THE EXCITEMENT OF DANCE, MUSIC, THEATRE AND STORYTELLING COMES TO YOU!

FUTA TORO WEST AFRICAN DANCE ENSEMBLE
LET’S GET STARTED!

Enclosed is a packet of information about the scheduled program. Please review all of the documents carefully, as they are the materials you will need to sponsor a successful program.

THE DAILY SCHEDULE

It is important that the daily schedule be maintained as specified on the confirmation document. If special circumstances occur once the project has begun, notify Music Center staff as soon as possible. Changes may be accommodated pending artist availability (which can be limited). We request that all participants be seated in the performance area and ready to begin at the scheduled times.

STUDENT SUPERVISION AT SCHOOL SITES

In accordance with California law, The Music Center requires that a classroom teacher be present with students at all times. It is expected that teachers will attend events with their class and actively participate in the learning experience.

YOUR FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

About a week after the performance, you’ll receive an invoice in the mail. You have 30 days to pay upon receipt of the invoice. We do ask that you wait until you receive the invoice before sending payment.

ARTIST INTRODUCTION & STAGING REQUIREMENTS

Please introduce the artist with the enclosed introduction. There is also specific information you will need to prepare for the arrival of each artist. Please give the tech sheet to the school personnel in charge of setting up the performance area well in advance of the scheduled dates. Be sure to have ready any equipment which may be required.

CURRICULUM CONNECTION FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS

These pre- and post-event classroom activities are designed to enhance the understanding and enjoyment of the program. Please duplicate this preparation material and distribute to all teachers whose students will be attending the event to allow them to fully prepare the students.

PRESS RELEASE AND POSTER

A pre-made press release is available should you wish to publicize the event. A premade poster is also included so that your school community can be aware of the upcoming event.

We applaud your commitment to arts education and look forward to working with you.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to call us at 213-972-4310.
"I would like to introduce today's performance which is presented by The Music Center of Los Angeles County. Futa Toro West African Dance Ensemble is a celebration of color, sound, movement and spirit. It is a vibrant, hand-clapping event that transports us to a far away West African Village. Please welcome the rhythms and dances of Futa Toro West African Dance Ensemble!"

Feel free to encourage the adult members of your audience to share the experience on social media! Tag us on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram at @MusicCenterLA and we might repost your photos!
TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

SPACE
• 28’ wide x 20’ deep
• Portable stages must be sturdy, level and securely lashed

SURFACE
• Wood, carpeted, or tike stage is required
  • Freshly mopped (not waxed)
  • Irregularities covered with tape
  • Extraneous clutter removed

DRESSING AREA
• Two clean and secured dressing rooms are needed. Restrooms may not be substituted.

EQUIPMENT
• One microphone on a stand (not connected to a podium).
  • Two armless chairs

OUTDOOR PERFORMANCES
• If a grass area is used, the grass must be level and cut short.
• The area should be clean and free of rocks or other sharp objects

ARRIVAL
• 45 minutes prior to the scheduled start time to prepare and set up

PARKING
• Two space close to the venue for loading and unloading

ASSISTANCE
• Please have a school representative ready to welcome the performers and to stay and help as needed.

START TIME
• Please prepare to start the program on time
• Students should be in the venue, seated and ready to begin at the listed times
FUTA TORO WEST AFRICAN DANCE ENSEMBLE

ART FORM: Dance
STYLE: Traditional
CULTURE: West African

MEET THE ARTIST:

Futa Toro West African Dance Ensemble presents the dances, songs and music of the West African countries of Senegal, Mali and Guinea. The ensemble is directed by Malik Sow, a master drummer of Senegal, singer, dancer and choreographer. Malik established the group in 1992, lending the name of his Fulani tribe to the dance ensemble as a gesture of pride. The name “Futa Toro” is derived from a large geographic region in African that encompasses areas of northern Senegal and southern Mauritania, in the Senegal River Valley. Encompassed by tropical climates, low-lying plains and the edge of the Sahara desert, the land and the people are rich in history, culture and music. The group encompasses the cultures of West Africa, providing students with a colorfully-costumed look at the history, nations and people of the region.

Past performance highlights include: The Festival of the Mask, The Rolling Stones’ Voodoo Lounge Tour, appearing annually at the Los Angeles African Marketplace and Watts Summer Festival and Parade. The ensemble currently has a membership of over 16 performers and a repertory of 11 ballets. Most recently, Futa Toro can be heard on the Black Panther movie soundtrack.

PREPARING FOR THE EXPERIENCE:

The continent of Africa has both an ancient and modern history, but this section will focus on the ancient, traditional aspects of the West African regions of Senegal, Mali and Guinea. The Empire of Ghana (4th -13th centuries) covered eastern Senegal, southwest Mali and southern Mauretanian. The Soninke people controlled trade at this time, including the gold trade with the Arab states across the Sahara desert. Cross-cultural influences developed from this strong economic relationship.

In the 11th century, the Empire began to decline and the Mandingo state of Kangaba became known as the Great Empire of Mali (13th-15th centuries). Sundiata Keita (1210-1260), known as the great magician king, is called the founder of the Mali Empire. Crippled from birth, he went into exile with his mother when his father died; his extremely jealous half brother became king. However, his half-brother was later overpowered and the people begged Sundiata to help them. He put together an army and achieved victory, ruling the Mali Empire for the 25 years until his death in 1260. His era was marked by a period of great wealth and education among the people. His name lives on in songs, poems and dances.

The Mali Empire reached the height of its glory under the Emperor Mansa Musa (1307-1332). Later, leaders were unable to maintain the strength of the empire, which fell to an invading Moroccan army in 1591. During this period a considerable body of literature in Arabic was developed, but due to the turbulent history of the area, much of this treasure was lost. Throughout its history, West African traditional culture has relied on the oral tradition. To pass on history and cultural traditions and information.

Myths, fables, legends and stories continue to be passed down by griots (oral historians). Also, performers amuse, entertain and teach the people about legendary heroes, historical events, values, beliefs, and traditional customs. Although there are many different languages spoken throughout this area, the official language is French because France held much of West African territory in the early part of the 20th century.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What words (verbs and adjectives) would you use to describe the performance?
- Name some of the specific instruments that were featured in the performance. What do you recall about each instrument? Can you remember the names of any of the instruments?
- What was the role of the master drummer? How did he give signals to the other musicians and dancers?
- What are some of the specific things you learned about West African traditions and culture?
- Describe what the performers were wearing. What qualities of the clothing made them unique?

FRAMEWORK FOCUS—HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES:

Using a map or globe, find the continent of Africa. Identify the countries in West Africa and specifically locate Senegal, Mali and Guinea. Divide into groups. Have each group research one of these countries and discover such things as geological variations, temperatures, weather, and indigenous animals and plants.

Make a list of comparisons between West Africa and California. Compare the size of West African countries to California. What is the highest point of each country? What are the longest rivers? Compare the weather.

What countries border Senegal, Mali and Guinea in West Africa? What states border California? What things do you find that are similar? What things do you find that are different? What is the difference between states and countries?

ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE:

- Pair students and have them take different roles - one being the person who attended the performance, and one who didn't. The one who attended the show should describe the performance and what they themselves learned. The other person is to ask questions to learn more. Switch roles. This can also be done as a writing assignment.
- In traditional West African societies, music and songs are integral to the telling of stories. However, when Africans were forced into slavery in the United States and other countries, their native languages were banned and they were not allowed to sing their songs. Today, most of the translations of the stories do not include the songs, traditionally sung by each character. Do research online or at the library in order to find recordings of the tales of West Africa. Pay special attention to whether or not traditional words, phrases or songs are included. Read or listen; find one to share with a friend.
- Review the traditional vocabulary list below:
  - **Djunjun** (jun jun) - or bass drum
  - **Djimbe** (gem bay) - drums which play the accompanying patterns and lead parts
  - **Shekere** (shay ker ay), a gourd covered with beads, a rattle.
  - **Tague** (tah gay) - a dance
  - **Sunu** (soo-noo) - West African rhythm to signal that a celebration is about to begin
  - **Doumb** (do-um) - dance that challenges the skill of the performers

Select 1-2 words and draw a picture to illustrate the meaning of each. Share.

- Communication is an important function of drumming in Africa. When playing rhythms, drummers are sometimes emulating a spoken language. The rhythms of the languages are communicated through the percussive rhythm patterns. These rhythms, portraying words, can tell of an event, give an alarm, or call people to a gathering. Write a short message on paper. Rhythmically clap the syllabic sounds of your message. Divide the class into different sections. Select a different phrase for each. Have each group clap a specific message, passing it rhythmically on to the next “village.” Try this example first: “Join us for dinner.” Pass it to the next village. Then, “Come at dusk.” pass to the next village. Then, the second group becomes the group starting a new message.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:


Author: Kathryn Johnson-Schwartz, Adapted by Susan Cambigne-Tracey. © The Music Center of Los Angeles County www.musiccenter.org/ontour @MusicCenterLA
School Contact Name: ________________________
Phone: ________________________

_________________________ AND THE MUSIC CENTER ANNOUNCE
FUTA TORO WEST AFRICAN DANCE ENSEMBLE TO PERFORM ON

_________________________ and The Music Center today announced the upcoming Futa Toro West African Dance Ensemble performance. As part of the school’s continuing efforts to enrich its curriculum and its students’ educational experience, the school will present a special performance of Futa Toro West African Dance Ensemble. The performance is presented by The Music Center’s education department which provides many offerings including live performances, classroom workshops, scholarship and training programs, online arts curriculum, on-campus events and professional development.

Futa Toro West African Dance Ensemble presents the dances, songs and music of the West African countries of Senegal, Mali and Guinea. The name “Futa Toro” is derived from a large geographic region in African that encompasses areas of northern Senegal and southern Mauritania, in the Senegal River Valley. Encompassed by tropical climates, low-lying plains and the edge of the Sahara desert, the land and the people are rich in history, culture and music. The Futa Toro Ensemble encompasses the cultures of West Africa, providing students with a colorfully-costumed, in-depth look at the history, nations and people of the region. The ensemble is directed by Malik Sow, a master drummer of Senegal, singer, dancer and choreographer.

The Music Center on Tour is the premiere resource for high-quality performing arts performances in Los Angeles County. For more than 35 years, schools and communities have benefited from the program's roster of diverse and compelling performing artists who serve as models of artistic excellence, inspire creative thinking and introduce young audiences to the world's diverse cultural traditions. Music Center artists represent and celebrate the finest artistic contribution of the world's cultures – from the colorful regional dances of Mexico and the exquisite music of the China, to the pulsating rhythms of Brazil and the golden harmonies of 20th century America.

Schools can choose from more than 70 performances in music, dance, theatre and storytelling from an internationally acclaimed roster of artists seen across the globe in films, theaters, concert halls, television shows and museums.

About The Music Center
As L.A.’s performing arts destination, The Music Center is L.A.’s home to the world’s greatest artistic programs and events. With four iconic theaters and four renowned resident companies – Center Theatre Group, the LA Master Chorale, the LA Opera and the LA Philharmonic – and recognized for its illustrious dance programming, Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center, The Music Center is a destination where audiences find inspiration in the very best of live performance, as well as nationally recognized arts education and participatory arts experiences. With The Music Center On Location, the non-profit performing arts organization brings events and activities to locations outside of its Downtown Los Angeles campus. The Music Center also programs and manages Grand Park, a 12-acre adjacent greenspace, with year-round free programming. For more information, visit musiccenter.org Follow The Music Center on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (@MusicCenterLA).

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For more information, please contact The Music Center at 213-972-3338. Members of the media are welcome to cover this performance. Please contact The Music Center prior to sending a reporter or photographer to the school.
THE MUSIC CENTER PRESENTS

FUTA TORO WEST AFRICAN DANCE ENSEMBLE

DATE: ______________________ TIME: ______________________

SCHOOL: ____________________

musiccenter.org/ontour
ARTS INTEGRATION PARTNERSHIPS

The Music Center’s teaching artists work in the classroom facilitating student learning and modeling effective instructional strategies for teachers. Essential skills and vocabulary in music, theater, dance, or visual art are connected to universal themes and integrated with other content areas.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Our Professional Development targets arts integration strategies for K-12 teachers in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts. Teachers learn creative and effective approaches for integrating the arts into their content areas. Additionally, The Music Center offers the Summer Arts Studio for Educators. This program consists of events tailored for classroom teachers, arts teachers and educators.

STUDENT MATINEE PERFORMANCES

Each year Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center offers free student matinee dance performances. All performances include a teacher orientation session and curriculum guide for students.

THE BLUE RIBBON CHILDREN’S FESTIVAL

The Blue Ribbon Children’s Festival, designed specifically for fifth grade students, is an annual admission-free program at The Music Center. Students experience a live professional performance at a world-class performing arts center, then gather together to perform a short choreographed dance inspired by the production.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS FESTIVAL

The Very Special Arts Festival is an annual admission-free event celebrating the artistic achievements of students with disabilities and their mainstream peers. The festival features student and professional performances on two stages, visual and performing arts workshops, and a student art exhibit created around a central theme.

SPOTLIGHT

Much more than a competition, Spotlight is a scholarship and training program, which encourages personal and artistic growth, while exploring new possibilities in the arts.

ARTSOURCE®

The Music Center’s Artsource® curriculum is designed to bring the expressive world of the arts into classrooms. The materials are available online free of cost.

OTHER ON CAMPUS MUSIC CENTER OFFERINGS:

Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center, Dance Downtown, Symphonian Campus Tours, Grand Park

PROGRAM SUPPORT PROVIDED BY: