

**The Music Center
Performing Artists
in Schools and
Neighborhoods**

**Exciting
Dance
Music
Theatre
Storytelling
Performances
Come To You**

FUTA TORO WEST AFRICAN DANCE

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 host 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, notify The 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.

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 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.

PRESS RELEASE AND POSTER

A template press release is included should you wish to publicize the event. If you wish to use it, simply copy the text into a word document and fill in the blanks with the appropriate information. A premade poster is also included to let your community know about the upcoming event.

CURRICULUM CONNECTION FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS

These pre- and post-event classroom activities are designed to deepen the understanding and engagement 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.

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.

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.

Performance Introduction

"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!

SPACE

- 20' wide x 20' deep
- Portable stages must be sturdy, level and securely lashed

SURFACE

- Wood, carpeted, or tile 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.
 - Four microphones on stands
- 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 spaces close to the venue for loading and unloading

ASSISTANCE

- Please have a representative ready to welcome the performers and to stay and help as needed.

START TIME

- Please prepare to start the program on time
- Audience 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.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:

A *Futa Toro* performance is a celebration of color, sound, movement and spirit. It is a vibrant, handclapping event that transports the audience to a distant West Africa village. It begins with a 'drum call,' using a traditional West African rhythm, such as *Sunu* (soo-noo), to signal everyone within hearing that a celebration is about to begin. Group leader Malik Sow helps the audience understand the customs, attire and lifestyle of the people of West Africa. The instruments used in the performance include a *djunjun* (jun jun), or bass drum; two *djimbe* (gem bay) drums which play the accompaniment patterns and lead parts; and a *shekere* (shay ker ay), a gourd rattle covered with a netting of beads.

Dance is an integral aspect of the music, not a separate piece. One of the most popular dances is the *tague* (tah gay) which is performed before the planting and after the harvesting of the crops. Another dance, the *doumb*, challenges the skill of the performers with intricate dance steps performed at rapid tempos. The audience is invited to participate with rhythmic claps and call and response songs, as well as in the dancing.

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 Mauretania. 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 the instruments?
- What was the role of the master drummer? How did he give signals to the other musicians and dancers?
- Did any part of the performance intrigue you? Confuse you? Surprise you? Delight you? Discuss why.
- 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?

California Arts Standards: Artistic Processes

- Cr** Creating
- Pr** Performing/Producing/Presenting
- Re** Responding
- Cn** Connecting

Learn more at:

<https://tinyurl.com/ArtsStandardsCA>

ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE:

Re 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 critique the performance and also share what they learned. The other person is to ask questions to learn more. Switch roles. This can also be done as a writing assignment.

Cn 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.

Cr Review the traditional vocabulary list below:

Djunjun (jun jun) - or bass drum

Djimbe (gem bay) - drums which play the accompaniment 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.

Pr 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:

"Chuck Davis - African American Dance Ensemble." The Music Center, The Music Center, <https://www.musiccenter.org/education/Teacher-Resources/Artsource-Curriculum/Available-ArtSource-Units/Chuck-Davis---African-American-Dance-Ensemble/>.

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. 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.

For more than 40 years, The Music Center Performing Artists in Schools and Neighborhoods have been the premier resource for high-quality educational performances, offering one of the most compelling and diverse artistic rosters. The Music Center's incredible artists bring the magic of live performance to audiences throughout Los Angeles County, with an emphasis on programs that are an excellent fit for educational and neighborhood settings. All Music Center Performing Artists in Schools and Neighborhoods performances include standards-based curriculum materials that feature background information on the artists and their performance, as well as related classroom activities with connections to multiple curricular disciplines. Schools can choose from more than 60 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

The Music Center convenes artists, communities and ideas with the goal of deepening the cultural lives of every resident in Los Angeles County. The \$70 million non-profit performing arts organization has two divisions: TMC Arts and TMC Ops. TMC Arts, The Music Center's programming engine, provides year-round programming inside The Music Center's four theatres, on Jerry Moss Plaza, outside at Grand Park—a 12-acre adjacent green space—in schools and other locations all over Los Angeles County and on a digital platform called The Music Center Off-stage. TMC Arts presents world-class dance with Gloria Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center, free and low-cost public concerts and events, as well as live and digital K–12 arts education programs, workshops, performances, interactive experiences and special events. TMC Ops manages the theatres, the Plaza and Grand Park, which comprise \$2 billion in county assets, on behalf of the County of Los Angeles. The Music Center is also home to four renowned resident companies—Center Theatre Group, Los Angeles Master Chorale, LA Opera and LA Phil. For more information, visit musiccenter.org. Follow The Music Center on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @MusicCenterLA.

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For more information, please contact The Music Center at 213-972-3332. 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.

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Exciting
Dance
Music
Theatre
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DATE: _____

TIME: _____

LOCATION: _____



musiccenter.org/performingartists
@MusicCenterLA

THE
MUSIC
CENTER
A TMC Arts Program

ARTS INTEGRATION PARTNERSHIPS

Music Center teaching artists work in classrooms to empower student creativity and develop their artistic, work-force and life skills. The program deepens learning across the curriculum in collaboration with classroom teachers by combining dance, music, theatre, visual and media arts with content areas including English Language Arts, history, science and social emotional learning for students of all ages and abilities.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Music Center's professional development programs bring educators together to participate in an experiential and immersive approach to integrating dance, music, theatre, visual and media arts into their classrooms. The focus is on meeting educators where they are and building their capacity over time and in depth — both at school sites and at The Music Center. As but one example, each year The Music Center's Arts Integration Symposium engages participants in all grade levels, art forms and content areas.

DANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS

Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center offers Student Matinee performances during each season featuring world-class dance performances that celebrate the diversity of L.A. communities; invited rehearsals that provide young people with an inside look at the creative process of dance companies in residence; master classes focused on technique, choreography and dialogue with professional dancers; and creative residencies where local youth engage with visiting dance companies for multiple days, including the Ailey school residency program.

STUDENT FESTIVALS

The Very Special Arts Festival engages students of all abilities as artistic creators and contributors. At the Blue Ribbon Children's Festival, fifth graders across the county experience live performances and dance together as a community.

SPOTLIGHT YOUNG ARTISTS PROGRAM

A nationally acclaimed, free arts training and scholarship program that develops the creative capacity of high school performing artists in Southern California.

ARTS GROWN LA

A new platform for artistic expression already thriving in communities throughout Los Angeles County. From performances at parks, community centers, libraries, senior centers and civic events, to Hip Hop dance parties and youth lessons, Arts Grown L.A. collaborates with community partners and neighborhoods to uplift artists and creativity, complementing existing local programs.

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, Grand Park, Dance DTLA, L.A. County Holiday Celebration, Plaza Concerts, and Symphonian Campus Tours, among other activities

For all our offerings, please visit us at www.musiccenter.org