



UC DAVIS PRESENTS

Community Outreach Program

2001-2002 School Matinee Series

NATIONAL SONG & DANCE COMPANY OF MOZAMBIQUE

Friday, March 15, 2002
Freeborn Hall, UC Davis, 11:00am

Dear Teachers:

We hope you will find this Teacher's Guide helpful in preparing your students for what they will see and hear at the National Song and Dance Company of Mozambique performance matinee. The Guide provides background information on the ensemble and the country as well as a review of theater conventions and audience protocol. The National Song and Dance Company of Mozambique matinee, which is specially designed for student audiences, will feature these dynamic ambassadors of culture from the southeast coast of Africa.

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NATIONAL SONG AND DANCE COMPANY OF MOZAMBIQUE
Companhia Nacional de Canto e Danca de Mocambique - CNCD



David Abilio, General Director
Julio Armando Matlombe, Artistic Director

DANCERS

Rosa Domingos ~ Perola Jaime ~ Emelva Dine ~ Maria Jose ~ Liria Rafael ~
Elisa Jopela ~ Julieta Simiao ~ Sandra Mahumane ~ Sheila Masungue ~
Graca Timbane

Guerra Andre ~ Joao Antonio ~ Alexandre Coane ~ Zacarias Mahumane
Abacar Mulima ~ Luis Sala ~ Hussene Ussene ~ Pedro Vumba ~ Justino Zimba

MUSICIANS

Eduardo Durao ~ Rolando Alexandre ~ Bernabe Fundi ~ Amos Mawaia ~
Arnaldo Nhassengo

Renowned for their luminous costumes, technical polish, creative panache and seemingly inexhaustible energy, the National Song & Dance Company of Mozambique is one of Africa's greatest cultural treasures. Under the direction of dancer/choreographer **David Abilio**, the 25-member company presents more than 300 performances each year. The company became one of the first government-funded cultural organizations to appear after Mozambique's independence in 1975, its major goals being to collect, preserve, and perform the major expressive art forms of the Mozambican people. Drawing upon the rich and diverse culture of the country, the company's repertoire ranges from traditional dances, with choral and instrumental music, to modern African

ballet, accompanied by poetical recitation and storytelling. “In our music and dance [there is] very deep significance, there is not only the case of aesthetics or entertainment,” Abilio said. “We have something very deep to say through the dance. We are telling a story about Africa.”

In 1979, just four years after Mozambique won its independence from Portugal, a group of young talented performers (dancers, musicians, actors, storytellers) joined to form an amateur dance troupe in Mozambique’s capital city of Maputo, under the auspices of the National Directorate for Culture. In 1983, the group became professional and was renamed Companhia Nacional de Canto e Danca (CNCD). Artists were recruited from among the best performers in each of the nation’s ten provinces and, at least once a year, they are sent to several parts of the country to learn new dances and songs that are incorporated into the company’s repertoire. The professionalization of the ensemble was in recognition of its outstanding contribution to the promotion of national culture, with the government pledging to provide for better working conditions and financial and technical support, and to ensure ever higher performance standards. Today, the National Song and Dance Company of Mozambique is composed of about 50 members, including dancers, musicians, technicians, and administrative staff.

Each year, the company’s season includes performances in the capital city and in a number of towns and villages around the country of Mozambique, reaching an audience of over 300,000. An unprecedented phenomena was undoubtedly the presentation throughout the country of “Ode to Peace,” an artistic program for civic and electoral education financed by the European Economic Community. From 1993 to 1994, the dance company toured this program to all provincial capitals as well as to 70 districts reaching more than 2,000,000 spectators. The company has regularly toured abroad, winning universal acclaim and enthusiastic reviews from critics. In addition to visiting more than ten countries in Africa, the troupe has toured to Bulgaria, Hungary, Denmark, France, Spain, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Italy, Portugal, and Romania. In the Americas, CNCD has performed in Brazil, Cuba, Guyana, Jamaica, and the United States. In Asia and the Middle East, the company has toured China and Dubai, and recently performed in Australia. CNCD made its U.S. debut in the spring of 1998 with engagements at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC and the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark. In the current 2001-2002 season, the company tours the United States and Canada with engagements coast-to-coast during an extended six-week tour.

ADMINISTRATIVE BIOGRAPHIES

DAVID ABILIO MONDLANE, General Director, was born in 1949 in Chibuto, a small village in the Gaza province of southern Mozambique. The son of a king of the Makambanes tribe, he came to settle in Maputo, the capital city, after his father's death. In 1974, he joined a small group of young people who founded the first cultural association to represent the country, the Mozambican Association of Musical and Theatrical Culture. And in 1976, under the patronage of the National Directorate of Culture, he founded a performing troupe of dancers, singers, poets, and theater artists of which he became Artistic Director. It was from this group that the National Song and Dance Company originated. David Abilio is also a playwright, a teacher of drama and culture, a theater director, and a choreographer. His most important dances, "Em Mocambique o Sol Nasceu" and "N'tsay," have been performed throughout the world and won many awards.

JULIO ARMANDO MATLOMBE, **Artistic Director**, was born in 1958 in Maputo and first joined the National Song and Dance Company of Mozambique in 1981 as a dancer. With the company, he has toured to Portugal, Poland, Russia, Brazil, Norway, Spain, Zimbabwe, and the U.S., performing during the company's 1998 American debut at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. Mr. Matlombe was appointed Artistic Director in 2000. Among his responsibilities are auditioning, training, and rehearsing the dancers in the performance repertoire of the company. He also conducts master classes for local dancers while the company is on tour. His training in dance and choreography includes study in Birmingham, UK with the Kokuma Dance Theatre and attending an accelerated course of study at the Moving into Dance Academy in South Africa. He has also participated in workshops given at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre School, at the American Dance Festival, with Paul Taylor, and with Jawole Zollar of Urban Bush Women in the US.

PROGRAM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The program for young people, called "Celebration," will be narrated and introduced by General Director and choreographer, David Abilio. "Celebration" consists of some of the same traditional dances incorporated into the work *In Mozambique the Sun Has Risen Up*. This extraordinary suite of dances, created in 1985 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Mozambican independence, were specifically designed to affirm national solidarity, in a country where the people

speaking 16 different languages. Each of the seven numbers requires costume changes, yet dancers move seamlessly from modern dance to the theatricalized forms of more traditional dances. A spectacular extravaganza featuring the most representative songs and dances of Mozambique, *In Mozambique, the Sun Has Risen Up* is an engaging act of parades, flirtations, and friendly athletic competitions. Dancers invite audiences to clap with the rhythm as the dances accumulate intensity, and the finale—a patriotic flag-waving celebration—expresses the joy of African liberation. “The program was exhilarating in the caliber of performing and the exquisite costumes and stage designs,” praised the *New York Times* critic in a recent review; “But the greatest fascination lay in the ways age-old traditional dance and music were filtered through a modern sensibility to produce an extraordinarily vital and subtle new art.”

IN MOZAMBIQUE THE SUN HAS RISEN UP

Em Mocambique, o Sol Naceu

(1985)

TUFU/ NSSOPE, a dance from the northern coast of Mozambique. Before Portuguese colonial occupation, Arab traders had settled in the coastal zones of Mozambique in the course of their expansion throughout Africa. They left religious and cultural influences through the contact that they had with the population. Dances performed by women at celebratory events reflect this influence.

XIGUBO, a dance from southern Mozambique. Traditionally, the Xigubo was performed to celebrate military victories and to prepare warriors for battle. The dancers dress as if for battle and brandish their weapons, their steps and movements representing the various stages of war. Drums and *gululas* keep the beat. Songs to encourage the warriors are chanted throughout. This dance was brought to Mozambique in the 19th century by Nguni warriors.

NIQUETXE, a dance from Zambezi Province. Niquetxe is performed traditionally by a large part of the population of Zambezi. The dance drew its strength from the harshness of forced labor on the tea plantations controlled by large monopolies and was performed on the occasion of a death, usually six months after the funeral. Today, it is performed by men, women, and children at any occasion or time of the year.

SEMBA, a dance from Sofala Province. Semba is a dance that expresses the amorous feelings of young people in love. A joyful, up-beat dance, it is widely performed throughout the country.

XIGOGORO, music by Eduardo Duro. Performed on the *timbila* (the traditional xylophone), this music originates from the Chope ethnic group.

N'GANDA, a dance from Niassa Province. During World War I (1914-1918), the village men returned and, alongside the British, fought against the Germans of Tanganyika (now Tanzania). They had to show the community their military prowess in parades. These displays took place during the harvest festival, amidst much happiness.

MAKWAYA, a dance with its origins in Manica and Sofala provinces. This is a dance of joy, generally performed at weddings. Several groups representing the groom's and bride's families compete among themselves, turning the competition into a big, happy celebration for all participants.

MOZAMBIQUE: COUNTRY PROFILE



Official name: Republic of Mozambique
Area: 801,600 sq km (309,500 sq mi)
Population: 15.7 million

Capital city: Maputo (pop 1.3 million)
People: African (99%, including Shangaan, Chokwe, Manyika, Sena and Makua)
Language: Portuguese (official), indigenous languages
Religion: Indigenous beliefs (50%), Christian (30%), Muslim (20%)
Government: Republic
Major industries: Food, beverages, textiles, chemicals, petroleum
Major trading partners: South Africa, Spain, US, UK, Portugal, France, Japan

The National Song & Dance Company of Mozambique draws upon the rich cultural history of their country on the southeast coast of Africa. Beginning more than 1,000 years ago, the indigenous Bantu peoples established coastal trading towns with links to other parts of Africa, the Middle East, and India. The Arab influence in these ports was strong, and Swahili was the lingua franca of trade. The first Portuguese colonists arrived in 1498, establishing supply points for sea routes to and from India, and engaging in a lucrative trade in gold and ivory. By the mid-1700s, slaves were added to the cargo. Many African slaves from Mozambique were transported to Brazil—another Portuguese colony—where they contributed their song and dance traditions to Brazilian culture. Portugal would dominate Mozambican culture until 1975. In that year, independence was won and the victorious Frente de Libertacao de Mocambique (FRELIMO) party came to power.

There are 16 major ethnic groups in Mozambique. The most significant are the Makua (the largest group) of the northern provinces; the Makonde (also of the north), famous for their carvings; the Sena, from the central provinces; and the Shangaan, who dominate the southern provinces. There is also a small population of native Portuguese (less than 1%), plus small numbers of European and Asian residents. Each of the major ethnic groups in Mozambique has its own language. The common tongue and official language is Portuguese.

Like the other countries of Southern Africa, animist religions have existed in Mozambique for thousands of years, and many people retain their traditional beliefs, sometimes alongside an organized religion. Arab traders introduced Islam to the coastal regions beginning in the 8th century, and Portuguese Catholic missionaries brought over Christianity in the 16th century. Today, about a quarter of the population is Muslim, mostly in the northern provinces and coastal areas; about a fifth are Catholic; and most of the rest are animists.

Mozambique has a rich artistic tradition which, incredible as it may seem, continues to thrive after decades of colonial occupation and civil war. Today Mozambique produces some of the finest art in Africa. The sculpture of the Makonde people from the north is recognised as one of Africa's most sophisticated art forms. A number of talented painters have emerged since the 1950s. Probably the most famous is Malangatana, who has exhibited throughout the world. The country is well known for its murals, many of which can be found adorning walls in Maputo. Traditions and stories have been preserved and transmitted orally from generation to generation in Mozambique.

The written word has assumed more importance in the 20th century, and nationalist writers such as poet Jose Craveirinha have made the gritty, often tragic realities of the country their subjects. Since independence, a number of writers have emerged, including Mia Couto, whose works include *Voices Made Night* and *The Tale of the Two Who Returned from the Dead*. Traditional music is widely played in Mozambique. The Makonde in the north are noted for their wind instruments, known as **lupembe**. In the south the Chope musicians play the **marimba**, a form of xylophone found throughout Southern Africa, and are famous for their marimba orchestras. Modern music flourishes in the cities. Marrabenta is perhaps the most typical Mozambican music--with a light style inspired by traditional rural majika rhythms.

–Abridged from the Lonely Planet guide

THINK ABOUT IT!

Talking with your teacher, friends, and family about a performance after attending the theater is part of the experience. When you share what you saw and felt you learn more about the performance. You can now compare ideas and ask questions and find out how to learn even more. Here are some questions to think about:

- 1) How would you describe the National Song & Dance Company of Mozambique matinee to a friend?
- 2) What feelings did you have while you listened to the music and watched the performers?
- 3) Pretend you are a reporter for the *Sacramento Bee* newspaper. Write a cultural review of the matinee for the Arts section. Describe the dancing, instruments, costumes, and props with as much detail as you can remember. Then discuss what you liked best about the performance and why.

ATTENDING THE THEATER

What is expected of student audiences at the matinee:

- Enter the auditorium quietly and take seats immediately (note that all matinees have reserved seating);
- Show courtesy to the artist and other guests at all times;
- Demonstrate appreciation for the artist's work by applauding at the appropriate times;
- Refrain from making unnecessary noise or movements;
- Please eat lunch before or after the performance to avoid disruption;
- Relate any information acquired from the pre-matinee discussion to the new information gained from the matinee.

What you can expect of your experience in a performing arts theater:

A theater is a charged space, full of energy and anticipation. When the house lights (the lights that illuminate the audience seating) go down, the excitement level goes up! Theaters are designed so that the voices of the singers and actors and the music of the musicians can be heard. But this also means that any sound in the audience: whispering, rustling of papers, speaking and moving about, can be heard by other audience members and by the performers. Distractions like these upset everyone's concentration and can spoil a performance.

The performers on stage show respect for their art form and for the audience by doing their very best work. The audience shows respect for the performers by watching attentively. Applause is the best way for audience members to share their enthusiasm and to show their appreciation for the performers. Applaud at the end of a performance! Sometimes the audience will clap during a performance, as after a featured solo. Audience members may feel like laughing if the action on stage is funny, crying if the action is sad, or sighing if something is seen or heard that is beautiful. Appreciation can be shown in many different ways, depending upon the art form and the culture(s) of the people in the audience. While the audience at a dance performance will sit quietly, other types of performance invite audience participation.

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