



Overture Center
FOR THE ARTS

RESOURCE GUIDE

2010/11 Season

OVERTURE ONSTAGE

A Performing Arts Series for Students



Acoustic Africa | WED, MAR 9, 2011



Overture Center FOR THE ARTS

ABOUT OVERTURE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Overture Center for the Arts fills a city block in downtown Madison with world-class venues for the performing and visual arts. Made possible by an extraordinary gift from Madison businessman W. Jerome Frautschi, the center presents the highest-quality arts and entertainment programming in a wide variety of disciplines for diverse audiences. Offerings include performances by acclaimed classical, jazz, pop, and folk performers; touring Broadway musicals; quality children's entertainment; and world-class ballet, modern and jazz dance. Overture Center's extensive outreach and educational programs serve thousands of Madison-area residents annually, including youth, older adults, people with limited financial resources and people with disabilities. The center is also home to ten independent resident organizations.

RESIDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Bach Dancing and Dynamite Society
Children's Theater of Madison
Kanopy Dance Company
Li Chiao-Ping Dance Company
Madison Ballet
Madison Museum of Contemporary Art
Madison Opera
Madison Symphony Orchestra
Wisconsin Academy's
James Watrous Gallery
Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra

Internationally renowned architect Cesar Pelli designed the center to provide the best possible environment for artists and audiences, as well as to complement Madison's urban environment. Performance spaces range from the spectacular 2,250-seat Overture Hall to the casual and intimate Rotunda Stage. The renovated Capitol Theater seats approximately 1,110, and The Playhouse seats 350. In addition, three multi-purpose spaces provide flexible performance, meeting and rehearsal facilities. Overture Center also features several art exhibit spaces. Overture Galleries I, II and III display works by Dane County artists. The Playhouse Gallery features regional artists with an emphasis on collaborations with local organizations. The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters' Watrous Gallery displays works by Wisconsin artists, and the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art offers works by national and international artists.

RESOURCE GUIDE CREDITS

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ACOUSTIC AFRICA

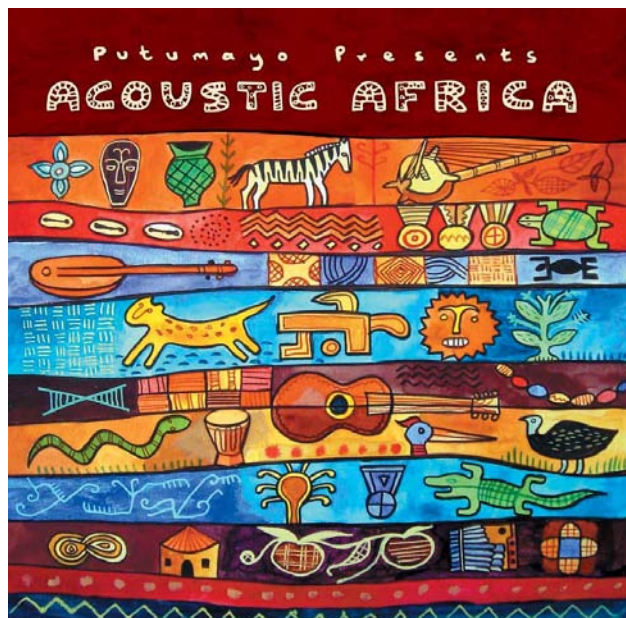


TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Letter to Teachers
2	About the Artists
3	About Africa
4	About African Music
5	Music Vocabulary
6	Music Activities
7	Social Studies Activities
8	Post-Performance Activities
9	Additional Resources
10	Wisconsin Academic Standards

Dear Teachers

This Spotlight on Learning: Educator's Resource Guide for the Acoustic Africa OnStage performance is designed to:

- Maximize students' enjoyment and appreciation of the performance;
- Extend the impact of the performance by providing discussion ideas, activities, and further reading that promote learning across the curriculum.
- Promote arts literacy by expanding students' knowledge of music, storytelling and theater;
- Illustrate that the arts are a legacy reflecting the values, customs, beliefs, expressions, and reflections of a culture;
- Use the arts to teach about the cultures of other people and to celebrate students' own heritage through self-reflection.

In this Resource Guide, you will find valuable information and suggestions for activities that can help prepare students to see this performance, ideas for follow-up activities and resources you can access on the web. We've also included Wisconsin Academic Standards for each activity in order to align the experience with your curriculum requirements.

We Want Your Feedback!

OnStage performances can be evaluated online! Evaluations are vital to the future and funding of this program. Your feedback educates us about the ways the program is utilized and we often implement your suggestions. [CLICK HERE](#) to fill out an online evaluation. We look forward to hearing from you.

Enjoy the show!
Overture Education Team

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Acoustic Africa writes and performs music inspired by their cultural roots, focusing on the richness of the African guitar tradition. Each artist has made an effort to be true to his own region's musical heritage, helping to spearhead an acoustic revolution in contrast to the studio-based, synthesized dance music that became the standard for African pop-stars of the 1980's and 90's. The group's album, *Acoustic Africa*, includes gentle folk songs from Senegal, a protest song from South Africa, and blues-tinged ballads from Mali.

Visit Acoustic Africa online

- The [Acoustic Africa official website](#) provides a good introduction to the artists and their music
- Individual artist websites:
 - [Habib Koité](#), the Malian superstar whose exciting concerts have endeared him to audiences worldwide
 - [Oliver Mtukudzi](#), the best-selling artist in his home country of Zimbabwe
 - [Afel Bocoum](#), a guitarist, singer, and composer from Mali whose songs evoke the evolution of traditional Malian society
- [Listen to songs](#) from the album, *Acoustic Africa*
- [Watch video](#) of an Acoustic Africa performance in Germany (11/2010)

ABOUT AFRICA

Where in the World is Africa?

Using available resources locate the continent of Africa on a world map and answer the following questions.

- How does the size of Africa compare to the United States?
- The U.S. is a country divided into 50 states. How many countries are located on the continent of Africa?
- Africa is surrounded by water. List the bodies of water that surrounds the continent.
- What continents and countries share a close border with Africa?
- How many different languages are spoken by the various ethnic cultures living in Africa?



Geography: The Continent of Africa

Divide the class into three groups. Have each group research the geographical features of: *Western Africa*, *Northeast Africa*, and *Southern Africa*. Using various art supplies, have groups create a 3D topographical art construction, as well as a written summary of their research. Once each group has completed their region, the whole project can be assembled and displayed as a representation of the diverse geography of the African continent.

Research should include the following features, their definitions, and impact on the ecological and environmental conditions seen throughout different regions of the continent.



- *Water sources* are mainly limited to shallow rivers and *drainage basins*. Where are those water sources located? How does this limited access to water affect the animal and plant populations living in these regions?
- Africa is known for its *vast deserts* and few mountain regions. However, the continent is primarily an *uplifted plateau*. How do the contrasting elevations in various regions affect the animals and wildlife?
- The *Great Rift* is an example of the *tectonic process* of rifting or tension in creating a set of faults. How has this geological movement affected different regions of the continent?

ABOUT AFRICAN MUSIC

Music is a central part of African society. In fact, it is so connected to daily life that some African languages do not even have an exact noun that means “music.” Music is a form of recreation and entertainment, but more importantly, it has social, ritual, and ceremonial functions. Much of traditional African music is related to myths, legends or folklore, and making music is a primary way many African societies connect to the spiritual world.

For example, the Minianka tribe in Mali uses music and drumming as a sacred act of communal healing. Other West African cultures connect with and appeal to their ancestors through music. Dancing is another way Africans connect spiritually with music. Also, African children play musical games that help prepare them for adulthood; music helps them learn about tasks like fishing, hunting, and wedding and funeral rituals.

Musical styles vary by region, due to differences in language. Most African languages are tonal, meaning high and low pitches change the meanings of words, and because much African music is based on speech, these tones can be heard in the singing. Some instruments are even tuned in a way that their music becomes understandable language. For example, the tama, or talking drum, is tuned to mimic human speech.



African instruments also vary from region to region. Instruments are created using the natural resources available in a particular area. For example, drums are more popular in the forested regions of West Africa, where there is more wood available, than they are in the savannah areas where there are few trees. Wind instruments also vary greatly—some are made from animal tusks or horns, where others are made from shells or gourds.

Percussion instruments that are most commonly used in Africa include drums, rattles, friction sticks (sticks that are rubbed together to make a sound), bells, sanzas, and xylophones.

MUSIC VOCABULARY

The following terms can help students connect with this Overture *OnStage* musical experience. Use these words in some of the following activities:

- Post the words around the room.
- Assign each student a word. Have the student act out the word. After having all the students guess the meaning, tell them the word. Give students a list of the terms and see if they can select the term that is acted out.
- Have students work with a partner to define as many of the following terms as they can. Then put two pairs together, allowing students to add more definitions from the group knowledge base.

A cappella.....	Singing without accompaniment
Acoustics.....	Study of the making, travel and reception of sound waves
Balance.....	A sense of equilibrium or satisfying proportions of sounds
Balafon.....	African instrument similar to a marimba
Bongos.....	Two small drums attached to each other, which are played with the hands and make a high-pitched sound
Chord.....	Two or more pitches sounding together
Danssa doso.....	Musical style invented by Habib Koité, combining danssa music and doso, ancient music of Malian hunters
Diction.....	Correct and clear pronunciation of consonants
Griot.....	A spiritual figure within tribes of West Africa who travel to villages reciting poetry, singing songs of praise, and sharing family histories
Harmony.....	The combination of notes considered pleasing to the ear
Instrumentation.....	The arrangement or composition of music for instruments (band or orchestra)
Kamele n'goni.....	Four-stringed West African instrument similar to a ukulele or a lute
Melody.....	Pitches in sequence that form a pattern
Meter.....	The division of time into units
Mood.....	A feeling/emotion induced by a particular atmosphere (entertainment, solace, diversion)
Pitch.....	The highness or lowness of sound measured in Hz
Pulse.....	Feeling where the beat is
Repetition.....	Repeat a pattern of melody to help achieve thematic unity
Rhythm.....	How a sound is placed in time
Sanza.....	An instrument consisting of narrow strips of metal or bamboo attached to a sound box. This instrument is played by plucking the strips
Tama	Talking drum, or drum that is tuned in such a way that its sounds mimic human speech
Tempo.....	The speed at which a regular pulse is repeated
Tone /Timbre.....	The relative brightness or darkness of a sound
Tonal.....	The use of high and low pitches to symbolize different meanings
Unison.....	Everyone on the same pitch
Visualization.....	Imagery generated by and synchronized with the music that is being played

You Compose It

Go to the [Virtual Piano](#) website. Compose a simple melody using both the white and black keys and any rhythmic accompaniments you wish. Write down the letters of the notes you choose in order to practice your melodies and then play them for the class. *Optional: Write your own lyrics!*

Wisconsin Academic Standard: Music – Language Arts

MUSIC ACTIVITIES

Rhythm

Rhythm is something that repeats itself, aurally, visually, or physically. Rhythms can be found everywhere. We hear rhythms all around us, like rain hitting the ground, telephones ringing, or water dripping. Even when we walk, our footsteps create a rhythm.

Tempo

Tempo is how fast or slow the pattern repeats itself. For example, the sound of rain falling will usually have a faster tempo, or speed, than the sound of water dripping.

Feel the Rhythm

Rhythms you can see are called patterns. You can see a pattern in a flock of birds, railroad tracks, or the rows of windows on a large office building. Not only can you hear and see rhythms, but also they can be made with movement. Walking creates a rhythm with the body. Everyone has his or her own personal natural rhythm. It can be found in your heartbeat. In musical terms, rhythm is defined as organized beats grouped in patterns, which are repeated. Rhythm is one of the basic elements of music.

Divide students into small groups and have them experiment with the sounds and patterning of a rhythm to create a new group pattern. Use the following questions in discussion.

- How did the tempo of the rhythm affect what you felt as a performer or as an observer?
- How did the dynamics (loudness or softness) of the sound affect you?
- What feeling did the rhythm convey?

Prop it Up

Can a prop have a life of its own? Have students choose any object and think about how it could be used to symbolically represent their rhythm. Have them move with and explore the physical nature of the object.

- How does it move?
- What does the object mean to them?
Does it have any symbolic meaning?
- What could they change about their object to make it more relevant, such as a color or shape?
- Does the object make a sound, or do they associate a sound with the object?
- Using the object, create a performance that emphasizes the theme of your rhythm.



Wisconsin Academic Standard: Music -- Dance

SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITIES

Songs and Social Activism

In the 1980s and 1990s, many parts of Africa underwent great social and political change. Songs are an important part of social activism in many regions of Africa. The artists of Acoustic Africa make music in response to the particular social and political conditions in their homelands. Part of the proceeds from the group's album sales go to charities that assist African countries.

Many American songwriters have been similarly inspired. In 1985, Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie collaborated on the song, "We Are the World," to benefit African famine relief.

As a class, listen to the song "[We Are the World](#)" and discuss the lyrics.

- What do you think is the meaning of this song?
- What do you think the songwriter is trying to say?

Can you think of other songs you know that are related to social concerns?

We are the World

There comes a time when we need a certain call
When the world must come together as one
There are people dying, oh,
and it's time to lend a hand to life
The greatest gift of all

We can't go on pretending day by day
That someone,
somewhere will soon make a change
We're all a part of god's great big family
And the truth, you know love is all we need

We are the world
We are the children
We are the ones who make a brighter day
So let's start givin'
There's a choice we're makin'
We're savin' our own lives
It's true, we'll make a better day
Just you and me



Research Music Activism

In the last two decades, musical artists like U2's Bono, country legend Willy Nelson, and Sting have organized music concerts to benefit social concerns. Last year, the song "We Are the World" was re-recorded to benefit the victims of Haiti's earthquake.

Learn about the social and political conditions connected to other musical benefit concerts like *LiveAid* and *FarmAid*. Research other artist activists who are contributing their voice and music to effect social change around the world.

Create Your Own Activist Song

What are important concerns in American society, or in your city or neighborhood? Using a familiar tune, write some lyrics to help raise awareness of this issue. If you are feeling bold, get the whole class to sing along!

Wisconsin Academic Standards: Music -- Social Studies -- Language Arts

POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES



Music in Your Life

As a class, discuss the following questions. What do today's music styles reflect about our society? What attitudes about the world are conveyed through different types of music? Think about the importance of music in your life. What are your favorite songs and why?

Review the Performance

Write a review of the performance. Start by writing down everything you remember from the show. What kinds of artistic styles did they perform? Who were your favorite performers? Why? What did you think of the music in the performance? What was your favorite part of the performance? Did you have a least favorite part of the performance? Why? Were there any additional aspects of the show that stood out to you (e.g. sets, lighting, costumes and/or a specific dance sequence)? What did you like most about those aspects of the show? How did the performance make you feel?

- Give the performance a rating, out of five stars.
- For each positive star, discuss one thing you liked about the performance. (Example, for a five-star rating, describe five things you liked and why you liked them.)
- For each star under five, discuss one thing you did not enjoy about the performance. (Example, for a three-star rating, list three things you liked and two things you did not enjoy.)

Draw or Paint your Impression of the Performance

Draw or paint a picture that expresses how the music made you feel. Or draw or paint your impression of the performance, using shapes, lines, colors, patterns and other elements from your imagination that convey qualities of the music.

Performance Feedback

We love to hear from you. Send your performance reviews and/or drawings to:

Education Department
Overture Center for the Arts
201 State Street, Madison, WI 53703

Wisconsin Academic Standards: Music -- Language Arts – Art and Design

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[PBS: Africa](#)

Explore the regions of Africa. Take the “African Challenge.” Download teacher tools and other resources

[The Africa Guide](#)

Learn about African culture, art, and language

[Africa Action](#)

One of the oldest African advocacy groups in the United States working for political, economic and social justice throughout the African continent

[African Activist Archive Project](#)

Preserving records and memories of activism in the United States to support the struggles of African peoples against colonialism, apartheid, and social injustice from the 1950s through the 1990s

[African Music on the Internet](#)

Stanford University's annotated guide to African music sites

[Music Videos of Africa](#)

Watch videos from specific African artists, genres, or different countries of the continent

WISCONSIN ACADEMIC STANDARDS

LANGUAGE ARTS

Writing

- B.1 Create or produce writing to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes--
- Write nonfiction pieces that convey essential details and facts and provide accurate representations of events and sequences
 - Write expressive pieces in response to reading, viewing, and life experiences (narratives, reflections, and letters) employing descriptive detail and a personal voice
 - Write a persuasive piece (such as a letter to a specific person) that includes a clear position, a discernible tone, and a coherent argument with reliable evidence

Research and Inquiry

- F.1 Conduct research and inquiry on self-selected or assigned topics, issues, or problems and use an appropriate form to communicate their findings

SOCIAL STUDIES

Geography

- A.1 Use a variety of geographic representations, such as political, physical, and topographic maps, a globe, aerial photographs, and satellite images, to gather and compare information about a place

The Behavioral Sciences

- E.3 Describe the ways in which ethnic cultures may influence the everyday lives of people
- E.10 Explain how language, art, music, beliefs, and other components of culture can further global understanding or cause misunderstanding

ART AND DESIGN

Visual Communication and Expression

- E.3 Communicate complex ideas by producing popular images and objects, such as folk art, traditional arts and crafts, popular arts, mass media, and consumer products
- E.5 Use the visual arts to express ideas that can't be expressed by words alone

MUSIC

Improvisation

- C.2 Improvise melodic embellishments and simple rhythmic and melodic variations
- C.3 Improvise short melodies in a consistent style, meter, and tonality

Composition

- D.1 Compose short pieces within specified guidelines, demonstrating the use of the elements of music

Analysis

- F.1 Describe specific musical events upon listening to a given example, using appropriate terminology
- F.2 Demonstrate knowledge of the basic principles of meter, rhythm, tonality, intervals, chords, and harmonic progressions and their application in analyzing written and/or aural examples of music
- F.3 Analyze and compare the use of the elements of music upon listening to examples representing diverse genres and cultures

History and Culture

- I.1 Describe distinguishing characteristics of music genres and styles from a variety of cultures
- I.3 Compare the functions music serves, roles of musicians, and conditions under which music is typically created and performed around the world

DANCE

Improvisation

- C.1 Use improvisation to explore, discover, and invent movement and to solve movement problems
- C.3 Respond to various motivational resources such as music, props, costumes, and scenic elements through improvisation

THEATER ETIQUETTE AND EXPERIENCES

We have a wonderful opportunity at this performance to help youth learn about attending live performances.

Please discuss the following with your students:

1. Sometimes young people do not realize how a live performance differs from watching a movie or television show. A live presentation has not been pre-recorded with the mistakes edited out. This makes it riskier for the performer and more exciting for the audience. It also means the audience has a real contribution to make to the overall event. Each audience member affects those around him/her as well as the performer. Concentrate to help the performers. The audience gives energy to the performer who uses that energy to give life to the performance.
2. An usher will show you where to sit. Walk slowly and talk quietly as you enter the theater.
3. For safety's sake, do not lean over or sit on the balcony railings or box ledges. Please be careful on the stairs. Avoid horseplay and running throughout the building.
4. If necessary, use the restroom before the performance begins. Adults need to accompany young students.
5. You may talk quietly to the people next to you until the performance begins.
6. When the lights in the theater begin to dim, it is the signal that the performance is about to begin. Stop talking and turn your attention to the stage.
7. Stay in your seat throughout the entire performance.
8. During the performance, listen quietly and watch closely. Talking during the performance will distract other audience members and performers. Try not to wiggle too much and don't kick the seat in front of you. These disruptions make it hard for others around you to concentrate on the show.
9. Sometimes during a performance you may respond by laughing, crying, or sighing. By all means feel free to do so! **LAUGHING IS APPROPRIATE.** (Teachers, please do not hush the students while they are laughing.) If something is funny, it's good to laugh. If you like something a lot, applaud. This will let the performers know that you are enjoying the show.
10. At the end of the show, applaud to say thank you to the performers. The performers will bow to acknowledge your appreciation and thank you for coming.
11. When the lights get brighter in the theater, the show is over. Stay in your seats until the OnStage Coordinator dismisses your school.
12. Please remember:
 - Taking photographs or using recording devices is strictly prohibited.
 - Beverages and food, including gum and candy are not allowed in the theater.
 - You are only one person among several hundred in the audience.
 - Please respect the performers and your fellow audience members.

Please inform your adult chaperones that ushers will be available throughout the performance if there are any difficulties.

AMERICAN GIRL'S FUND FOR CHILDREN

Funding for this resource guide and the OnStage Performing Arts Series for Students is provided by a generous grant from American Girl's Fund for Children, a philanthropic foundation created to support programs and services for school-age children in Dane County. Since its founding in 1992, American Girl's Fund for Children has supported programs in the arts, culture, and environment.

OVERTURE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

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