



dance music theater

Performances

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

2008-2009 Season

SchoolTime Study Guide



Habib Koité and Bamada

Friday, April 3, 2009 at 11 a.m.

Zellerbach Hall, University of California, Berkeley

Welcome to *SchoolTime*!

On **Friday, April 3, 2009**, at **11 am**, your class will attend a performance of **Habib Koité and Bamada**.

Considered Mali's greatest pop star, Habib Koité integrates elements of Western folk, rock, jazz and blues into music inspired by his homeland of Mali in West Africa. With Mr. Koité on guitar and his band Bamada playing traditional African as well as contemporary instruments, the musicians celebrate Mali's diverse musical and cultural landscape.

Using This Study Guide

This study guide will enrich your field trip to Zellerbach Hall by engaging your students more deeply with the performance. Prior to the show, we encourage you to:

- **Copy** the student resource sheet on **page 2 & 3** and hand it out to your students several days before the show.
- **Discuss** the information on **pages 4- 5** About the Performance and the Artists.
- **Read** About the Art Form on **page 6** and About Mali sections on **page 8**.
- **Engage** your students in two or more of the activities on **pages 11-12**.
- **Reflect** with your students by asking the guiding questions, found on **pages 2, 4, 6 & 8**.
- **Familiarize** students further with the art form by using the glossary and resource sections on **pages 12-13**.

At the performance:

Your students can actively participate during the performance by:

- **OBSERVING** how the musicians work together to communicate with their music
- **LISTENING** to the harmonies, rhythms and lyrics of the songs
- **THINKING ABOUT** how history, culture, and ideas can be expressed through music
- **MARVELLING** at the sounds, sights, and performance skills experienced at the theater
- **REFLECTING** on the history and culture of Mali

We look forward to seeing you at *SchoolTime*!

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1 Theater Etiquette

Be prepared and arrive early. Ideally you should arrive at the theater 30 to 45 minutes before the show. Allow for travel time and parking, and plan to be in your seats at least 15 minutes before the performance begins.

Be aware and remain quiet. The theater is a “live” space—you can hear the performers easily, but they can also hear you, and you can hear other audience members, too! Even the smallest sounds, like rustling papers and whispering, can be heard throughout the theater, so it’s best to stay quiet so that everyone can enjoy the performance without distractions. The international sign for “Quiet Please” is to silently raise your index finger to your lips.

Show appreciation by applauding. Applause is the best way to show your enthusiasm and appreciation. Performers return their appreciation for your attention by bowing to the audience at the end of the show. It is always appropriate to applaud at the end of a performance, and it is customary to continue clapping until the curtain comes down or the house lights come up.

Participate by responding to the action onstage. Sometimes during a performance, you may respond by laughing, crying or sighing. By all means, feel free to do so! Appreciation can be shown in many different ways, depending upon the art form. For instance, an audience attending a string quartet performance will sit very quietly, while the audience at a gospel concert may be inspired to participate by clapping and shouting.

Concentrate to help the performers. These artists use concentration to focus their energy while on stage. If the audience is focused while watching the performance, they feel supported and are able to do their best work. They can feel that you are with them!

Please note: *Backpacks and lunches are not permitted in the theater. Bags will be provided for lobby storage in the event that you bring these with you. There is absolutely no food or drink permitted in the seating areas. Recording devices of any kind, including cameras, cannot be used during performances. Please remember to turn off your cell phone.*



2 Student Resource Sheet

Habib Koité and Bamada

Questions to Think About:

- Describe Habib Koité's music.
- What is a jeli and what is their role?
- What are some significant events in Mali's history?



At the Theater

Your class will attend a *SchoolTime* performance featuring Habib Koité and his band Bamada in Zellerbach Hall. Bamada means “in the mouth of the crocodile,” and the ensemble’s music blends elements of blues, jazz, rock and Latin music with traditional music from their native Mali in West Africa.

With Koité on guitar, the musicians play African instruments like the *balafon* (African xylophone), *tama* (talking drum), and *kamale n’goni* (African harp/lute) along with the electric bass, drum set, and harmonica.

About the Performers

Habib Koité comes from a family of traditional Malian musicians and storytellers known as griots, or jeli in the common language of Mali. His grandfather played the kamele n’goni and Mr. Koité adapted techniques from that traditional instrument to his guitar style. By mixing together Mali’s different musical styles, Mr. Koité celebrates Mali’s diversity and hopes to encourage tribes to stop fighting and appreciate each other’s cultures.

The Music of Mali Hunters’ Music

Hunters in Mali often join special societies and perform what is called Hunters’ Music. One of the oldest musical customs in West Africa, Hunters’ Music is accompanied by traditional instruments and dancing. Public ceremonies intended to inspire bravery honor the hunters through songs of praise, wisdom and remembrance.

To become a Hunters’ Musician, students are mentored by master musicians. At gatherings, a lead musician performs while moving around an audience circle of hunters and community members, while his apprentices follow behind dancing, singing and playing their instruments.

The Jeli

Throughout Mali’s history only members of established musical families have the right to become a jeli, a professional musician and storyteller. During many years of apprenticeship jeli learn to sing about their society’s traditions and knowledge, perform on traditional African instruments and tell stories and lecture or preach.

Tende Drum

Among Mali's Tuareg people, music is traditionally performed only by women. They mainly play the tende drum, made from a mortar (a vessel used to crush grain) with goatskin stretched tightly across the top, accompanying the drum with singing and clapping. Music performed with the tende usually occurs at special events like wedding and births. The lyrics are often about love and praise, and the songs are performed in a call and response style with a soloist singing a line and a chorus responding with a repeated phrase.

About Mali

Mali is a landlocked country in West Africa bordered by Guinea, Senegal, Mauritania, Algeria, Niger, Burkina Faso and the Ivory Coast. Since most of the country is in the Sahara, the only farm lands are in the south where the Niger and Senegal rivers provide water. Mali produces most of the region's cotton, and exports natural resources like gold, uranium and salt.

The population is made up of many different tribal groups, however, the main ethnic group is the Bamana, and the Bamana language is commonly spoken. Ninety percent of Malians are Muslim.

Although today Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world, at one time it was the seat of the powerful Ghana, Mali and Songhai empires. During the height of the Mali Empire in the 14th century, the ancient cities of Djenné and Timbuktu were centers of trade and Islamic culture and learning.

During the 20th century, Mali was one of France's colonies until 1960 when the people formed the Republic of Mali. Since then, Mali has weathered dictators, rebellions and droughts. However, today Mali has a democratic government and is considered one of the most politically and socially stable countries in Africa.



Photo by Gian Carlo Castelli Gattinara



Great Mosque of Djenné

3 About the Performance & Artists

Habib Koité and Bamada

Guiding Questions:

- ♦ What musical styles does Habib Koité blend into his music?
- ♦ What are the instruments he and his band play?
- ♦ What is the family tradition that Habib Koité was born into?

Habib Koité and his band Bamada (roughly translated “in the mouth of the crocodile”) integrate elements of blues, jazz, rock and Latin music into traditional music from their native Mali in West Africa. With Koité on guitar, the musicians play African instruments like the *balafon* (African marimba), *tama* (talking drum), and *kamale n’goni* (African harp/lute) in addition to the electric bass, drum set, and harmonica.

One of the most popular African musicians in the world today, Habib Koité descends from a line of traditional Malian troubadours known as *Khassonké griots* or *jeli* in the common language of Mali. These musicians travel to villages reciting poetry, performing songs, and sharing family histories.

His grandfather played the Malian four-stringed *kamele n’goni* and Koité adapted techniques from that traditional instrument to the guitar.



Blending regional variations and styles of Malian music, Koité’s style is dominated by *danssa*, a popular rhythm from his hometown of Keyes. Through his art, Koité strives to “symbolize the music of all ethnic groups in Mali.” He continues, “I’m curious about all the music in the world, but I make music from Mali.”

This mixing of Malian music is particularly important to Koité because of the inter-tribal conflicts of Northern and Southern Mali. By celebrating Mali’s range of musical styles, Koité hopes to inspire in all Malians an appreciation of the country’s rich and diverse cultures.

In 1988, Koité formed Bamada and since then the band has performed at major venues including the Montreux Jazz Festival, WOMAD and the World Roots Festival. Admired worldwide for his musical range, unique voice and eclectic approach to playing guitar, Koité has been featured on National Public Radio, Public Radio International, CNN World Beat, Late Night with David Letterman and in *People* magazine, *Rolling Stone* and *Le Monde*.

“His reputation as a guitar player has become almost mythical, combining rock and classical techniques with Malian tunings that make the guitar sound like a kora or ngoni” (*The New York Times*).

5 About the Art Form

Music of Mali

Guiding Questions:

- ♦ Why do Malian hunters play music?
- ♦ What is a jeli and what is this person's role?
- ♦ Describe some characteristics of the music of the Tuareg people.



Left to right: Kamale n'goni players; Jeli musicians playing sokos; women playing tende drum.

Mali has a rich musical heritage that includes a variety of traditional music from different regions in West Africa. Many of Africa's most famous musicians like Salif Keita, Habib Koité and Oumou Sangaré come from Mali and draw their music from this distinctive legacy.

Hunters Music

In Africa, hunters are thought to have powerful connections with the spiritual forces of nature. Forming close-knit societies, the hunters perform what is called hunters' music—playing instruments, singing, and dancing to traditional songs. Hunters' music is one of the oldest musical traditions in West Africa. It is performed at public ceremonies meant to inspire bravery, to honor the hunters,

and to celebrate their past achievements, with songs that praise, share wisdom and commemorate hunters, and even scold those who are unsuccessful.

Hunters' musicians in Mali mostly play the six-stringed *kamale n'goni* (hunters' harp), a cylindrical metal scraper known as the *karinyan*, and a shaker called the *kusuba*.

To become a hunters' musician, students are mentored by master musicians. At large gatherings, the lead kamale n'goni player will perform, moving around an audience circle of hunters and community members while his apprentices follow behind dancing, singing and accompanying him on kamale n'goni, karinyan, and kusuba.

The Jeli

Just as Malian hunters believe that nature and animals have spiritual properties, music and words are also thought to contain spiritual elements. Jeliya [JEH-lee-yah] is the ancient art of channeling the spiritual forces of these abstract forms.

A jeli [JEH-lee] (plural jeliw) is a professional musician of Mande origins. Born into the role, these musicians have the privilege and duty to share the heritage and wisdom of their culture through song, stories and speech. Following years of apprenticeship, jeliw become highly trained performers whose techniques and repertoire have been passed down through the generations. A male jeli (known as a jelike) may sing, play an instrument, and be an authoritative speaker. A female jeli (known as jelimuso) primarily sings. In Mali, three instruments are closely associated with jeliya: the *kora*, the *balafon*, and the ngoni.

Jeli have existed for thousands of years. Originally, jeli accompanied a family of warrior-kings, or *jatigi*, and sang about the family's history and nobility. Most villages had their own jeli to convey the community's beliefs, through proverbs, folktales, and stories of births, deaths, marriages and battles. Their stories are accompanied by a full dance band, and songs include a scripted refrain (*donkili*) and an improvised section wherein ancestors and family members are praised.

Highly respected in the community, jeli are also called upon for advice and to mediate conflicts.

Tende Drum Music

Among Mali's Tuareg people, music is traditionally performed only by women. The tende drum, made from a mortar (a vessel used to crush grain) with

goatskin stretched tightly across the top, is the main instrument played and is accompanied by singing and clapping. Songs performed with the tende usually occur at special events like wedding and births. Primarily centering on love and praise, the lyrics are often improvised. Songs are performed in a call-and-response style with a soloist singing a line and a chorus responding with a repeated phrase.

Malian Music in the 20th Century

During World War II in the 1940s, British and American soldiers popularized the guitar throughout Africa. Dance bands featuring waltzes, rumbas and Argentine tangos became a favorite attraction in Mali. In the 1960s, Mali experienced a Cuban music craze and dance bands incorporated Cuban rhythms into their songs.

However, Mali's second president, Moussa Traoré curbed performances of Cuban music when he came to power in the late 1960s. Instead, he promoted Malian traditional music through folk music festivals and encouraged dance bands to become folk groups. When public support for the Malian government declined in the late 1980s, this revival began to flag too. The region of Wassoulou in southwest Mali became the center for a new wave of danceable music also referred to as *wassoulou*.

Performed mostly by women, *wassoulou*'s lyrics address issues like childbearing, fertility, arranged marriage and polygamy. Performers play instruments like the *soku* (a fiddle), *djembe* drum, *kamale n'goni*, *karinyan* and *bolon* (a four-stringed harp). The call-and-response vocals are typically passionate and emphatic. Today, *wassoulou*'s popularity has skyrocketed especially among Mali's youth.

Instruments of Mali

Balafon is a type of xylophone common among the Mande of West Africa and made of tuned wooden slats tied onto a frame. A gourd below each slat resonates when the slat is struck with a mallet. Two small holes cut into each gourd and covered with tissue paper, plastic, or spider egg casings create a slightly distorted, buzzing sound.

Kamale N'goni (also known as Donso Ngoni) is a six-stringed harp with a body made out of a large gourd covered with cow skin. The neck of the instrument is a long wooden stick that passes through the gourd. The kamale n'goni is one of the types of hunter's harp.

Djembe is a skin-covered hand drum, shaped like a large goblet and played with bare hands. The djembe's wide range of tones depends on its size, shape and density.

Karinyan is a metal tube with carved notches that are scraped up-and-down with a thin metal rod, much like a güiro in Latin American music.

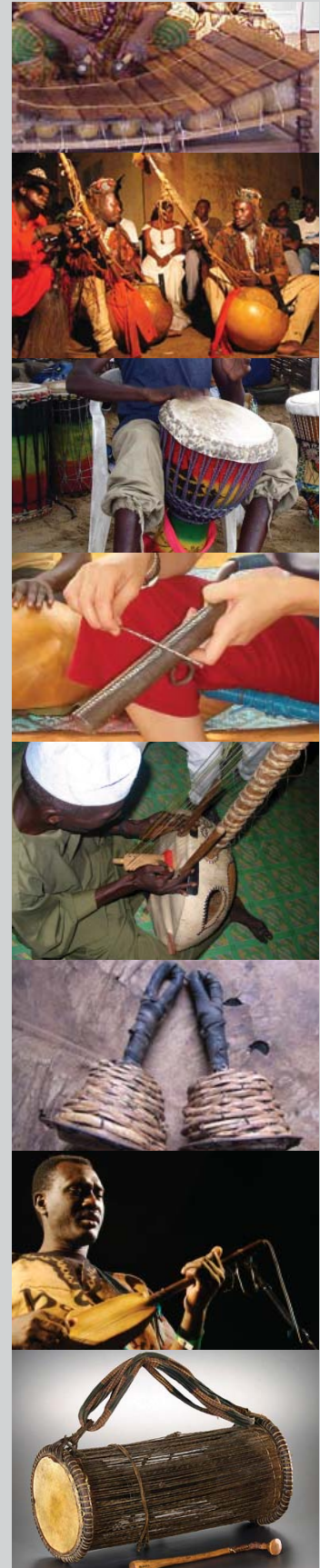
Kora is a 21-string harp-lute made out of a large gourd wrapped with cowhide and pierced with a long stick – the neck of the instrument. Two long pegs are inserted into the body of the instrument; the player holds a peg in each hand and plucks the strings with his thumbs and index fingers. The kora is another type of hunter's harp.

Kusuba is a woven bamboo shaker with a metal or wooden bottom. It is filled with either pebbles or bottle caps and shaken by a handle.

Ngoni is a type of lute that can vary in size. Typically the ngoni is made from a hollowed out, canoe-shaped piece of wood covered with animal skin and connected to a fretless stick. It is believed African slaves developed the American banjo when they tried to recreate the ngoni in the United States.

Soku is a traditional fiddle composed of a single string played with a bow. It is a popular instrument from the southwestern part of Mali.

Tama is an hour-glass shaped drum with a head on either end. Made from goat, iguana or fish skin it is tuned with straps that connect the drum heads. Placing it under one arm, the player hits the drum with a specialized beater. Also known as the talking drum, the tama can mimic the human voice when players squeeze or release the drum's strings thereby raising and lowering its pitch.



6 About Mali

Guiding Questions:

- ♦ Where is Mali located?
- ♦ What happened during the Mali Empire?
- ♦ What are some of the challenges Mali has faced in recent history?



Left to right: Tuareg man in front of mosque; Market center at the ancient city of Djenné; Banana girl from Bamako

Mali's Geography & People

The largest country in West Africa, most of Mali lies in the Sahara. It is bordered by Guinea, Senegal, Mauritania, Algeria, Niger, Burkina Faso, and the Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast). Since Mali is largely a desert country, the only fertile area is in the south where the Niger and Senegal rivers provide water for crops. The country's economy centers around agriculture (primarily cotton farming) and fishing, however, Mali also exports its natural resources which include gold, uranium, and salt.

Mali has an estimated population of almost 12,000,000 people from a number of tribal groups that live in various countries throughout West Africa. The Bamana, Soninké, Khassonké, and

Malinké, are all part of the broader ethnic group, the Mandé (or Manding) peoples, and make up 50% of Mali's population. Other significant groups are the Fulani, Songhai, Dogon and Tuareg. For most of its history Mali has enjoyed positive inter-tribal relations; however ethnic tensions exist between the Songhai and the Tuareg people.

While the country's official language is French, the common language spoken by 80% of the population is Bamana. Around 90% of Mali's people are Muslim. Islam reached West Africa when Arab merchants and teachers traveled the trans-Saharan trade routes. The Tuareg people, who descended from nomadic North African Berber tribes, converted to Islam as early as the 9th century.



Mali's History

Although today Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world, at one time it was the seat of powerful African empires. The empire of Ghana controlled trans-Saharan trade routes from the 4th to the 11th centuries. The Mali Empire reached its height during the 14th century, when the ancient cities of Djenné and Timbuktu were centers of trade, Islamic culture, and learning.

In the 15th century, the Songhai Empire encompassed most of the Mali Empire. When the Songhai empire collapsed in the late 16th century, this was the end of the region's dominance as a trading center, as European travelers began to favor sea passages over the trans-Saharan land routes.

France began to colonize Mali in the late 19th century. The country remained "French Sudan" until 1960 when the Republic of Mali was formed. In 1968, military dictator Moussa Traoré removed Mali's first president, Modibo Keita in a coup. Traoré ruled until his overthrow in 1991, at which time a new Malian constitution was written and a multi-party political system emerged. Alpha Konaré became Mali's first democratically elected president in 1992.

In the past two decades, Mali has weathered droughts, rising starvation, and rebellions by the Tuaregs, who accuse the government of marginalizing them politically and culturally.

Today, under president Amadou Toumani Touré the country continues to face challenges, yet Mali is considered one of the most politically and socially stable countries in Africa.

7 Learning Activities

Pre-performance Activities

Guiding students through these standards-based activities before they come to the theater is an effective way to engage them in the performance and to connect their experience to core subject areas such as literacy, social studies, and the arts.

Music, Social Studies & English Language Arts (Grades 1-6)

Music as Learning Experience

Discussion and Exercise:

African children often play musical games to learn how to perform adult tasks or participate in adult rituals. Some of these learning song titles include:

- * Invitation to young people of the village to be calm and obey the chief
- * Song to lure birds into your net
- * Coffee Grinding Song
- * Song for the rice harvest
- * Song for grinding millet
- * Music for chopping down a tree
- * Young people's song for a better life

- Share this list of song titles with your students.
- Discuss what these titles might suggest about life as a child in Africa.

(You may also concurrently share information about Mali or Malian music from the study guide, or other information on Africa.)

- Ask students for examples of children's learning songs from their own culture.
- Make a list of these songs (Examples include learning the alphabet through the ABC song and pre-school songs that begin, "This is the way we...")
- Discuss with students what these songs tell us about we consider important to learn in our culture(s).
- For students grades 3 and older: Ask students to write a paragraph about the ways in which their lives might be different from and similar to children in Africa.

Music, History & English Language Arts (Grades 3-12)

Historical Figure Praise Song

A central part of a Malian musician's repertoire, praise songs celebrate the achievements of leaders in their community.

- Choose a historical figure that your class is studying (or have the students choose their own)
- As a class or in groups, ask students to describe this person, focusing on their praise-worthy actions and achievements. Have one student be the "scribe" to capture these achievements, the post the list where the students can see it.
- In groups or on their own, ask students to use the list as a springboard to write a poem praising this historical figure.
- Ask students to rehearse how they would like to present their poem to the class. They may choose make it into a rap, or a song, or have a solo reader and a chorus who repeats phrases – encourage them to be creative!
- Have the students share their poems and discuss them with the class.

Visual Art and English Language Arts (Grades 1-8)

Proverb Mural

In Mali, a jeli will often share songs or speeches focusing on a wise saying, or proverb. Some examples of popular proverbs in America include:

"Honesty is the best policy," "Knowledge is power," and "Beauty is skin deep."

- As homework, have students collect from family members proverbs they've learned, write them down and bring them into class.
- Post a long strip of butcher paper for your proverb mural and invite students to write their proverbs down with markers or crayons. They may then use different colored markers to decorate and draw around their proverbs.
- Afterwards, have students examine the mural, share their proverbs and discuss what they might mean and why that saying would be important to their family member.

Additional Resources

Website

<http://www.contrejour.com/artists/habibkoite/>

Videos

search "Habib Koité" on www.video.google.com

search "Habib Koité" on www.youtube.com

Habib Koité and Bamada Discography

Afriki (2007) Ma Ya (1999) Baro (2001)

Fôly (2003) Mousso Ko (1995)

8 Glossary

blues - a style of expressive music from southern African American nonreligious songs

call-and-response - a style of singing in which the melody sung by one singer is responded to or echoed

chorus - a group of people singing in unison

electric bass- an electric guitar which can play deep sounds or tones

ensemble- a group of performers playing or singing together

folk music- musical art form based on a people's traditional beliefs, myths, tales, and practices

harmonica - a small rectangular instrument consisting of a row of free reeds set back in air holes, played by exhaling or inhaling

harp - a musical instrument with a triangular frame fitted with strings and sometimes with pedals, held upright, and played with the fingers

jazz - a type of music born in America that combined African drum rhythms, African American spirituals, and blues with European classical and marching music

jeli (griot)- a poet, praise singer, and musician who communicate their culture's heritage and wisdom through stories and song

lute - a stringed instrument with a pear-shaped body and a neck with a fretted fingerboard

oral history- stories passed down over the years by word of mouth; can include historical events, myths, or songs

pentatonic scale- musical scale with five pitches per octave; this scale is commonly used in West African music

phrase - a division of a composition, often a passage of four or eight measures

refrain - a phrase or verse that recurs in a song or poem, especially in the chorus

rhythm- the combinations of long and short, even or uneven sounds that convey a sense of movement in time

rock (rock 'n roll) - a mixture of rhythm-and-blues and country-and-western music, originating in the 1950s

rumba - a word commonly used to describe any kind of Cuban music

solo- performing alone

tango - a ballroom dance of Latin-American origin, danced by couples, and having many varied steps, figures, and poses

troubadour- a person who writes original poetry that is often recited or sung with music

waltz - a European ballroom dance

9 California State Standards

Music Grades K-12

1.0 Artistic Perception

Processing, analyzing, and responding to sensory information through the language and skills unique to music

Students listen to, analyze, and describe music and other aural information, using the terminology of music.

2.0 Creative Expression

Creating, performing, and participating in music

Students apply vocal and instrumental musical skills in performing a varied repertoire of music. They compose and arrange music and improvise melodies, variations, and accompaniments, using digital/electronic technology when appropriate.

3.0 Historical and Cultural Context

Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of Music

Students analyze the role of music in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting cultural diversity as it relates to music, musicians, and composers.

4.0 Aesthetic Valuing

Responding to, analyzing, and making judgments about works of music

Students critically assess and derive meaning from works of music and the performance of musicians according to the elements of music, aesthetic qualities, and human responses.

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Connecting and applying what is learned in music to learning in other art forms and subject areas and to careers

Students apply what they learn in music across subject areas. They develop competencies and creative skills in problem solving, communication, and management of time and resources that contribute to lifelong learning and career skills. They also learn about careers in and related to music.



About Cal Performances and *SchoolTime*

The mission of Cal Performances is to inspire, nurture and sustain a lifelong appreciation for the performing arts. Cal Performances, the performing arts presenter of the University of California, Berkeley, fulfills this mission by presenting, producing and commissioning outstanding artists, both renowned and emerging, to serve the University and the broader public through performances and education and community programs. In 2005/06 Cal Performances celebrated 100 years on the UC Berkeley Campus.

Our *SchoolTime* program cultivates an early appreciation for and understanding of the performing arts amongst our youngest audiences, with hour-long, daytime performances by the same world-class artists who perform as part of the main season. *SchoolTime* has become an integral part of the academic year for teachers and students throughout the Bay Area.



Cal Performances Education and Community Programs Sponsors

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