SIAMA'S CONGO ROOTS

CURRICULUM

CLASS NOTES®

PRESENTED BY CLASSICAL MPR

THESE MATERIALS ARE MADE POSSIBLE IN PART BY THE MINNESOTA LEGACY AMENDMENT'S ARTS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND.

WELCOME TO CLASS NOTES ARTISTS!

We are so excited to bring live music into your school—thanks for hosting a concert. This curriculum includes:

- *Learning prompts for before, during,* and *after* the concert experience
- Standards-based, K-6 lesson plans based on themes and ideas from your Class Notes Artists concert

Everything is designed to help you and your students get the most out of the experience. Please share your experience with us!

Katie Condon, Education Specialist, Classical MPR, *kcondon@mpr.org*

BEFORE THE CONCERT

LEARN WHAT YOU WILL HEAR

Siama's Congo Roots sings music from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Find it on a map!

SOURCE LINK

- Listen to and watch Siama's Congo Roots performing in the MPR studios.
  - "Yele Yele"
  - "Yele Yele" again,this time on the Sky Ride at the State Fair!
  - "Ko Yimbe Ko"
  - "Malembe"
- Watch all or part of this episode of *The Lowertown Line* to hear Siama's music and learn his story.
- Read this interview with Siama and Dallas to learn a little more about them.
- Siama's Congo Roots' Class Notes Artists concert will include a selection of the following pieces:
  - "Balafon Song," an improvised welcome song by Siama Matuzungidi
  - "Yele Yele," a celebration song in Kikongo by Siama Matuzungidi
  - "Mbira Song," an improvised lullaby by Siama Matuzungidi
  - "Ko Yimbi Ko," a song in Kikongo about kids shooing a hawk away by Siama Matuzungidi
  - "Maisha Mazuri," a song in Swahili about living in the moment by Siama Matuzungidi
  - "Lion Sleeps Tonight," a South African/Zulu song by Solomon Linda
  - "Malembe," a song in Lingala about enjoying life just as it is ("slowly by slowly") by Siama Matuzungidi

MEET THE PERFORMERS

Back in Africa, **Siama Matuzungidi** played guitar on hundreds of songs and toured the world with popular artists. Now living in south Minneapolis with his wife Dallas, Siama is a singer who writes songs and plays guitar, ukelele, balafon and mbira.

Dallas Johnson is a singer, songwriter and storyteller with two CDs on iTunes. She plays a little ukelele, guitar, flute and piano. She and Siama love wearing fun, colorful clothes and they've created a Minnesota-style jungle in their front yard.

Tim O'Keefe is a longtime musician who plays many musical instruments—mostly drums—from all over the world. He also has a very large outside cactus garden at home.

- Listen to a short radio interview where Tim explains his drumming interests.

MEET THE INSTRUMENTS

- **GUITAR**

  Guitars are stringed instruments used all over the world. They usually have six strings. When a string is plucked or strummed, it vibrates, which causes the whole body of the instrument to vibrate, and the sound is amplified, or made louder.

GUITAR

- **MBIRA (THUMB PIANO)**

  The mbira, also known as the thumb piano, is made of a wooden board with metal tines attached to it. Players push down on the tines and sound is produced. Shorter tines make higher sounds and bigger ones make lower sounds.

MBIRA

- **PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS**

The musicians in Siama's Congo Roots play a wide variety of percussion instruments, including African drums. Percussion instruments include anything that you shake, scrape, or strike to produce a sound. Here are just a few percussion instruments that you will see in Siama's Class Notes Artist concert.

› BALAFON (MARIMBA)

The balafon is a percussion instrument. Players hit wooden bars with mallets to create melodies.

BALAFON

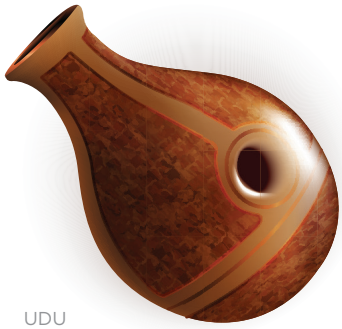
› SHEKERE

The body, or main part, of a shekere is made of a dried, hollowed-out gourd. A net of beads covers part of the gourd, and shekere players tap and shake the instrument to create rhythmic patterns.

SHEKERE

› UDU

The udu is a big clay pot or jug that has a hole in the side and one on top. Players use their hands to tap on the instrument in different ways. The position of a player's hands can affect how high or how low the pitch sounds. Certain hand positions create a low "dooon" sound.



UDU

DISCUSS IN CLASS

- How can we use our bodies to listen?
- How can we show respect to performers and other audience members?
- What does it mean to be an audience?
- Some of Siama's music is dance music—it is okay to dance! How can we move to the beat and still listen to the music?
- Watch a video about concert etiquette.

DURING THE CONCERT

- NOTICE
  - Tim plays many percussion instruments. Compare and contrast how they look and sound. What things do they have in common? What are some differences?
  - Sometimes one person sings and sometimes two people sing.Notice how their parts fit together. Sometimes they sing together (in unison) and sometimes their singing echoes or overlaps.
  - Siama's Congo Roots sings in several different languages. Do you notice how each language has a collection of sounds that make it sound different from other languages?
- WONDER
  - How often do these musicians practice?
  - How did they get their start?
  - Many of Siama's songs tell a story. Do you ever use music to tell a story? Some of his music is about everyday life. What parts of your everyday life could you write a song about?
- THINK ABOUT
  - How each instrument makes its sound.
  - How the singing changes to tell different kinds of stories.
  - The different kinds of sounds each instrument can make.
  - The feelings or images that pop into your mind as you listen. Do you think the composers wanted to make you feel a certain way with his or her music?
- IMAGINE
  - You are a composer or songwriter. What sounds would you want each instrument or each voice to make?

AFTER THE CONCERT

- **DISCUSS**
  - Your favorite piece of music from the concert. What did you like best, and why?
  - How each piece sounds similar or different from the others.
- **TELL SOMEONE AT HOME**
  - Two things you heard or saw or learned at your Class Notes Artist concert.
- **DESCRIBE**
  - How the music made you feel. Maybe different pieces of music made you feel different feelings.
- **REMEMBER**
  - How each instrument made its sound. Can you explain how each instrument's sound is produced?
- **CONNECT**
  - Something from the Class Notes Artists concert to something you've learned in school. Explain the connection to a partner, a teacher, or someone at home.