

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO THE PERFORMANCE OF:

Lesole's Dance Project

Dancing through South Africa

Lesole's Dance Project introduces students to South African cultural dance and storytelling. The goal of Dancing through South Africa is to develop creative potential through three different dance experiences (Ndlamu, Gumboot and Pantsula) which encourage meaningful student participation and promote an appreciation of dance as a means of recreation, cultural expression and a possible profession!

Dancing through South Africa is divided into a three-part program that emphasizes the role of dance in promoting a deeper understanding and acceptance among people of different backgrounds and cultural traditions. The program supports the diversity of the school system as it recognizes that even within the African continent, Western, Eastern, Northern and Southern traditions vary (many students have already been exposed to some aspects of other parts of Africa). Students learn best by "doing" and Lesole's Dance Project actively engages the audience throughout all three dance experiences:

- *Ndlamu* – traditional Zulu/tribal dance
- Gumboot – see description below*
- *Pantsula* – modern social/hip-hop dance

*Gumboot dancing originated in the gold mines in South Africa during the oppressive Apartheid years. Black laborers worked in total darkness and appalling conditions for three months at a time. They were chained to their stations and were forbidden to talk to each other. They stood knee-high in infected water, which caused skin diseases and resulted in lost time from work. Those in charge of the mine work soon discovered that it was too expensive to drain the mines, so they made the workers wear Gumboots (rubber boots). The miners used the gumboots as a method of communication by slapping the boots, stomping their feet and rattling their ankle chains. These sounds later became a form of recreation for men during the long months away from their families and thus the tradition of Gumboots was born!

About the Dancer/Director

Lesole Zachariah Maine was born in Sebokeng, South Africa. This small township just outside of Johannesburg, rich in diversity, culture and tradition was an environment where he recognized his love of dance and appreciation for the many ethnic customs taking place around him. Fluent in more than three languages, Lesole is able to use his heritage to enhance his performances. In 1995, he was awarded a scholarship to study with Johannesburg based Moving Into Dance Company, where he studied contemporary, jazz, Afro-fusion, modern, ballet, jive, hip hop, traditional and modern South African dance. After graduating from the Community Dance Teaching Course, Lesole was

offered a position as a dancer and teacher in 1997. He has since traveled around the world (Canada, Ivory Coast, Croatia, France, Holland, Jordan, Lesotho, Malaysia, Nigeria, Portugal, Switzerland, and various cities in the United States).

About the Country

South Africa is one of the very few countries to successfully solve many of their problems with “peaceful negotiation” and “conflict resolution” rather than through civil war! It is the southernmost country in Africa, bordered on the north by Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Swaziland; on the east and south by the Indian Ocean; and on the west by the Atlantic Ocean. Lesotho forms an enclave in the northeastern part of the country. South Africa is rich in minerals such as gold and diamonds, and its industrial base grew around the mining industry. Black Africans comprise three quarters of South Africa’s population, and whites, Coloureds (South African people of mixed race), and Asian (mainly Indians) make up the remainder. Among the Black population there are numerous ethnic group and 11 official languages. Until recently, whites dominated the nonwhite majority population under the system of racial segregation known as apartheid. Apartheid ended in the early 1990’s, but South Africa is still recovering from racial inequalities in political power, opportunity, and lifestyle. The performing arts, dance in particular, is helping the country to transform (<http://encarta.msn.com>).

VOCABULARY

Lesole’s Dance Project – Zulu, Gumboot and Street Dances from South Africa – introduces students to several new languages, including Zulu, Sotho and Tsotsi’tal (slang):

Word	Translation	Word	Translation
<i>Woza</i>	Come	<i>Shayiebotsi</i>	Hit the boots
<i>Mova</i>	Back	<i>Chisa</i>	Hot
<i>Phezulu</i>	Up	<i>Jiga</i>	Turn
<i>Khahlela</i>	Kick	<i>Wena</i>	You

Lesole’s Dance Project would like the audience to be aware of the the high energy level of the dance, and the collaboration between the clapping, foot stomping and talking using the list of new vocabulary words.

The students will appreciate seeing young minority male/female dancers, who demonstrate their love for dance as a recreation, cultural expression, and as a profession! This promotes high self-esteem within the increasingly multicultural environment of our schools.

PERFORMANCE FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Question and answer session after the show
- Discuss performance and new vocabulary: What did the students learn?

- Share resources and books with students
- Write students/teacher letters to Lesole's Dance Project
- Take a class survey to find out who is interested in the performing arts as a future career
- Visit given websites about South Africa
- Teacher evaluation form to improve Lesole's Dance Project

What student resources or books would you recommend to extend your performance?

- *A tutu for Mimi* by Tynia Thomassie
- *Peaceful Protest: the life of Nelson Mandela* by Yona Zeldis McDonough
- *Once upon a time and What's cooking, Jamela?* By Niki Daly
- *Abiyoyo Returns* by Pete Seeger
- *South Africa* by Etagale Blauer and Jason Laur-E

What teacher resources or books would you recommend to extend your performance?

- *South Africa, a Country Study* by Rita M. Byrnes
- *South Africa in Pictures* by R. L. Watson
- *Great African Americans in the Arts* by Carlotta Hacker
- www.southafrica.net
- <http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/refpages/RefArticle>
- *South African Embassy* 3051 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20008
202-232-4400

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