

Showtime!

Mbilla Arts: Routes to Rhythm



Mbilla Arts promotes the music and dance forms of Africa and the diaspora through performance and education programmes. Our experienced artists provide extensive expertise in arts education and performance.



In-Schools Touring: Schools' Resources

This pack contains:
Pre-show information sharing resources
Pre-show pupil activity
Post-show pupil activities



Information for **teaching staff** taking part in the workshop and show.



Before the workshop and show it would be helpful if you could:

- Share what is happening and when with your colleagues in school. We have included a poster template on the next page that you could print out for the staff room to let people know what's happening.
- Let parents, carers and the wider school community know what is happening – we have provided some wording to help. Just add the details then copy and paste.
- Prepare your pupils – there are some ideas on how to do this later in the resource pack.
- We also have a separate [visual story and information about our access and sensory kit](#) to support with this.
- Make sure you have the resources needed for the workshop.
- Let any teaching/support staff who will be present during the workshop and show know what to expect so they can support pupils to access the experience.

Here is some more information about the organisation visiting your school which you could share with teachers:

Mbilla Arts promotes the music and dance forms of Africa and the diaspora through performance and education programmes. Our experienced artists provide extensive expertise in arts education and performance.

Pupils will take part in a performance of Routes to Rhythm – an African and Caribbean music & dance adventure.

Showtime!

What you need to know.

Our school is taking part in Primary Arts, a new creative cultural programme for London's primary schools from A New Direction.

We have booked a touring session. Performers will be visiting us in school to provide a show and workshop for pupils and twilight CPD for staff.

Who is visiting us?



Title of the show:

Routes to Rhythm



Classes taking part

Date of the show and workshops

Where the show is taking place

Timings of the show and workshops

Staff member organising it

Staff members attending

Date & time of Teacher Twilight CPD

Information to share with parents, carers and the wider community before the show.



Below is some suggested copy for a letter home to parents/carers or inclusion in your school newsletter:

We are delighted to let you know that our school is taking part in Primary Arts – a new creative, cultural programme for London primary schools from A New Direction.

We have booked a touring session, and Mbilla Arts will be visiting us in school to provide an experience and workshop for pupils in [INSERT CLASS/ES TAKING PART] on [INSERT DAY AND DATE].

Pupils will take part in a performance of Routes to Rhythm – an African and Caribbean music & dance adventure.

Led by master drummers from West Africa and accompanied by high-energy dancers, this performance explores the origins of West African music and dance styles, tracing its journey from the African Continent across the Atlantic to the Caribbean and influencing carnival celebrations in the UK today.

Pupils will also take part in a workshop which includes an opportunity to learn to play the djembe drum and experience the

interaction between the drum and the dance. For the first part of the workshop children learn basic drumming patterns on djembe drums and practice call and response with drums.

The second part of the workshop involves step-by-step teaching by experienced dance teachers of African People's Dance accompanied by live drumming. At the end there is an opportunity for solo performances within the group to round off the workshop in an atmosphere of carnival celebration with drumming and Soca music.

Preparing **pupils** for the show.



Before the workshop and show you can let your pupils know what to expect using some of the key info and discussion questions below.

Mbilla Arts are coming to visit us to do a workshop and a show! In the workshop, the visitors are going to help us learn something. In the show, we will watch the visitors perform.

This is the summary of the show. Listen carefully and then tell your talk partner what you think the show will be about.

We will take part in a performance of Routes to Rhythm – an African and Caribbean music & dance adventure. Led by master drummers from West Africa and accompanied by high– energy dancers, this performance explores the origins of West African music and dance styles, tracing its journey from the African Continent across the Atlantic to the Caribbean and influencing carnival celebrations in the UK today.

We will also take part in a workshop. We will have an opportunity to learn to play the djembe drum and experience the interaction between the drum and the dance. We will also learn some of the dances from the performance, accompanied by live drumming.

Pre-show discussion questions

You might like to talk through the following prompts to be ready for the performance.

- What is a show and what makes it special?
- What makes a good performance?
- What makes a good audience? E.g.
 - Stay sitting down so everyone can see and hear.
 - Respect everyone’s personal space.
 - Don’t talk when the show is on unless the musicians ask you to take part.

You can also let your pupils know what to expect using the discussion prompts on the next page.

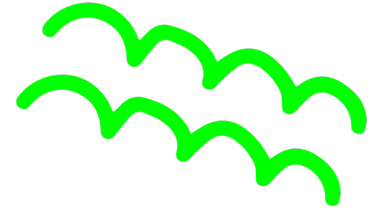
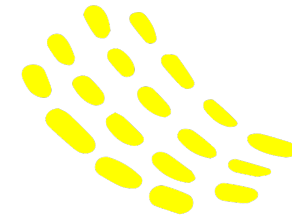
Depending on your pupils, for example pupils with SEND/younger children, you might want to share extra information about what sensory or interactive elements might happen or you might choose to leave that as a surprise. We have also provided a separate [visual guide and information about our access and sensory toolkit](#).

Thinking about our show and workshop

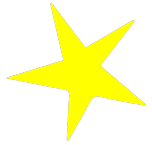
What do we need to remember when we have visitors to school?



How do you feel about the show coming to our school? Are you excited, nervous, happy?



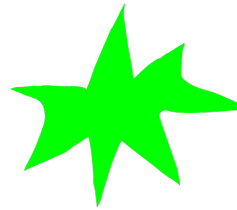
How can we make sure that we all enjoy the show? For example, we will need to sit and listen very carefully.



What props do you think you might see in the show?



In some parts of the show, they might ask us to take part – what do you think they might ask us to do?



What kind of music, songs or sounds do you think the show will include?



How will we know when to stop taking part and it is time to sit and listen again?



What do we do at the end of the show to say thank you?



Additional resources for your school!



Prior to your school's performance and workshops taking place, your school will also receive:

- **A box of books** containing a range of fiction and non-fiction titles for all year groups, linked to the themes explored by the shows in this year's programme. These are for you to use in book corners or the school library.
- **A themed booklist** showing the books you've been sent and a range of additional titles you might find interesting.
- **A box of creative materials** and a themed resource with ideas for creative activities. This box contains a wide range of items that we hope will bring creativity to life in your classroom in many different ways!

The box of creative materials is for your school to use how you like! We suggest that it be used for the class/es that took part in the Primary Arts In-Schools Touring workshop and show for some extra creative activities. Most of the items in the box can be used for more than one project, as we wanted to ensure that it included lots of core art materials that, if looked after kindly, will be used again and again.

Each box contains the following materials:

- 2L PVA glue and 12 glue sticks
- Coloured tissue paper and coloured cellophane rolls
- Peel & stick wiggly eyes
- 100 paper plates
- 2 x 10m rolls of sugar paper in olive and cream
- Safety pins
- Scissor block set
- 2 x 1m of fake fur fabric
- 10m of calico fabric
- 2 packs of 48 coloured pens and 3 packs of 48 colouring pencils
- 50 sheets of coloured card and 50 sheets of white card
- Coloured lollipop sticks pack and 2 packs of stripy pipe cleaners
- Bumper pack of A6 greetings cards
- 100 sheets of A6 white card
- 45m of modelling string



Take a bow!

Post-Show Activities

We hope that your school enjoyed the workshops and show!

Exploring the themes of the show and supporting pupils to reflect on the experience, we have suggestions for 10 minutes, 30 minutes or a full 1-hour lesson.



If you have 10 minutes

Box Office Vox Pop



Ask pupils to interview each other in pairs for a couple of minutes each, then as a whole class write up some short sentences to share in your school newsletter or assembly.

You have just come out of the show and a journalist grabs your attention to ask you what you think as you are leaving. Journalists: use a pen/ruler/your hand as a microphone and ask your talk partner:

- How are you feeling?
- What was the show you just saw?
- What was your favourite part?
- Can you sum up the performance in just one word?

Challenge students to think of their own questions and follow up questions to what's been said.

Go Further: Pupils could write up a review of the experience or perform a memorable part in groups.

EYFS/KS1/SEND: Focus on two of the questions and provide sentence frames, word mats with key vocabulary and pictures from the show to scaffold students as needed.

KS2: Challenge pupils to think of their own questions and follow up questions to what has been said.

Creative Skills: In this activity pupils are collaborating by co-operating together and sharing reflections.

If you have 30 minutes

Invite others to see the show!



Do the discussion activity above to reflect on the show, then support pupils to think of something you could send or share with other pupils who haven't yet experienced the performance.

Children at other schools are going to see the same show we saw. Let's send them an invitation... how could we make them excited to see the show? What do we want to tell them and how can we do this in a creative way? What should we keep as a surprise? Why?

Allow pupils to think of ideas in groups and then present back to the class – they could perform, write up or draw their ideas. Example invitation ideas: a card that opens up as a pop-up flower, a suitcase with a letter inside, a sound recording of a song, a map – all with some key information about the show.

Reflection: How does your invitation link to the show? What else does it make you think of?

Go Further: Pupils could make the actual invitations in DT/Art/Literacy lessons and then display them in the classroom/school hall/display boards.

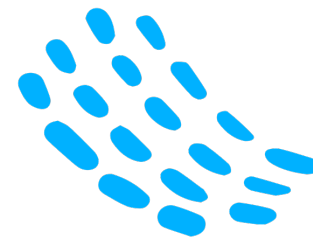
EYFS/KS1/SEND: Focus on thinking of an object and a word to send to other pupils that links to the show. Provide options and key words for pupils to choose from. For example: friendship, welcome, travel.

KS2: Encourage pupils to think as widely as possible – what could they do with unlimited resources?

Creative Skills: In this activity pupils are collaborating and being imaginative by playing with possibilities.

If you have 1 hour

Crafting a Drum – Activity provided by Mbilla Arts



Creating and decorating a West African djembe drum using paper cups. For this activity, you will need:

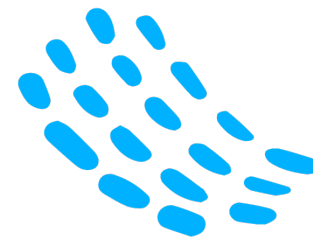
- Two sturdy paper cups per pupil
- Strong tape e.g. black or coloured masking or sticky tape
- Scissors
- Balloons or parchment paper
- Rubber bands
- Paints, markers, or crayons
- Glue or double-sided tape
- Decorative materials like ribbons, stickers, yarn, string or coloured tape/card/tissue paper/cellophane
- Optional: lightweight ornaments, stickers, beads

Printed or displayed on IWB:

- Examples of traditional African djembe patterns (via an online image search)
- Instructions for building the drum (slides for pupils follow the instructions section)

If you have 1 hour

Crafting a Drum – Activity provided by Mbilla Arts



Building the Drum: (25 minutes.) Provide pupils with the crafting materials and share the instructions on how to construct the drum (page after next).

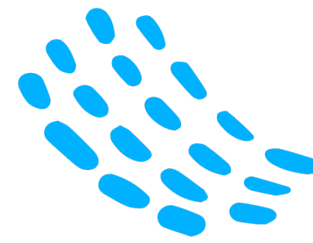
Decorate the Drum Base: (20 minutes.) Provide paints, markers, stickers, or coloured paper for children to decorate their drum bases. Encourage creativity with patterns, designs, and bright colours. Provide examples of traditional African djembe patterns.

Add Additional Decorations: (10 minutes.) Wrap ribbons, string, yarn, or washi tape around the drum base for visual appeal. Glue on lightweight ornaments, stickers, or beads if desired.

Play the Djembe: (5 minutes.) When children have finished constructing their djembes, gather in a circle and experiment with rhythms by tapping the drumhead using a call and response format, or allow time for free play. What kind of sounds can you make with your djembe and how do you think you could change the sounds it makes?

If you have 1 hour

Crafting a Drum – Activity provided by Mbilla Arts



Reflection: What did you find fun or difficult about making your djembe? How did you decide what patterns, colours or designs to use?

KS1/SEND: Pre-prepare steps 1, 2 or 3 and allow children to focus on decorating the drums and exploring the tactile and auditory elements of the instrument.

Provide large grip crayons or markers for easier handling during decoration. Use textured or oversized rubber bands and larger balloons for the drumhead to accommodate children with fine motor challenges.

KS2: Challenge children to research traditional djembe designs and incorporate authentic patterns, symbols, or storytelling elements into their decoration, fostering deeper cultural understanding and artistic complexity.

Go Further: Discuss how the drums are used with dance in Africa and get the children to create some movement to accompany the rhythms they create on their djembes.

Creative Skills: In this activity, children are being imaginative and being disciplined by developing techniques.

Let's make a djembe drum – Part 1



Cut the bottoms out of the cups

Carefully cut out the narrow ends of the two cups using scissors to create open cylinders.

Create the base of the drum

Tape the narrow ends of two paper cups together securely using strong tape. Ensure the cups are aligned and stable to form the body of the djembe.

Let's make a djembe drum – Part 2



Create the drumhead

Stretch a balloon (with the thin end cut off) over one open end of the paper cup structure to form the drumhead.

Alternatively, cut parchment paper in a circle slightly larger than the top of the cup and secure it tightly with a rubber band.

Make sure the surface is taut to produce sound when tapped.

Thank you!

We hope that your school enjoyed the show!

Please share your experiences with other teachers in your network and encourage schools to sign up for information about next year's Primary Arts programme at:

www.anewdirection.org.uk/primary-arts

**A NEW
DIRECTION**
We create opportunity



About New Direction

A New Direction is an award-winning charity (1126216) working to enhance the capacity and agency of children and young people in London to own their creativity, shape culture, and achieve their creative potential.

Primary Arts is supported by The City of London Corporation City Educational Trust Fund (29084), a City of London Corporation charity. We are extremely grateful to them for their support.



Primary Arts is supported by The City of London Corporation City Educational Trust Fund (29084), a City of London Corporation charity.



#PrimaryArts

X @A_New_Direction

Instagram @anewdirection_idn

Facebook @anewdirectionlondon

LinkedIn a-new-direction-london

anewdirection.org.uk

**A NEW
DIRECTION**
We create **opportunity**