

DAYTON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA  
YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONCERT

NEAL GITTLEMAN, Artistic Director and Conductor

# Rhythms of Africa



## Concert Program

<i>Drums – A Symphonic Poem</i>	James P. Johnson
African Drumming Demonstration	Traditional
<i>Sadhji, Finale</i>	William Grant Still
African Songs	Traditional
“Mai Nozipo”	Maraire-Truby
Kalimba Demonstration	Traditional
<i>Three Black Kings,</i>	Duke Ellington
1 <sup>st</sup> movement, “King of the Magi”	
“We’ve Got Rhythm” from <i>Let’s Make a Symphony</i>	Roberto Sierra
<i>Drums – A Symphonic Poem</i>	James P. Johnson

♪ A [YouTube Playlist](#) is available with selected works from the concert. ♪

These lesson plans are for educational purposes only.

2019 | Dayton Performing Arts Alliance

## DAYTON PERFORMING ARTS ALLIANCE

DAYTON DAYTON DAYTON  
*Ballet Opera Philharmonic*

Dear Educators, Parents, and Home Educators,



Twice a year, the Dayton Performing Arts Alliance produces two Young People's Concerts for students in Grades 4 through 7. We create lesson plans to accompany these performances.

As we all adjust to a world where learning is taking place at home, we wanted to make these materials available for you for free to explore with your children. These lesson plans integrate music with topics from the Ohio Learning Standards in Social Studies and English Language Arts.

**Rhythms of Africa** is a celebration of the influence of African rhythmic elements on the orchestra and its music, this concert features traditional African drummers as well as orchestra music written by American, African-American, and Hispanic composers.

African people and music have had an enormous impact on America's culture and musical styles. Sharing ideas across cultures is natural, especially in music. Sometimes, music from one culture crosses over into another culture and merges with its indigenous music to become a new style of music.

A YouTube playlist of selected works from the concert is available: [Rhythms of Africa Playlist](#).

To find out more about our education programming or to reserve your spot for a future performance, visit our website at [www.daytonperformingarts.org/education](http://www.daytonperformingarts.org/education).



*Ruth Reveal.*

Ruth Reveal  
Director of Education  
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Suggestions for connected Ohio Learning Standards are included in the following lesson plans. They are meant only as guides, as many of the topics can be expanded to fit into your curriculum! This concert focuses on standards in Social Studies, ELA, Music, and Movement.

## Meet Our Conductor

### Neal Gittleman

Conductor and Artistic Director of the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra

**Birthplace:** Panama Canal Zone

**First Music Lesson:** Unless you count singing, it was piano lessons from my mother when I was about six.

**Instruments I play:** Violin, viola, piano...

**I become a conductor because:** I love orchestral music and I love the music-making that goes on in orchestras

**My job as a conductor is:** To help the musicians play the music as well as they possibly can

**Favorite food:** Black beans and rice

**Favorite childhood book:** Winnie the Pooh

**What I like to do in my spare time:** Play golf and t'ai chi, read books, see movies



## Lesson Sequence

- Lesson 1: An Overview of Africa
- Lesson 2: African Drums
- Lesson 3: Polyrhythms and Syncopation
- Lesson 4: African Influences



## Lesson 1: An Overview of Africa

Standards	<p><b>Grade 6 Social Studies Theme:</b> Regions and People of the Eastern Hemisphere (many specific standards can be applied)</p> <p><b>Music 2CE (Grades 3 &amp; 5):</b> Listen to, identify, and respond to music of different composers, historical periods and world cultures</p>
Objectives	I can summarize the land, culture, and music of the continent of Africa.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject handout for each group</li> <li>• Graphic organizer for each student</li> <li>• William Grant Still read-aloud</li> </ul>
Time	40 minutes
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention Grabber: Watch the 3-minute National Geographic overview video about Africa:  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSYHMWmyVfo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSYHMWmyVfo</a></li> <li>• Jigsaw Activity: Split the class into 4 groups and task each group with reading their fact sheet aloud and writing the top 3 most important facts in their graphic organizer. Then, each group should present their findings to the class and the class takes notes on each topic.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Learning at home modifications:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Split up the content with friends and then video chat to share!</li> <li>▪ Read about each section in a different room in the house</li> <li>▪ Read each section aloud to your sibling or even a friend or grandparent over video chat!</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Composer Connection: Read the class the story about composer William Grant Still and listen to a short excerpt from his ballet <i>Sadhji</i>:  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-27Vwsubdy8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-27Vwsubdy8</a> (18:00 – end).             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Talk about the question “During Still’s lifetime, what obstacles would an African-American composer have to overcome in order to be taken seriously as a composer of traditional orchestral music?”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Assessment	Students can summarize 1 or 2 main ideas about the land, culture, and music of Africa.

### Group 1: African Land and Climate

Africa covers 11,500,000 square miles, which is over three times the size of the United States! This enormous continent is surrounded by the Atlantic and Indian Oceans and the Mediterranean and Red Seas.

Most of Africa is a vast plateau that rises high above sea level. Because the equator passes through central Africa, the weather in much of Africa is hot all year, but the climate is more varied than we might think. For example, some of the mountains, such as Mount Kilimanjaro in Kenya, are so high that the tallest peaks are always covered in snow. In the north is the mighty Sahara desert. Along the Nile are grasslands, which look like the western prairies of the United States. In central Africa there is a great tropical rainforest.

### Group 2: African People

Fossils indicate that the earliest human beings had homes in eastern and southern Africa between one and two million years ago. After the Stone and Iron Ages, some of the migrating hunters settled down to cultivate the land. The organization of their farming practices encouraged the development of communities, which led to great civilizations, such as Egypt along the Nile and the Kush civilization in the Sudan. The people in Zimbabwe, Ghana, Mali, and Nigeria became wealthy traders of gold and other precious metals.

Today if you were to travel through Africa, you would find that many peoples with many different cultures make their homes on this continent. Over 1,000 languages are spoken throughout the African continent.

### Group 3: African Music

Music in the sub-Saharan countries of Ghana and Nigeria is part of everyday life and is very functional. There are songs to sing if you are sad and other songs to sing if you are hauling boats. You would never sing a boat-hauling song just walking down the street!

There are hundreds of tribes, cultures, and languages in this part of the world, but they all use music functionally. Sub-Saharan Africans don't just listen to music; they create and participate in it.

In Ghana, some tribes believe that drums have spirits or souls. The people honor the drum, but they do not worship it. The belief that objects such as drums have spirits or souls is called *animism*.

### Group 4: African Musical Instruments

The most commonly used African drums are *djembe* and talking drums. *Djembe* drums come in varying sizes—the smaller the drum, the higher the pitch. *Djembe* drummers vary the tone quality of the instrument by striking the drumhead in different places and by using different hand shapes to strike the head.

Talking drums have many uses in African society. They are called talking drums because they can produce a wide range of pitches. They send messages of births, deaths, marriages, sporting events, dances, governmental policies, war, and even gossip and jokes. The sounds travel six to seven miles, and by relaying the messages from drummer to drummer, communications can be sent one hundred miles or more!

## Africa Overview Jigsaw Activity

<p><b>African Land and Climate</b></p>	<p><b>African People</b></p>
<p><b>African Music</b></p>	<p><b>African Musical Instruments</b></p>



## William Grant Still (1895–1978)

William Grant Still was born in 1895 in Woodville, Mississippi. Still's father died when he was six months old, and his mother moved his family to Little Rock, Arkansas, to live with his grandmother. He first experienced music by hearing the constant singing of hymns and spirituals in his grandmother's home.



Although he enrolled as a pre-med student at Wilberforce University in Ohio, music was the center of his college life. He soon left Wilberforce to make a living as a commercial musician. When the famous W.C. Handy, the "father of the blues," heard him perform, he was so impressed that he offered Still a job as an arranger. Still wanted to continue his formal education and enrolled at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in Oberlin, Ohio. While at Oberlin, he heard a symphony orchestra for the first time.

In his early career Still supported himself as a musician and as an arranger for band leaders and entertainers. He wrote background music for radio and later TV shows, including "Gunsmoke" and "The Three Stooges." However, as his classical compositions became known, he relied less and less on popular music for his income.

William Grant Still was the first African-American to:

- compose a major work for orchestra,
- conduct a major symphony orchestra
- conduct an all-white symphony orchestra in the deep South, and
- compose an opera produced by a major American opera company.

Still was inspired by African music and folk tales when he wrote the ballet *Sadhji*. The story is set in Central Africa during a hunting feast. When you listen to the excerpt, notice how the drums keep a steady beat. As the music gets faster, does the drumbeat stay steady?

After you listen, have a discussion as a class: What kinds of obstacles might Still have had to overcome as an African American composer in the early- and mid-1900s?

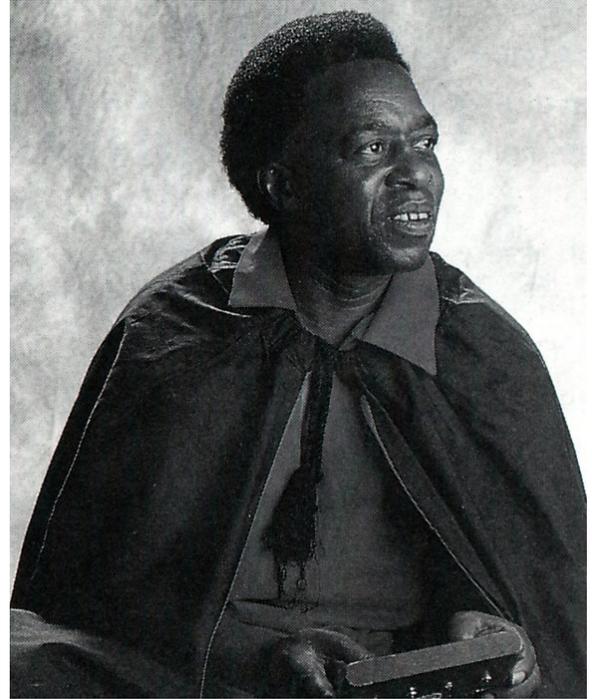
## Lesson 2: African Drums

<b>Standards</b>	<p><b>Grade 6 Social Studies Theme:</b> Regions and People of the Eastern Hemisphere (many specific standards can be applied)</p> <p><b>Music 4PR (Grade 4):</b> Sing, move and respond to music from world cultures and different composers.</p> <p><b>Music 5PR (Grade 4):</b> Improvise and compose short compositions using a variety of classroom instruments and sound sources.</p>
<b>Objectives</b>	I can demonstrate how African drummers create different rhythms and sounds on their drums.
<b>Materials</b>	Drinking cups (Styrofoam, plastic, or paper); glue; masking tape; markers
<b>Time</b>	40 minutes
<b>Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attention Grabber: Watch the short African drumming lesson (4 minutes): <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKuyIBWo6Ak">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKuyIBWo6Ak</a></li><li>• Build Your Own Drum Activity: 1) Glue or tape the two cups together (bottom to bottom); 2) Cover the drum completely with masking tape; 3) Decorate your drum with markers.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ As students make and decorate their drums, play a piece from the concert, "Mai Nozipo," as background music: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcbD8OAKnIQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcbD8OAKnIQ</a></li></ul></li><li>• Practice with your drum:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Rewatch the drumming lesson and try to play along using your instrument (students can also use their laps or desks).</li><li>◦ Discuss:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ How many different ways did the instructor show that you could hit a drum?</li><li>▪ How are the ways he showed to hit a drum different from each other?</li></ul></li><li>◦ In small groups, make up your own rhythm using "Pa," "Pe," and "Pa ra"; share your rhythm with the whole class.</li></ul></li><li>• Composer Connection: Read the story about Dumisani Maraire, the composer of "Mai Nozipo." Listen to the beginning of "Mai Nozipo" (<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcbD8OAKnIQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcbD8OAKnIQ</a>) and discuss the following questions as a class: How do the drum and the strings interact? How does the music make you feel?</li></ul>
<b>Assessment</b>	Students can demonstrate three different African drumming techniques.

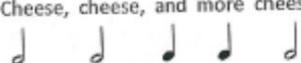
## Dumisani Maraire (1944–1999)

Dumisani Maraire was born in Zimbabwe in 1944. Known to his friends as “Dumi,” he was a master of the *mbira*, or thumb piano. Dumi is known for introducing Zimbabwean music to North America.

Dumi learned a lot about music through his family, and he also studied at the college of music in Bulawayo, a city in Zimbabwe. Dumi moved to Seattle, Washington, where he was a professor at the University of Washington. Dumi later earned his PhD in ethnomusicology (the study of the music of different cultures) at the University of Washington and then returned to Zimbabwe to teach. He passed away in 1999.



## Lesson 3: Polyrhythms and Syncopation

Standards	<p><b>Grade 6 Social Studies Theme:</b> Regions and People of the Eastern Hemisphere (many specific standards can be applied)</p> <p><b>Music 4PR (Grade 4):</b> Sing, move and respond to music from world cultures and different composers.</p> <p><b>Music 6PR (Grade 4):</b> Read, write and perform using sixteenth through whole note values including syncopated rhythms in 2/4, 3/4 and 4/4 meter.</p>
Objectives	I can define and demonstrate polyrhythms and syncopation.
Materials	Previously created drums (or body percussion)
Time	40 minutes
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention Grabber: Watch as two drummers, one from Los Angeles and one from Nigeria, perform traditional African polyrhythms (3 minutes): <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrEqNTyMF_A">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrEqNTyMF_A</a></li> <li>• Discuss as a class after watching the video:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What did you notice about the way the polyrhythms sounded? Could you clap along?</li> <li>○ Why might the drummer from Los Angeles be interested in learning traditional Nigerian polyrhythms?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Define polyrhythms as a class: <b>A rhythm that makes use of two or more different rhythms simultaneously.</b></li> <li>• Class Polyrhythm Activity:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Try making your own polyrhythms as a class.                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a steady beat.</li> <li>▪ Have the entire class say the following rhythms together:                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I love pizza, I love pizza!”</li> <li>• “Pepperoni, olives, peppers, and cheese.”</li> <li>• “Cheese, cheese, and more cheese!”</li> </ul> <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> <p>I love piz-za, I love piz-za!</p>  <p>Pep-per-on-i, o-lives, pep-pers, and cheese</p>  <p>Cheese, cheese, and more cheese!</p>  </div> </li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Divide the class into four groups and layer the rhythms, beginning with a steady beat and then adding the other rhythms one by one. Each group keeps repeating their part until the end. Establish a sign to bring this polyrhythm piece to a close by having each part drop out one at a time until only the lead remains.                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Learning at home modification:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Try this is a family</li> <li>○ Have your child record themselves using a phone and then layer their voice with the different polyrhythms</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Video chat with friends and try to layer the polyrhythms</li> <li>o Challenge the class: Have each group play the rhythms on the drums they created without saying the rhythms (or you can use other classroom percussion or body percussion).</li> <li>• Define syncopation as a class: <b>A rhythm that stresses the “weak” beat.</b></li> <li>• Class Syncopation Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Count the steady beat aloud: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8</li> <li>o Clap on the natural accents: 1 3 5 7</li> <li>o Clap the syncopation: 2 4 6 8</li> <li>o Create your own syncopated rhythms by accenting any number except 1, 3, 5, or 7.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Composer Connection: Read the story about James P. Johnson, the composer of <i>Drums: A Symphonic Poem</i> Listen to the beginning of <i>Drums: A Symphonic Poem</i> (<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hh5H6yWpRek">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hh5H6yWpRek</a>) and listen for the syncopation and polyrhythms. They could appear in any instrument, not just drums!</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment</b>	Students can demonstrate a polyrhythm as a class or in small groups.

## James P. Johnson (1894–1955)

### About the Composer



James P. Johnson was a highly influential African-American jazz pianist who also wrote popular songs and composed classical works. Jazz is a uniquely American style of popular music which features a strong beat, improvisation (the art of making up music “on the spot”) and syncopated rhythms. His compositions for orchestra were based on African themes.

In his early years, Johnson studied classical and ragtime piano and by his late teens was performing in saloons and dance halls and at parties in the black community on Manhattan’s West Side. He became known for his ability to improvise and embellish popular songs and was the favorite accompanist for two famous jazz singers of the time, Bessie Smith and Ethel Waters. He taught both Thomas “Fats” Waller and Edward “Duke” Ellington, who both became famous jazz musicians.

Faced with fewer performance opportunities during the Depression, Johnson devoted himself to serious musical study in order to achieve his goal of writing symphonic music based on African-American themes. Composers George Gershwin and Ferde Grofé inspired Johnson by their works. He combined jazz and classical music, adding a mix of Negro folk music and spirituals into his works as well.

### About the Music

Johnson originally wrote *Drums* as a tune for the 1931 Harlem song “Harlem Hotcha.” In addition to recording it as a solo piano composition, Johnson also used this tune as a basis for *A Symphonic Poem*. The work weaves traditional African drumming styles with the sounds of big band and ragtime. Traditional African drumming and jazz are full of polyrhythms and complicated syncopation.



## Lesson 4: African Influences

<b>Standards</b>	<b>Grade 6 Social Studies Theme:</b> Regions and People of the Eastern Hemisphere (many specific standards can be applied) <b>Music 4PR (Grade 4):</b> Sing, move and respond to music from world cultures and different composers. <b>Music 5PR (Grade 4):</b> Improvise and compose short compositions using a variety of classroom instruments and sound sources.
<b>Objectives</b>	I can discuss how African music influenced American composers.
<b>Materials</b>	Jazz Music worksheet
<b>Time</b>	40 minutes
<b>Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attention Grabber: Watch the short video of Duke Ellington's band performing "Take the A Train" (3 minutes): <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cb2w2m1JmCY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cb2w2m1JmCY</a></li><li>• Read the story about Duke Ellington and have the students predict: Why do you think Duke Ellington, an American composer, is featured in a concert about the Rhythms of Africa?</li><li>• Split students into small reading groups to read the History of Jazz worksheet and complete the questions; Review as a class<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ <b>Learning at home modification:</b> Read the History of Jazz aloud, with a friend or grandparent over video chat, or even to your pet or a stuffed animal!</li></ul></li><li>• Revisit their predictions about why Duke Ellington is featured on this concert (Duke Ellington was a famous jazz musician and composer, jazz is a genre of music heavily influenced by African rhythms and expression).</li><li>• Composer Connection: Listen to part of Ellington's <i>The Three Black Kings</i>, "King of the Magi": <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lhr1ZQ7vPeY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lhr1ZQ7vPeY</a> - 0:00-1:30)</li></ul>
<b>Assessment</b>	Students can show how jazz was influenced by African music.

## Edward Kennedy (“Duke”) Ellington (1899–1977)



Duke Ellington

### About the Composer

“Duke” Ellington was born and raised in Washington, D.C., where his father was a butler in the White House. Always a smart dresser, Ellington was nicknamed “Duke” in high school, and the name stuck.

Ellington began piano lessons when he was seven years old and, at the age of seventeen,

made his pre-professional debut as a pianist. In 1923, he moved his band to New York City and began to experiment with jazz. Ellington brought jazz to new and expressive heights, but was never content to repeat the formulas that led to his success. He was always refining and expanding his concepts as he composed film music, instrumental pieces, sacred music and stage works. He composed more than 1,000 pieces! In 1969, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

### About the Music

*Three Black Kings* was the last major work written by Duke Ellington. As he lay dying in his hospital bed in 1974, he gave his son, Mercer, final instructions on how it was to be completed and orchestrated. The first movement with its African rhythmic motifs, depicts Balthazar, the Black king of the Nativity; the second is concerned with Solomon, King of Israel; and the third celebrates, with warm “down-home” feeling, Martin Luther King, Jr., Ellington's good friend whose triumphs are celebrated in the inspiring finale.

At the Young People’s Concert, you will hear the first movement, “King of the Magi.” Ellington uses a repeating rhythm to create the feeling of movement as the kings travel onward. This steady pattern is interrupted by a percussion instrument called a ratchet.



King Balthazar

## Jazz Music

### History of Jazz

**Jazz** is often considered America’s first musical invention. The music grew out of the African-American communities in the South in the late 1800s and early 1900s after slavery was abolished and many freed slaves set out to look for work. In New Orleans, jazz music started to develop from the popular music called ragtime. Because New Orleans is a port city, people from all over the world brought their own musical traditions.

Jazz combines European harmonies and instruments with African influences such as polyrhythms, syncopation, and expressive instrument playing.

<b>African Influences on Jazz</b>	<b>European Influences on Jazz</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polyrhythms</li> <li>• Syncopation</li> <li>• Play instruments expressively as an extension of the musicians themselves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harmony (the chords that accompany the tunes)</li> <li>• Instruments (saxophone, trumpet, piano)</li> </ul>
<b>Both African and European Influences on Jazz</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Musical improvisation (composing music “in the moment”)</li> </ul>	

**Test Your Knowledge:** Answer the questions below, highlighting the evidence from the text that supports your answers.

1. After what major event in U.S. history did jazz begin to develop?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What city is known as the “birthplace of jazz”? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Why was jazz a melting pot of music from many different countries?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What elements from African music influenced jazz? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What elements from European music influenced jazz? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

