

Summer 2004

Volume 1, Issue 1

African Art Safari

News letter from
Southern E Media Education & Arts/ 0114 2437899

SOUNDING OUT SCHOOLS



Support from schools for our programme has been truly inspiring. With more than 120 schools engaged we thought it about time we let you know about our expanding activities.

Many of you will have worked with Mandla Sibanda from Zimbabwe's Sunduza Dance Theatre over the last three years working on a diverse range of arts activities with your children. Some of you will also have had whole arts weeks with pure music and dance led by Simon Banda. Simon recently completed a project with the City of Leeds School as part of the *Performing Africa* outreach programme of Leeds

University who hosted over ninety researchers from University Centres for African studies in Africa engaged in developing the use of theatre in development, and theatre in education.

Southern eMedia is currently running a community programme raising funds for charities. This year has seen us fund raising with the help of *SOSA-XA!* to support Sheffield teachers who visited Khanyanjalo Primary school in Durban. They are helping to build flush toilets. Mandla Sibanda through school workshops and through leading our community based arts groups has helped this funding process.

Simon Banda shows off the Cajones drum



Mandla has had an extensive schools programme

Our arts community

Sunduza Dance Theatre had a major collaboration with Firth Park Community Arts College. A group of 12/13 year old children worked with Simon Banda and members of Sunduza. They formed part of an evening at Sheffield University drawing on the talents of the children, the Sheffield Oratorio Chorus and Sunduza Dance theatre in a musical evening that took the audience through sounds that stretched from the Cape to Cairo. Simon Banda choreographed David Fanshawe's African Sanctus, sung by the Chorus, giving a presentation that reflected the quality of the original work but updated its interpretation by thirty years allowing a modern, post

colonial Africa to take its place on the stage. The feeder primary school children also gained by Sunduza's workshops led by Mandla Sibanda. It was a rare chance to engage in a cross generation production presented to almost 1000 people and it contributed to the College securing a Gold mark award from the Arts Council in May 2003.

In June and July 2004 the team will be working with Handsworth Grange summer school on a musical play around the concept of debt and with Abbeydale Grange in developing an international event.



SOSA-XA! hits a high note



SOSA-XA! Sounds of Southern Africa is the UK's first isicathamiya or imbube performance choir. The choir have to learn choreography as the music is all done to synchronised steps. It is the first group in the UK to explore the techniques in depth. *SOSA-XA!* also work in different African languages.

Mandla Sibanda took over most of the rehearsals from Simon Banda who returned to Zimbabwe for a year to work with Sunduza Dance Theatre.

Many of the members have been with the group since its inception and have worked in a dedicated way to explore the multiple languages and sounds from Southern Africa.

The project, run by Mandla and SEMEA supports a variety of charities that raise funds for causes in Africa. The first CD, *Tauya Zimbabwe* is led by Mandla Sibanda and was recorded live at Sheffield University with the support of the Ethnomusicology department. To join phone 0114 2437899 first.

"SOSA-XA! Award winning team grace the Winter Gardens at Chance to Dance."



Kutamba Kids! Meets Saturday morning from 10.30a.m. at the Burngreave Ashram

Singing for Supper

SOSA-XA! have successfully performed at the Merlin theatre supported by the Gospel temple Rhythms Choir led by Jacqui Mckoy and Sam Lewens, and the equally stunning Mbira band Zango led by Nick Clough and Jane Tarr.

The concert supported Sheffield - Zimbabwe HIV Action who are a Sheffield based charity raising funds for Batanai- an HIV self help group in Masvingo, Zimbabwe.

This year the choir have been supporting Pitsmoor Church to raise funds for the Mbale rural development

centre in Uganda and working with the eighteen teachers who visited Durban earlier this year to raise funds for Khanyanjalo primary school in Durban.

They also performed in Chesterfield at the Winding Wheel for the Tsumeb/ Namibia twinning link

Finally the group raises funds for supporting Sunduza's own work at the Es'Phakeni Arts Theatre in Pumula, Bulawayo. The group helps the youth trust to lease the centre through the City of Bulawayo creating new employment opportunities

Kutamba Kids!

SEMEA started The Kutamba School of Contemporary African Dance in May 2003 but which saw its first funding arrive in January 2004.

The funding is part of support from Burngreave New Deal and the Creative Burngreave team. This has been helpful in providing more instruments including Djembe drums and the unusual Cajones drums used mainly in Flamenco dance.

Kutamba meet at the Burngreave Ashram Dance Studio, Kutamba Kids! aged 5-12 yrs, Kutamba Kool! our adult group and Kutamba Youth. The group gave their first stunning show at Sheffield's Chance to Dance and will be working with the Bolsover Children's Festival.



Kutamba Creative!

Kutamba! which means to dance or to play in Zimbabwe's main language, *Shona*, will enable children, youth and adults to explore Africa's dance heritage. It will explore positive images of Africa through discussion, the use of the internet and African theatre.

Some members of the community have already visited Bulawayo and we hope that some of the youth will get a chance to work on projects in Pumula linked to the Open Air Theatre.

We hope SEMEA's outreach programme will bring Kutamba to a centre near you and to this end the group will be embarking on a programme in Maltby and Chesterfield from September 2004.

Kutamba is led by Simon Banda and

Mandla Sibanda. Kutamba is also taught by Godfrey Pambalipe, Cynthia Phiri, Tsungai Tsikirai (who led our women's day in March). They are supported by our Kutamba Drummers. If you want to join the team get in touch.

The project will see expansion from September with a youth theatre group guided by the team and encouraged by Vernon Williams.

Cajones

These unusual drums made from a variety of soft wood and African hardwoods and snares originated on the slave ships that went to Brazil and Peru.

The packing crates now have much sophistication. If you want more information or to purchase some contact us as the UK distributor on 0114 2437899 and support the dance team!



So you think drums are round? Kutamba Kids! Meets Saturday morning from 10.30a.m. at the Burngreave Ashram

SEMEA working with ZIBF

Southern E Media is set to launch Sunduza's production of *Voices from the Rocks* at this year's Zimbabwe international Book fair that will see almost 200 stands from publishers from all over Africa and Europe.

This multimedia production saw its premiere at the Merlin theatre in 2002 and is based on the history of Matopos National Park outside Bulawayo, this became a UNESCO world heritage site in July 2003 and is the burial place of many Shona and Ndebele Kings as well as the infamous Cecil John Rhodes.

It explores how different cultures have interacted with the landscape over the last 100 years, each culture displacing the other. It has been well researched

by Professor Terry Ranger, Professor emeritus at Oxford University and visiting professor at the University of Zimbabwe. He has specialised in the history of Zimbabwe for many years. The book is published by James Curry, Oxford. SEMEA will promote its arts philosophy to the *Indaba* in Harare at this Pan African occasion.

The Pumula Project

The project will raise awareness of the Es' Phakeni Open Air Theatre in Pumula, Bulawayo. This is a youth project led by Sunduza and which will become a learning centre for the arts leased from the City of Bulawayo. We look forward to bringing the production back to Sheffield in the near future.



"Voices from the Rocks at the Zimbabwe international Book Fair will support the Open air Theatre."





Southern E Media

Education & Arts

9 Goddard Hall Road
Sheffield S57AP
South Yorkshire
TEL:0114 2437899
FAX:0114 2437899
E-MAIL:

arts@southern-edia.org.uk

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.semea.org.uk
www.kutamba.org.uk
www.sunduza.org
www.sosa-xa.org.uk



Trustees

Rosalind Harrison
Robin Raily
Rod Douglas

Project Director:

Philip Weiss

Av Director

Mandla Sibanda

Director of Music

Simon Banda

Associate Producer

Vernon Williams

Inter-cultural arts space,
knowledge and
empowerment

A not for profit company
Limited by guarantee
No:4355445

Over the Edge Theatre and youth



Over the Edge established its credentials as a theatre company long before it toured *Born African* to Edinburgh in 2002. It now returns to the UK for just two months with Arts Council sponsorship to field its colourful production of Shakespeare's Twelfth Night. It has been given an unusual African twist recreated in the true style of African story telling.

You can catch it at the Crucible studio theatre on 10/11 September. They will be at the Alhambra Studio Theatre, Bradford on 21/22 September.

During 13-16 Sept your school may like some unusual drama workshops so please contact us on Tel:0114 2437899

Digital Dialogues

SEMEA has supported a variety of organisations through its capacity to develop web site, video and learning materials. These include artists as well as UK charities such as Vinjeru Education in Malawi and Batanai in Zimbabwe.

This year saw a second visit by Professor Peter Kanyandago currently developing the African School of Open Education which is a distance education programme in Uganda rooted in the culture of the rural areas and the oral tradition of teaching. It will however harness some of the power of the internet to rural centres to reduce the knowledge gap between the haves and have nots.



About Our Organization...

Southern E Media Education and Arts (SEMEA) was created to support knowledge exchange between people and community spaces in the "North" and Southern Africa. It adds value to what artists from the South bring to Europe as an empowerment programme; and to develop collaborative exchange using digital technologies and the performance arts.

It creates value by adding skills and knowledge through training programmes in the UK and Africa. It offers arts management skills, and multimedia skills to reduce the knowledge gap; and capacity build community projects.

SEMEA helps to raise funds for development projects that use the arts to educate and create employment.

