

# Why There Should Be a School Dedicated to the Teaching of African Music and Dance

by

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African music and dance is the backbone of being African, therefore it is important that Africans find ways of resuscitating and preserving these art forms and pass them on to the next generations. Africa is such a big continent, with so many ethnic groups in different countries; it is African music and dance that carry the identity of Africans world over. You cannot divorce Africans from their music and dances as these were used in different occasions for merry-making, worshiping or during morning. African music and dances are classified in different categories and seasons of the year, some dances and music were meant for gatherings such as rain-asking ceremonies, there were dances that were performed during harvest time and also dances for the first fruits ceremony. An occasion such as the installation of a chief is where music and dance was mainly used as part of entertainment and or to conduct certain African rituals.

Before colonial borders were erected, Africans lived in ethnic groupings as hunter gatherers or agriculturalists. During times of rain asking, Africans in Southern Africa, regardless of their ethnic groupings would gather in rain asking shrines (njelele) to conduct rain asking ceremonies, this is where music and dance played an important role in communicating with the ancestors. Such ceremonies are testimony of the importance of music and dance to the African people. Music and dance also played an important role in preparing warriors for war during ancient times. Music and dance will also be performed after the war to celebrate victory.

The above examples show that it is important to establish a school dedicated to the teaching of African music and dance, as a way of preserving culture through African music and dance for the betterment of the African people by themselves. A school dedicated to the teaching of African music and dance will be a legacy to the African people amongst many people world over. People from different parts of the world have come up with different theories about African music and dance, thereby confusing Africans about their music and dance. Such things are caused by the lack of Africans to take up the initiative of establishing their own school that will be dedicated to the teaching of African music and dance.

It is essential that there should be a school dedicated to the teaching of African music and dance due to many reasons that range from the preservation of African culture and traditions. The school will help equip young Africans with African culture and traditions that are being lost every day due to different factors that include migration of Africans from Africa to other continents. Since the time of slavery there has been a lot of migration from Africa by Africans to the west, many African children are born out of the motherland and grow up with other races, this affects them as in the process they lose African culture and traditions.

Many years ago, Africans were taken to the Americas and the Caribbean as labor on plantations. Different African styles of dance, from various ethnic groups, were merged together along with dance styles from other races. This merging of dance styles caused some changes in the dances and some of these dances are different from the original ones found in Africa. Children of African descent born in continents such as Americas and Europe will benefit from such a school so that they can learn original African dances and music. This will help preserve African dances and music in the Diaspora.

The best way to preserve and share African music and dance is to create a school dedicated to teaching of African music and dance. The school will create a platform for sharing expertise among African students and their teachers. As this school will accommodate people from different regions of Africa, it will help create the base of the African music and dance and also help share other African inventions such as *Greenotation* that was developed in the modern world but are very useful and important in African music and dance. The school will help create other study guides for African music and dance to facilitate the teaching of African music and dance in African countries also.

As said before, African music and dance is the base of being African because they are the custodians of African culture and traditions. Teaching of African culture and music in a school specifically created for this purpose will enable African culture and traditions to live and be passed on to generations by African children who will live to tell the story of Africa in an African way. The school will give young Africans the required knowledge about African music and dance, how these played an important role in the Africans' way of living and still continue to do so.

The school will help keep the African music and dance alive. Different African dances re-tell the history of Africa, the music keeps children and youth out of trouble and helps them to discover their true identity, music and dance helps the development of coordination of hands and feet through dance. This coordination of hands and feet is not common in dances found in other continents. This is one important aspect about African music and dance that cannot be taken away from Africans by other races.

Since African music has traditionally played an important role in African culture, it is essential that it be taught in a school dedicated to African music and dance as it represents the strong African heritage and its importance can be seen in many aspects of the culture such as marriage, where the bride price is paid to the in-laws by the groom as appreciation to the people who gave birth to his wife. Unlike many cultures, ancient African cultures encompassed music into their everyday lives, women and many used music when doing their household chores. Even children used music and dance when playing different games. Dance, story-telling and religious practices are all based on the music of the culture in Africa.

Unlike in other continents, in the African culture, music and dance means so much more than something done just to have a good time, it is the heart of being African. It has a much greater purpose in the living and well-being of being an African.

A school dedicated to African music and dance will be very important to Africans world over as it will give an opportunity to African children of different generations in learning African music and dance so as to pass it to coming generations. The school will help to bond Africans and help them find their identity. The school will help restore African music and dances that have been forgotten and are only practiced by a few communities in the motherland. This school will also be helpful in teaching the attire for the different dances and music performed by Africans during ancient times and also why that was done and the meaning of the dances.

The school will help also to classify African music and dances according to different categories, for example music for children, music for adults and also for males and females. The school will also help in identifying gender roles in African music and dance. People world over need to know more about African music and dance, this school will be a very important investment for Africans world over as it will be the custodian of African music and dance. The school should be designed to have a library that will also accommodate documentation such as books about African music and dance.

The school is important to both the young and the old, the young people will be able to learn things that they don't know about African music and dance. This will enable the young African people to write books on African music and dance, as a way of documenting African music and dance for the benefit of Africa and other people wishing to study African music and dance. The school will also create archives for African music and dance for the benefit of future generations.

The school will be vital for research about African music and dance, as of now there is no central place where you can research about African music and dance under one roof. Presently bits of African music and dance are scattered in different places around the world and one needs to find out where to get information that they need from different countries which might be expensive but a central place will be ideal for such projects.

The school will help teach the playing of different African instruments that are facing extinction and some that have gone extinct. The school will help research and revive the now extinct African instruments that can be fused with modern music.

The African children and those of African descent need to learn different kinds of music and dance, how they influenced lives of Africans in different occasions. The children need to learn how African music and dance played an important role during the liberation struggles of different African countries. The night vigils that were conducted by the freedom fighters were mainly based on dance and music, thus, music and dance kept the freedom fighters' spirits high during the days of the liberation struggle.

At the school, the children will learn how music and dance helped liberate some African countries such as Zimbabwe from colonization. The African school of music and dance will help generations and generations of people to realize that the Africans' lives were supported by music and dance. The school will clearly spell out that music and dance are a part and parcel of Africans.

The school dedicated to African music and dance will also give an opportunity to those who want to share anything about African music and dance to use the school as platform for sharing with learners. This school will be the central place for African people to meet and share anything concerning African music and dance for the benefit of Africa and the rest of the world.