



ArtSmarts

2004-2005 Wells Fargo School Matinee Series

Balé Folclórico da Bahia

October 5, 2004 11:00am

Jackson Hall, Mondavi Center

Dear Teachers:

We hope you find this CueSheet helpful in preparing your students for what they will see and hear at the **Balé Folclórico da Bahia** school matinee. This guide provides background information on the artists and the performance, as well as a brief overview of Brazil and its folkloric dances. A review of audience protocol is also included.

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BALÉ FOLCLÓRICO DA BAHIA

Balé Folclórico da Bahia, the only professional folk dance company in Brazil, was formed in 1988 by **Walson Botelho** and **Ninho Reis** and has achieved considerable success in its short history. Under the artistic direction of **José Carlos Arandiba**, the company's many national and international tours have earned it a prestigious reputation throughout the country and abroad that is reflected in the responses of the public and the critics. "Exuberant, indefatigable and virtuosic," wrote the reviewer for *The New York Times*; "a troupe of hypercharged young drummers and dancers--supple, fluid, muscular, sensuous--whose kinetic performance defied one to sit still" (*Minneapolis Star Tribune*). The 38 member troupe of dancers, musicians, and singers performs a repertory that exhibits three cultural influences on the Brazilian people: African, introduced through slavery; Indigenous, the culture of the native Brazilians; and European, introduced through 16th century Portuguese colonization.

Based in Salvador in the northeastern state of Bahia, the Brazilian company made its debut in July, 1988 at the Joinville Dance Festival where an audience of 20,000 enthusiastically greeted its performance. The troupe's immediate success brought invitations to perform at other festivals around the country, in Santos, Campina Grande, and Sao Cristavao. At the Bahia International Dance Festival later that year, Balé Folclórico da Bahia was awarded the prize "Best Performance of the Year," given by the Ministry of Culture, and the troupe was acclaimed as one of the country's most important dance companies. In 1989, Balé Folclórico da Bahia gave an unprecedented two-week engagement at Salvador's

Teatro Castro Alves, one of the foremost theaters in Brazil, followed by a national tour. In 1990, the company received the “Fiat 90” prize, awarded by Fiat Industries to the best dance company in Brazil.

Balé Folclórico da Bahia made its European debut in 1992 when it participated in Berlin’s Alexander Platz Festival and drew an audience of 50,000. Its most prestigious international engagement to date has been an appearance at the Biennale de la Danse, held in September, 1994, in Lyons, France. From among the over 20 companies from four continents participating, the New York Times commented that this Brazilian company best exemplified the festival’s celebration of African-derived dance. During the 1995-1996 season, Balé Folclórico undertook its first tour of the United States with sold-out performances in many major cities.

WALSON BOTELHO, General Director

Walson Botelho founded Balé Folclórico da Bahia with Ninho Reis in 1988. A choreographer and former performer, Mr. Botelho graduated from the Federal University of Bahia with a degree in cultural anthropology. He has worked as the dance director at the Cultural Foundation in Bahia, as the production director for the Balé Teatro Castro Alves in Salvador, and as assistant director, dancer, singer, and musician with the folkloric company Viva Bahia (1978-1983).

JOSE CARLOS ARANDIBA, Artistic Director

José Carlos Arandiba has worked with Balé Folclórico da Bahia since 1992 and, as a choreographer, has contributed several works to its repertory. A former solo performer with the Contemporary Dance Group at the Federal University of Bahia, he is now an internationally recognized teacher and director whose work has been seen in France, Germany, and Holland.

BALÉ FOLCLÓRICO DA BAHIA SCHOOL MATINEE PROGRAM

The school matinee performance will feature the following dances:

DANÇA DE ORIGEM (Origin Dance)

Choreography: Augusto Omolú

Music: Antônio Portella

Based on a legend depicting the creation of the Universe as interpreted by **Candomblé**, the African religion brought to Brazil by the slaves during the colonial period (16th and 17th centuries) and still practiced today in Bahia. “The Supreme God, Oxalá, with His sons, formed the Universe from a mixture of sacred powder and water”.

PUXADA DE REDE (Fishermen’s Dance)

Choreography: Walson Botelho

Music: Bahian Folklore

A popular demonstration, still seen on the beaches of Bahia, in which **Iemanjá**, the Goddess of the sea, is invoked by the fishermen and their wives who, through their dances and songs, ask for an abundant catch.

MACULELÊ

Choreography: Walson Botelho

Music: Bahian Folklore

A dramatic dance that originated in the sugar cane plantations of Bahia during Brazil’s colonial period and was danced by the slaves to celebrate a good harvest. Maculelê, due to its potential for violence, was also used as a means of defense by slaves against their owners.

SAMBA DE RODA

Choreography: Walson Botelho

Staging: Walson Botelho and José Carlos Arandiba

Music: Bahian Folklore

The most popular dance and rhythm in Bahia, the samba first appeared in Brazil as an entertainment practiced by the slaves during their leisure hours.

CAPOEIRA

Staging: Walson Botelho and José Carlos Arandiba

Music: Bahian Folklore

Capoeira is a martial art that originated in Africa and, during the colonial period, was brought to Brazil by slaves from Angola.

SAMBA REGGAE

Choreography: José Carlos Arandiba and the company

Music: from the songs of Bahia's carnival

The most recent form of popular music to appear in Bahia, Samba Reggae is a mixture of Afro-Bahian rhythms such as *afoxé*, *ijexá*, and *samba duro* (with a Caribbean influence). Paul Simon was the first mainstream artist to introduce this new rhythm to the world when he performed and toured with the Bahian percussion band Olodum.

BRAZIL'S FOLKLORIC TRADITION

Balé Folclórico da Bahia performs a repertory of authentic folkloric dance and music that is based on three influences: **African**, from the introduction of slavery in the late 16th century; **Indigenous**, from the original peoples of Brazil; European, through **Portuguese** colonization.

The African slaves, who were forced to Brazil around 1538, contributed to the development of both rhythm and choreography in Brazilian folk dances. Nowhere in the Americas have African traditions survived as intact as they have in Brazil. Unlike plantation owners in the United States, plantation owners in Brazil allowed their slaves to keep their culture and traditions alive. In the northeastern province of **Bahia**, African traditions have survived that have long since disappeared in the continent of Africa. Africans brought with them religious beliefs which later combined with aspects of Christianity. The most prevalent belief system of Bahia, known as *candomble*, was brought to Brazil by the Yoruba slaves from Nigeria and Benin and it has had a significant influence on Brazilian popular music. Many of the instruments used in samba bands have their origin in West Africa, including the **agogo**, a double cowbell, the **cuica**, a small friction drum, and the **atabaque**, a conical drum.

The Portuguese who first arrived in Brazil in 1500 left accounts of the music of the Brazilian natives. For the most part, the indigenous peoples danced and composed in an improvised style. Their instruments consisted of rattles and drums, flutes, whistles and horns.

The Portuguese colonists brought their own traditional dances, lullabies and nursery rhymes, and most of the basic musical instruments heard in Brazil today: the flute, clarinet, cavaquinho (a small four-string guitar), guitar, piano, violin, cello, accordion and the tambourine.

Brazil's most famous dance is the **samba**, originally a group dance practiced by the slaves and later a ballroom dance popular in Europe and the United States during the 1940s. Samba is also the rhythm of the Carnival, where it takes several forms: the lively *samba de enredo*, the school drums on parade; and, when slowed down, the *samba-cancao* (literally "song samba") with its lead singer backed by guitar and percussion. The Carnival (Carnival) is Brazil's biggest, most elaborate celebration. All countries colonized by Catholic nations have festivals during the Easter season, however, in Brazil, the entire country halts business in order to celebrate!

Many of the ritualistic dance forms of Brazil were associated with self-defense. The **maculele** originated in the sugar cane fields of Bahia both as a harvest celebration and as a means of self-defense used by slaves against their owners. The best of the martial arts dances is the **capoeira** (cap-oh-aa-ra). When several people get together to do capoeira, it is called a **roda**. The roda begins with the music of

the **barimbau de corpo** (an instrument composed of a bow and open gourd, which rests against the abdomen for resonance, and is played with a stick), followed by a lead singer and chorus, then by a resounding percussion section. Once the opening ceremony is finished, the dancers begin the capoeira. They must keep time to the music while they “fight,” spinning in cartwheels, launching swings, body throws and leg kicks. When one player decides to quit, he returns to the barimbau player, his partner joins him, and they shake hands.

BRAZIL

Full country name: República Federativa do Brasil

Area: 8.51 million sq km

Population: 175 million

Capital City: Brasília

People: 55% European descent, 38% mulatto, 6% African descent (according to the 1980 census). In reality, these figures are skewed by whiteness being equated with social stature in Brazil.

Language: Portuguese

Religion: 70% Roman Catholic; a significant proportion of the population also belongs to either various cults or practice Indian animism

Government: Federative Republic

Head of State: President Luíz Inácio 'Lula' da Silva

GDP: US \$650 billion

GDP per capita: US \$7,600

Major Industries: textiles, shoes, chemicals, lumber, iron ore, tin, steel, aircraft, motor vehicles and parts, arms, soya beans, orange juice, beef, chicken, coffee, sugar

Major Trading Partners: European Union, Central and South America, Asia, United States of America

Roughly the size of the USA (excluding Alaska), **Brazil** is a vast country encompassing nearly half of South America, and bordering most of the continent's other nations - Ecuador and Chile are the exceptions. After 40 years of internal migration and population growth, Brazil is also an urban country; more than two out of every three Brazilians live in a city. São Paulo is the world's second most populous city.

-information from <http://www.lonelyplanet.com>

MAP OF BRAZIL



-map taken from <http://www.lonelyplanet.com>

THINK ABOUT IT!

Talking with your teacher, friends and family about a performance after attending the theater is part of the experience. When you share what you saw and felt you learn more about the performance. You can now compare ideas and ask questions and find out how to learn even more. Here are some questions to think about:

- 1) How would you describe the folk music of Bahia to a friend?
- 2) What feelings did you have while you listened to the music?
- 3) What did you like best about the performance and why? Was the program different from what you expected? How?
- 4) Write a poem expressing your impressions of the performance: what you saw (the dancers, singers and musicians, the costumes and instruments); what you heard (the songs and instruments); and the kinds of feelings and thoughts you had during the show.

This CueSheet was written by ANETT JESSOP, Graduate Program Coordinator,
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ATTENDING THE THEATER

What is expected of student audiences at the matinee:

- * Enter the auditorium quietly and take seats immediately
- * Show courtesy to the artist and other guests at all times;
- * Demonstrate appreciation for the artist's work by applauding at the appropriate times;
- * Refrain from making unnecessary noise or movements;
- * Please eat lunch before or after the performance to avoid disruption;
- * Please turn off cell phones and pagers. Flash photography is strictly prohibited.
- * Relate any information acquired from the pre-matinee discussion to the new information gained from the matinee.

What you can expect of your experience in a performing arts theater:

A theater is a charged space, full of energy and anticipation. When the house lights (the lights that illuminate the audience seating) go down, the excitement level goes up! Theaters are designed so that the voices of the singers and actors and the music of the musicians can be heard. But this also means that any sound in the audience: whispering, rustling of papers, speaking and moving about, can be heard by other audience members and by the performers. Distractions like these upset everyone's concentration and can spoil a performance.

The performers on stage show respect for their art form and for the audience by doing their very best possible work. The audience shows respect for the performers by watching attentively. Applause is the best way for audience members to share their enthusiasm and to show their appreciation for the performers. Applaud at the end of a performance! Sometimes the audience will clap during a performance, as after a featured solo. Audience members may feel like laughing if the action on stage is funny, crying if the action is sad, or sighing if something is seen or heard that is beautiful. Appreciation can be shown in many different ways, depending upon the art form and the culture(s) of the people in the audience. While the audience at a dance performance will sit quietly, other types of performance invite audience participation.