Last Stop: Côte d’Ivoire with Kotchefga!

Our year of musical storytelling wraps up with the traditional music, stories, dances, and costumes of Côte d’Ivoire (the Ivory Coast), presented by the Kotchefga Dance Company. In their classrooms, students listened to a variety of rhythms that accompany each folk tale, and learned to drum some patterns, while improvising dance moves to others. They also practiced singing parts of West African songs in customary call-and-response style. This combination of
dancing, singing, drumming, and storytelling provided the students with multiple entry points for experiencing the authentic culture of people in West Africa, including the Mahou and Senufo.

**Felani**

One of the folk tales children studied in class was about an orphaned girl named Felani, whose story resembles the Cinderella archetype found in folklore from all over the world. After being mistreated by her wicked stepmother, Felani heads to the forest to forage for food and hears her mother’s spirit calling to her from inside a large fruit tree. During the concert, a narrator imparted the story while students protested in the orphan girl’s defense. Then they cheered as she re-gained her strength from the food imbued with her mother’s love and led her village to victory over evildoers. The young audience members were able to witness Felani’s dancing change and hear the rhythms pick up speed and excitement over the course of the story, becoming immersed in the multi-sensory world of Kotchegna’s culture and folklore.

**Kotchegna’s Drums**

Throughout the Kotchegna unit, students learned to recognize rhythms associated with each story, mask, or character. To deepen their understanding and aid their recognition of these rhythms, students also learned about three different drums that they would see Kotchegna play. Do you recognize any of them?
Our Talented Students!

Every student enrolled in the Musical Introduction Series receives his or her own music journal full of pictures, maps, performer biographies, song lyrics, and a variety of activity pages that provide them an opportunity to freely reflect on their musical and cultural experiences throughout the year. Unsurprisingly, the young people in our program produced some truly amazing writing, drawings, and other creative pieces inspired by the music and artists (some in their journals, and others on their own!). Here are a few examples:

A student from P.S. 189 demonstrates her understanding of pitch and instruments.

A mask designed with story-relevant symbols during the Kotchegna unit (P.S. 189).

Understanding emotions expressed by dancers in a ballet through puppetry.

A P.S. 189 student’s interpretation of Hazmat Modine’s song “Mockingbird.”

Inventing instruments for the four families of the orchestra at P.S. 527.

A class at Ella Baker School wrote a fairy tale inspired by the music of Igor Stravinsky’s Firebird Suite.

Third graders at Central Park East II acting out the story of La Revue de Cuisine with teaching artist Lynne Wilson.
A Year of Musical Storytelling

MIS By the Numbers

Participation

- 4 NYC Boroughs
- 27 schools
- 144 classrooms
- 4,000 students

Concerts

- 4 sets of concerts
- 22 performances
- 51 performers
- 18.3 hours of live music

Music

- Iceland: Maximus Musicus Visits the Orchestra
- France: Who Stole the Mona Lisa? & La Revue de Cuisine
- United States: Hazmat Modine
- Ivory Coast: Ketchegna Dance Company
“Now It’s Time To Say Adios Amigos…”

We would like to take this opportunity to extend our sincere thanks to all of our partner schools for another great year of world music education, especially the coordinators with whom we communicated extensively throughout the year, and the teachers who bring their best to the classroom every single day. It is always a pleasure to work with you and learn from each other.

Next year, our concerts are programmed around the theme of **Voices of Immigration**. We will be exploring the music of some of the most influential groups of immigrants in New York City, and are delighted by the positive responses many of you have shared with us about this theme’s connection to your classroom curriculum. If you would like your school to re-enroll in the Musical Introduction Series, you must reserve your spot before **June 20** to lock in your rate of $900 per class. After the 20th, the cost to enroll will be $950 per class. Email LGelman@92y.org or click here to register. We sincerely hope to see you in the fall!

*Here’s a sneak preview of the 2015-16 season:*