

## Performance Guidelines

- *Entering the stage area*
  - Think about an interesting way to have the group enter the performance area. Here are just a few options to consider:
    - Everyone walks into the performance area single file.
    - Performers walk into the performance area individually.
    - Performers dance as they enter the performance area.
    - Performers enter two by two.
    - Performers walk or move as animals as they enter the performance area.
  
- *Dancing and/or miming the story section*
  - *Movement*
    - Think about how you and your fellow performers will act out the story of your section of Sundiata.
    - As you create your performance, keep in mind that you will want to make your motions very clear and somewhat exaggerated.
    - You will also probably want to keep them rhythmic because your group's drummer will be keeping time on the drum as you present your portion of the story.
    - Think about how the animal you chose for your character's mask moves and behaves. You may want to bring some of the animal's natural movements to your own movements.
    - Be sure to use the space well. Each member of the audience should be able to see each of the performers.
    - Remember, there will be no talking as you present your story—just the rhythmic beat of the drum in the background.
  
- *Exiting the Stage Area*
  - Think of an interesting way to leave the stage after your group's portion of the story is presented.
  
- *Drumming*
  - Plan a three-minute section of the ceremony. While you are performing, your group's drummer will be playing the drum that he or she created. The drumming should create a rhythmic sound that supports the story that the performers are telling with their bodies and masks. Think about ways that the rhythm could accompany the emotion or action that a performer is expressing with movements:
    - Drumming gets faster and faster to show excitement and movement or chaos.
    - Drumming speeds up then stops abruptly to show suspense followed by a surprise.
    - Drumming becomes slow and loud to signal the arrival of an important person or moment.
    - Drumming creates a nice, bouncy rhythm to go with performers entering or exiting the stage area or simply going about their normal activities.

- A sharp beat of the drum provides a sound effect that signals that someone has dropped something or fallen down.
  
- *Creating masks*
  - The masks must be worn during the group's presentation, so you should pay attention to sturdiness and fit; you will also need to be able to see and speak while wearing the mask. African masks often incorporate animal characteristics. The masks must feature animal characteristics. The animal that students select for their character should have characteristics that go with the character's personality.
  
- *Creating the music for the performance*
  - Each group will have one member who is responsible for creating a drum and playing it in a rhythm that complements the actions that the masked dancers/mimes perform. The drum should resemble traditional African drums and should be "playable." The sides of the drum should be decorated with symbols or images that retell your group's section of the Sundiata story.
  - To make a simple drum, begin with a clean, empty coffee can, or other large can. Soak a piece of chamois (very soft leather available at craft stores and automotive stores), wring it out, and stretch it tightly over the top of the can. Fasten the chamois with glue and secure it by winding string, yarn, or twine around it. The chamois will tighten as it dries to form a good drumming surface. The base of the drum may be decorated with paper, fabric, and / or paint.