

UMassAmherst

Fine Arts Center

Ladysmith Black Mambazo
Wednesday, February 17, 7:00 p.m. ET
Virtual Performance with Artist Talkback



The UMass Fine Arts Center is supported by the New England Foundation for the Arts through the New England Arts Resilience Fund, part of the United States Regional Arts Resilience Fund, an initiative of the U.S. Regional Arts Organizations and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, with major funding from the federal CARES Act from the National Endowment for the Arts.

UMass Amherst occupies the traditional land of the Nonotuck tribe. We would also like to acknowledge our neighboring Indigenous nations: the Nipmuc and the Wampanoag to the East, the Mohegan and Pequot to the South, the Mohican to the West, and the Abenaki to the North.

The presentation of Ladysmith Black Mambazo is sponsored by:



THE ARTISTS

Thulani Shabalala

Sibongiseni Shabalala

Thamsanqa Shabalala

Msizi Shabalala

Albert Mazibuko

Abednego Mazibuko

Mfanafuthi Dlamini

Pius Shezi

Sabelo Mthembu

PROGRAM

1. Love Your Neighbor
2. Nomathemba
3. Thalaza
4. Long Walk To Freedom
5. Joseph Shabalala Tribute
6. Hello My Baby
7. Tough Times Never Last
8. Never Give Up
9. Nqokonqoko
10. Homeless
11. Wenothanda Bantu
12. This Little Light of Mine

ABOUT LADYSMITH BLACK MAMBAZO

South Africa's Five Time GRAMMY Award winning singing group, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, was founded in the early 1960s by Joseph Shabalala, a teenage Zulu farm boy living on the lands just outside the small town of Ladysmith. The group's name represents a combination of references: Ladysmith, Joseph's hometown, honors his family history; Black for the black oxen he worked with and the strongest of farm animals symbolizes the strength of the group's vocal singing and the Zulu word mambazo for chopping axe, a symbol of the group's vocal ability.

In 1970, a radio broadcast of a Ladysmith Black Mambazo concert opened the door to their first record contract and the beginning of a recording career that includes over seventy albums. Ladysmith Black Mambazo has earned nineteen GRAMMY Award nominations and five GRAMMY Award wins, more than any other World Music group. Their albums include: *Shaka Zulu* (1988), *Raise Your Spirit Higher* (2004), *Ilembe* (2009), *Singing For Peace Around the World* (2013) and most recently *Shaka Zulu Revisited: 30 Year Anniversary Celebration* (2017).

Apartheid, the South African social system forced upon the country's black majority to keep the white minority government in power, was a dividing force in many ways. The musicians and artists of South Africa took two paths of protest. Some sang songs with powerful messages of revolution against the horrors of apartheid. Others, led by Ladysmith Black Mambazo, followed a path of peaceful protest through songs of hope and love. When Nelson Mandela was released from prison, in 1990, he stated that Ladysmith Black Mambazo's music was a powerful message of peace that he listened to while in jail. When Mandela was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, in 1993, he asked the group to join him at the ceremony in Oslo. It was Mandela who called Ladysmith Black Mambazo "South Africa's Cultural Ambassadors to the World."

The group sings from a traditional music style called isicathamiya (is-cot-a-ME-Ya), which developed in the mines of South Africa. It was there that black workers were taken to work far away from their homes and families. Poorly housed and paid, the mine workers would entertain themselves after a six-day week by singing songs into the wee hours on Sunday morning. When the miners returned to their homes, this musical tradition returned with them.

During the 1970's Ladysmith Black Mambazo established themselves as the most successful music group in South Africa. In the mid-1980s, American singer/songwriter Paul Simon visited South Africa and incorporated the group's rich harmonies into his famous *Graceland* album (1986) – a landmark recording now considered the seminal album in introducing World Music to mainstream audiences. In addition to their work with Paul Simon, the group has recorded with Stevie Wonder, Dolly Parton, Sarah McLachlan, Josh Groban, Emmylou Harris and many others. They have provided music for many movies, have appeared on Broadway and even had a documentary film, *On Tip Toe: The Story of Ladysmith Black Mambazo*, nominated for an Academy Award.

Joseph Shabalala retired in 2014, handing the group leadership to his four sons, Thulani, Msizi, Sibongiseni and Thamsanqa. In their hands and with their voices, the future of the group is assured to continue for years to come. Ladysmith Black Mambazo carries a message of Peace, Love and Harmony as they travel the world year after year. They bring this message, in song and dance, to every theater they perform in. We hope you will join them as they spread their message.

Upcoming events:

Kristina Wong returns with her special brand of cutting wit! Two distinct opportunities to engage with the artist that brought you last Fall's *"Kristina Wong for Public Office"*.

**Stitch n' Bitch Community Craft Night with Kristina Wong
Wednesday, February 24, 2021 7 p.m. ET via Zoom**



A "Stitch 'n Bitch" is a gathering of crafty folks where they talk, listen, and work on needlecraft together. Sometimes these gatherings become a space for laughter, resistance, self-care, community building, and organizing. Meet and sew with the rock-star volunteers from Kristina's Auntie Sewing Squad, a national collective of volunteers of all genders who will take newcomers through the activity of making their own hand sewn mask and share what sewing means to them in this time. Beginners and other crafts welcome!

Free but registration is required.

**Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord
Monday, March 1, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. ET**

In her newest performance art piece, born from the COVID-19 pandemic, Kristina Wong details how she went from out-of-work performance artist to overlord of a homemade face mask empire in just ten days! With her trademark wit, she explores how she was able to build a sweatshop of hundreds of volunteer "Aunties" (including children and her own mother) to fix the U.S. public health care system while in quarantine. Wong hilariously unpacks the American Dream, America's pursuit of global empire at the cost of basic PPE to essential workers and healthy citizens, and the significance of women of color performing a historically gendered and racialized invisible labor at a time of heightened anti-Asian racism in the U.S. Tickets are \$10 per device. Free for UMass students with ID.

In the 2020-2021 season, **the Asian and Asian American Arts and Culture Program** celebrates its 27th year with a renewed mission to present the artistic and cultural heritages and living practices of the Asia/Pacific Islander region and the Asian American experience as a lens to promote intercultural dialogue and social engagement for our local, virtual, and broader audiences.

For more information about these and all UMass Fine Arts Center Events and to get your ticketing link please visit:

fineartscenter.com