



**ANNENBERG CENTER**  
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

**12/13 Season** SEPT-JAN



Courtesy Columbia Artists Management, Inc.

# Royal Drummers & Dancers of Burundi

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Wednesday, October 3 @ 7:30 PM

Zellerbach Theatre

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## Program

### Act One

<b>Kirundi language</b>	<b>English</b>
Scene 1: Guhumagara	The Call
Scene 2: Umuterero	The Long Walk
Scene 3: Kirimwo Abagabo	The Honest Men
Scene 4: Kama K'Iwacu	Our Tradition
Scene 5: Agahgbeobe	The Sacrifice
Scene 6: Agahonjohonjo	The Foretaste of the Concert
Scene 7: Amakira	Rhythm Dedicated to the Cow
Scene 8: Agakwakwano	The Peace
Scene 9: Indengera	The Travel
Scene 10: Birenzi Vy'Amahoro	Birenzi (The Cow)
Scene 11: Mvuye Kure	I Am Coming from Faraway
Scene 12: Ari Hehe Nkamwigina	Where is He?
Scene 13: Inserukira	The Ramble
Scene 14: Intamazo	The Arrival

*-Intermission-*

## Act Two

Kirundi language	English
Scene 1: Imararubanza	The Best
Scene 2: Akanyange	The Joy
Scene 3: Akezamutima	The Happiness
Scene 4: Ubumwe	The Unity
Scene 5: Dutere Tuja Imbere	Let's Go For Progress
Scene 6: Akanikizo	Exhibition
Scene 7: Amakira Y'inka	Rhythm Played When You Receive a Cow as a Present
Scene 8: Ntudengere	Stay at Your Home
Scene 9: Gira Amahoro	Be in Peace
Scene 10: Agaterero	The Little Walk
Scene 11: Ingaramango	The Acrobatics
Scene 12: Indamukanyo	The Greetings
Scene 13: Koma Amashi	Applaud Me Please
Scene 14: Inyange Ziraramye	Cows Rearing
Scene 15: Umwiyereko	The Suppleness
Scene 16: Nsanganira	Salute Me
Scene 17: Urarangwa	Bless You

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

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### The Royal Drummers & Dancers of Burundi

One of the greatest percussion ensembles in the world, the Royal Drummers & Dancers of Burundi have performed in the same way for centuries, passing down traditions and techniques from father to son. Their performances were traditionally a part of particular ceremonies, such as births, funerals and the enthronement of kings. In Burundi, drums are sacred and represent, along with the king, the powers of fertility and regeneration. The origins of their performance being shrouded in ancient legend and mystery, the Royal Drummers & Dancers of Burundi channel the energy and creative spirit of a nation through these drums and the rituals surrounding them.

The large drums, Ingoma, that are played are made from hollowed tree trunks covered with skin. The Amashako drums provide a continuous beat, and Ibishikiso drums follow the rhythm of the central Inkiranya drum. The thunderous sound of the drums with the graceful yet athletic dance that accompanies this masterful performance represents an important part of Burundi's musical heritage.

Since the 1960s the Royal Drummers & Dancers of Burundi have toured outside of their country, becoming a popular attraction at concert halls and festivals around the world. Their massed drum sound, or the "Burundi beat" as it became known, also caught the ear of Western musicians and they appeared on Joni Mitchell's *The Hissing of Summer Lawns* (1975). Their distinctive sound also influenced British rock bands of the early 1980s, such as Adam and the Ants and Bow Wow Wow. Seeing the drummers inspired Thomas Brooman to organize the first WOMAD festival in 1982, an event that helped to spark the world music boom.

The Royal Drummers & Dancers of Burundi recorded at Real World Studios in 1993 and released their live album on the Real World Label. Other recordings followed including *The Master Drummers of Burundi* in 1994 and *The Drummers of Burundi* in 1999. In 2006, the company undertook a sold-out six-week tour of the United States and Canada.

# PROGRAM NOTES

The relationship in Burundi between drum and nature is so strong that various parts of the drum are named after the concept of fertility:

Icahi – The Skin (Skin in which the mother rocks her baby)

Amabere – The Pegs (The breasts)

Urugori – The Thong Stretching the Skin (Crown of motherhood)

Inda – The Cylinder (The stomach)

Umukondo – Foot of the Drum (The umbilical cord)

The drums have lost none of their revered significance over the centuries. An ancient network of drum sanctuaries still exists in Burundi where the drums have been stored over the years. These sanctuaries are in places of importance such as royal residences ruled over by a queen, sacred groves or in forests marking the tombs of kings or princes. Known as “ingoro y’ ingoma” (the Palace of the Drums) these sanctuaries were the specific domains of family lineages who alone had the privilege of making, beating and keeping the drums and had, as a sacred calling, the task of bringing a certain number of drums to each Soughum feast. In the sanctuaries the main drum (the Inkiranya) is laid on a trestle of branches and surrounded, as though a king, by subsidiary drums (the Ingendanyi).

The Ngoma drums that the Drummers of Burundi play are hollowed out from the trunk of a particular tree called D’umuvugangoma (Corda Africana) meaning ‘the tree that makes the drums speak’. At the beginning of the twentieth century, these trees were already becoming rare and the men of the tribe had to travel far to find them. Each year they went in search of a tree from which four or five drums could be made. The chosen tree was marked and its felling preceded by a ceremony in which the drummers circled the tree while beating drums borne on their heads. The chief then sprayed the tree with a compound of herbs in order to chase away the python which was said to live in its foliage. To the salute of the drums the tree would be felled with an axe, then measured and cut up. The individual parts were hollowed out and the insides and outsides polished. The bottom of the drum was shaped with an implement called an imbazo and a band was marked with a hot iron around the base – usually the only ornamentation.

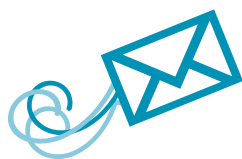
The skin, made from dried and stretched cow-hide, was pegged around the open end of the cylinder and stretched to its maximum.

In addition to the Inkiranya, there are Amashako drums, providing a continuous beat, and Ibshikiso drums, following the rhythm established by the dancer playing the Inkiranya drum.

In ancient Burundi, drums were much more than simple musical instruments. As sacred objects, reserved solely for ritualists, they were only played under exceptional circumstances and then always for ritual purposes: the major events of the country were heralded by their beating - coronations, sovereigns’ funerals and, with the joy and fervor of all Burundians, they kept rhythm with the regular cycle of the seasons, ensuring the prosperity of the herds and fields.

Nowadays, the drum remains an instrument that is both revered and popular, reserved for national celebrations and distinguished guests. The ancient lineages of drummers have kept their art alive and, in some cases, have had great success in popularizing it around the world.

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