

Media Contact:

Sarah Fergus

Marketing & Communications Manager

215.573.8537 | sfergus@ac.upenn.edu

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Hi-res images available at AnnenbergCenter.org/press or by request.

**The Royal Drummers and Dancers of Burundi
return to the U.S. for the first time since their sold-out 2006 tour**

(Philadelphia, September 5, 2012)—In “a celebration of ability” that is “sheer pleasure” (*New York Times*), the Royal Drummers and Dancers of Burundi make their thrilling return to the United States for the first time since their sold-out 2006 tour. Comprised of 22 musicians on 20 drums, the heart-stopping rhythms and athletic dancing of this ensemble channel the creative spirit of a nation. This performance will take place on **Wednesday, October 3 at 7:30 PM**. Tickets are \$20-\$55 (prices are subject to change). For tickets or for more information, please visit AnnenbergCenter.org or call 215.898.3900. Tickets can also be purchased in person at the Annenberg Center Box Office.



Rooted in tradition and shrouded in mystery, the Royal Drummers and Dancers of Burundi have performed the same way for centuries, passing down traditions and techniques from father to son. Their powerful drums were a part of sacred events, including births, funerals and the enthronement of kings, and they remain a symbol of the powers of fertility and regeneration to this day. To call them simply drummers, however, is an understatement, as their performance is “strikingly similar to what happens in a jazz jam session—more virtuosic than sentimental” (*New York Times*).

Their performance centers around four main drums. The large drums “Ingoma” are made from hollowed tree trunks covered with skin. The “Amashako” drums provide a continuous beat, and the “Ibishikiso” drums follow the rhythm of the central “Inkiranya” drum. The thunderous sound of the drums fused with the striking yet elegant dance that accompanies this performance represents an important part of Burundi’s musical heritage.

Since the 1960s, the Royal Drummers and Dancers of Burundi have toured outside of their country as a popular attraction at concert halls and festivals around the world. Their mass drum sound, or the “Burundi beat” as it has become known, has caught the ear of several Western musicians including a collaboration on Joni Mitchell’s, *The Hissing of Summer Lawns* (1975). Their distinctive tone has also influenced British rock bands of the early 1980s, such as Adam and the Ants and Bow Wow Wow. It was seeing the drummers that inspired Thomas Brooman to organize the first World of Music, Arts and Dance Festival in 1982, an event that helped to spark the world music boom.

The Royal Drummers and Dancers of Burundi recorded at Real World Studios in 1993 and released a 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 coast-to-coast tour of the United States and Canada.

African Roots Series

The Royal Drummers and Dancers of Burundi are the first of three African Roots presentations in the 12/13 season at the Annenberg Center. Upcoming presentations include **Acoustic Africa: Afropean Woman** on Saturday, November 10 at 8 PM; and **Hugh Masekela** on Sunday, April 14 at 7 PM.

INSIGHTS

September 28 at 6:30 PM

Audience members can enjoy a pre-show Taste of Burundi, featuring complimentary appetizers in the Main Lobby. This event is first come, first served.

INSIGHTS—Performance Enhancement Events

The Annenberg Center offers a range of exciting and informative pre- and post-performance events that are free for all ticket holders. Featuring discussions led by Penn faculty members, area experts and guest artists, these events are designed to illuminate the work on stage. For more information, visit AnnenbergCenter.org/INSIGHTS.

The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

The University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts has been the region's leading multi-disciplinary performance venue for theatre, dance, jazz, world music, new music and children's programming since its inception in 1971. The Annenberg Center's curatorial vision emphasizes four primary values: artistic integrity, cultural diversity, curatorial balance and a willingness to take risks. By presenting world-renowned and cutting edge artists and companies that express adventuresome perspectives on contemporary issues, timeless ideas and diverse cultures, the Annenberg Center promotes critical thinking and dialogue among its audiences, creating a uniquely rewarding arts experience.

The Annenberg Center has achieved national recognition for its outstanding, 30-year Dance Celebration series (presented in partnership with Philadelphia's Dance Affiliates), touring theatre series, and for its superior offerings for children, including both its Student Discovery Series and the acclaimed 29-year Philadelphia International Children's Festival, the oldest festival of its kind in the United States.

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Generous support for the 12/13 Annenberg Center season is provided by The William Penn Foundation, The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, The Philadelphia Cultural Fund, the Virginia C. Mulconroy Fund of The Philadelphia Foundation, PNC and The University of Pennsylvania. The Sheraton Philadelphia is the exclusive hotel sponsor.

For additional press information or to set up interviews, please contact:

Sarah Fergus, Marketing & Communications Manager
phone: 215.573.8537; email: sfergus@ac.upenn.edu

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