



2016-17 SEASON

# NEW VICTORY<sup>®</sup> SCHOOL TOOL

## THE NEW VICTORY<sup>®</sup> THEATER

### RESOURCE GUIDES

*A project of The New 42nd Street, a nonprofit organization*





# THE NEW VICTORY THEATER

The New Victory Theater is New York City's first full-time performing arts theater for kids, their families and classmates. Since it opened in 1995, The New Victory has quickly become an integral part of the cultural landscape in New York City, presenting a full season of adventurous, multidisciplinary works from around the globe and close to home. The New Vic seeks out sophisticated, thought-provoking, professional productions that are as artistically rich as they are entertaining.

The international productions on NEW VICTORY stages inform and inspire the work of the award-winning NEW VICTORY Education Program through a dynamic combination of school and public programs. Our school programs serve over 40,000 Pre-K through 12th grade students and teachers each season at almost no cost to the kids or their schools. Many of our partners are NYC-area Title I schools, with a high percentage of students who would be unable to experience live theater if it weren't for The New Victory. The enthusiastic young people who greet you on your way into the theater are part of the New Vic Usher Corps, a 3-year program that provides 27,000 hours of paid employment for 75-80 high school and college-age youth each season. Families who attend the New Vic together combine their theater-going with NEW VICTORY Family Workshops, as well as free in-theater engagement activities. Together, these nationally-recognized programs exemplify the organization's long-standing commitment to the intrinsic value of cultural participation in the lives of young people and families.

## NEW VICTORY® SCHOOL TOOL® Resource Guides

Available to Education Partners for every show in our season, NEW VICTORY SCHOOL TOOL Resource Guides provide educators with comprehensive materials that explore the artistry and key themes of each production. Filled with practical, ready-to-implement activities that allow any teacher to incorporate The New Victory into their classroom, the NEW VICTORY SCHOOL TOOL Resource Guides are designed to enrich the performance experience before, during and after the students' trip to the theater.

## NEW VICTORY Education Partnership

The NEW VICTORY Education Department is committed to building impactful and long-lasting relationships with schools and after-school programs. We believe that creating strong and meaningful partnerships between schools and arts organizations allows school communities to deeply enrich their arts programs and infuse creativity across the curriculum. By annually enrolling in the unique and award-winning NEW VICTORY Education Partnership Program, schools take advantage of \$2 tickets to NEW VICTORY school-time and after-school performances, free classroom workshops led by highly skilled teaching artists, in-depth resources and professional development that allow teachers to incorporate the arts into their classrooms.

## Making Connections to Learning Standards

NEW VICTORY SCHOOL TOOL Resource Guides align with the Common Core State Standards, New York State Learning Standards and New York City Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts. We believe that these standards support both the high quality instruction and deep engagement that The New Victory Theater strives to achieve in its arts education practice.

Please be advised that the unauthorized reproduction or distribution of NEW VICTORY® SCHOOL TOOL® Resource Guides for any purpose other than educational, such as for commercial or monetary gain, may constitute copyright infringement and may be punishable by law. For more information, please contact the NEW VICTORY Education Department at [Education\\_tickets@NewVictory.org](mailto:Education_tickets@NewVictory.org)

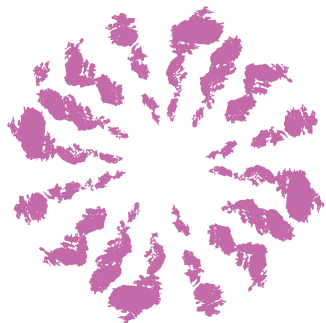
## CONTACT INFORMATION

209 W 42nd Street, New York, NY 10036  
[Education\\_tickets@NewVictory.org](mailto:Education_tickets@NewVictory.org)  
646.223.3090



NEW VICTORY® SCHOOL TOOL® Resource Guides are made possible by a generous gift in memory of Fr. John R. Scarangelo, OFM whose lifelong passion for the theater was a powerful influence on all who were fortunate to know and love him.





# CIRCUS DER SINNE

# MOTHER

# AFRICA

## MY HOME

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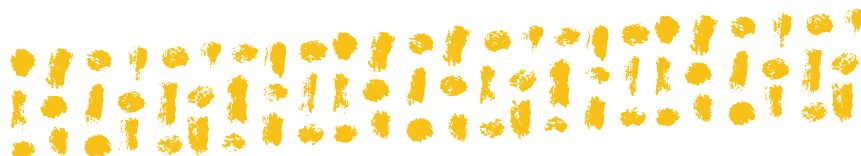
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# INSIDE

A behind-the-curtain look at the artists, the company and the art form of this production.

## COMMON CORE STANDARDS

**Reading:** 1; 2; 7; 10

**Writing:** 2; 4; 6; 7; 8

**Speaking and Listening:** 2; 4; 6

**Language:** 1; 2; 3; 4; 5

## NEW YORK STATE STANDARDS

**Arts:** 4

**English Language Arts:** 1; 4

**Social Studies:** 2; 3

## BLUEPRINT FOR THE ARTS

**Theater:** Developing Theater Literacy,  
Making Connections

**Dance:** Developing Dance Literacy,  
Making Connections

**Visual Arts:** Art Making, Making Connections

## Summary

This holiday season, experience the joyous spirit abundant in MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME, a circus spectacular set in Cape Town's largest township, Khayelitsha. Daring acrobats, jubilant dancers and mind-bending contortionists fill the New Victory stage when the sensational Drama Desk-nominated Circus der Sinne (*Mother Africa*, New Vic 2013) returns to NYC with electrifying live music and feats of extraordinary strength and dazzling skill. With performers representing the African nations of Tanzania, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Ivory Coast, this radiantly rhythmic production exudes a palpable zest for life that will have the whole family on the edge of their seats—or, better yet, dancing in the aisles!



CIRCUS DER SINNE  
**MOTHER  
AFRICA**  
MY HOME





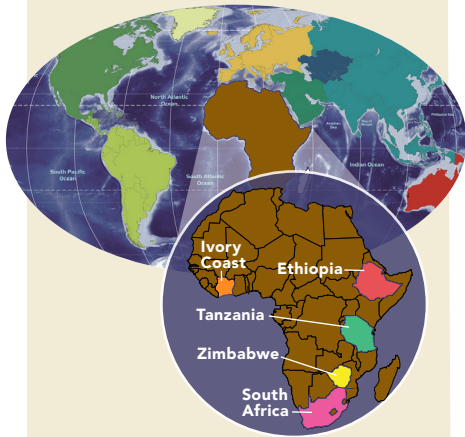
# INSIDE

AFRICAN MUSIC +  
DANCE + CIRCUS  
x SPECTACLE =

MOTHER AFRICA:  
MY HOME

WHERE IN THE  
WORLD IS  
THE CAST OF  
MOTHER AFRICA:  
MY HOME  
FROM?

Tanzania,  
Ethiopia,  
Zimbabwe,  
Ivory Coast  
and South Africa



Circus der Sinne created MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME and is based in Dar es Salaam, the largest city in Tanzania. Dar es Salaam is an Arabic term, which translates in English to "House of Peace."

Tanzania is home to the tallest point in Africa, Mt. Kilimanjaro, which rises to a staggering 19,341 feet. That's like stacking 13 Empire State Buildings on top of each other!

Wow!

## Closer Look at MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME

The company name, Circus der Sinne, is a German phrase that means "Circus of the Senses." The company prides itself on delivering shows that captivate all the senses in a blend of impressive acrobatics, spirited live music and vibrant choreography that showcases African tradition.

There are 26 cast members in MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME. Collectively, the cast represents the African nations of Tanzania, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Ivory Coast and South Africa. The cast trains at Winston Ruddle's African Acrobatic Academy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The Academy has an open door policy, which means anyone can join, observe and audition. Young people who exhibit significant talent are invited to study an artistic discipline suited to their talents and all materials, meals and daily transportation to and from the school are paid for. For most of them, the Academy is an opportunity to escape the poverty of their homeland. To date, Ruddle has trained over 150 young African performers.

MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME takes place in the South African township of Khayelitsha. In the Xhosa language, Khayelitsha literally means "New Home." The word Khayelitsha was the inspiration for the show's title. Located around 30 kilometers from Cape Town, South Africa, an estimated two million people call this township their home and a large portion of the town's population resides in self-built huts made of metal, wood or cardboard.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The cast members of MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME speak a variety of languages. The official languages of each country where the performers come from are:

- **TANZANIA:** Swahili, English (126 languages total)
- **ETHIOPIA:** Amharic (90 languages total)
- **ZIMBABWE:** English, Ndebele, Shona (21 languages total)
- **IVORY COAST:** French (83 languages total)
- **SOUTH AFRICA:** Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho, Swati, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa, Zulu (34 languages total)



# INSIDE / THE ART FORM

## MODERN CIRCUS

Modern Circus has a variety of skills like acrobatics, juggling, clowning and other physical feats. Although traditional circus is performed under a tent and includes both human and animal acts, many modern circuses are performed on a stage and do not use animals as part of the performance. MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME is a modern circus that combines traditional circus acts (including jugglers, acrobats, contortionists and unicycling) with music and dance that celebrates the culture and people of Africa!

## AFRICAN MUSIC AND DANCE

These two art forms are essential ingredients in MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME. All of the 26 artists in the show bring their talents together from different parts of the African continent to celebrate community, culture, family and the joy of performing. Dance and music are ancient art forms that are historically inseparable from the everyday activities of African society. One of the acts you and your students will see on stage is a Gumboot dance, which has traditions of rhythm, song and dance from the rural laborers who worked in the gold mines of South Africa. See if you and your students can spot this act in the show!

## WHAT DO YOUR STUDENTS KNOW NOW?

Prior to exploring MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME with your students, find out how much they already know about Circus. In addition, allow them to explore the theme: African culture.

*Have you ever seen circus performance either on stage or under a big top tent? If so, what circus acts stood out to you and why?*

*What questions do you ask yourself when you see acrobats or jugglers perform?*

*What other type(s) of acts are you hoping to see performers showcase on stage?*

*If you could perform one circus act, alone or with a group, what would it be and why?*

*MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME features dance numbers inspired by traditional African dance and accompanied by traditional African music. Have you ever seen African dance or heard African music performed before? Describe what you saw or heard.*

*The cast of MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME trains at the African Acrobatic Academy in Tanzania. Describe what you think their classes are like.*



CIRCUS DER SINNE  
**MOTHER  
AFRICA**  
MY HOME



# INSIDE / UNIT PLAN BRAINSTORM

## THE DIVERSITY OF AFRICAN CULTURES (ELA, SOCIAL STUDIES)



South Africa is often referred to as the “Rainbow Nation,” a term coined by former Archbishop Desmond Tutu to describe the country’s multicultural diversity. The performers in MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME are all from various African countries and represent their own variant of a “Rainbow Nation.” Embark on a creative writing unit that allows students to explore the history of African cultures. Over the course of a few days, have your students research the history of performance styles and techniques native to South Africa, or one of the other countries represented in the show. In pairs, have them exchange writings and draw what they feel or visualize as they learn about South Africa’s creative roots. In pairs or groups, students can share their findings and describe what they’ve drawn based on their research. To support this unit, start by giving your students the Handout: What’s That Act? in the **INSIDE** section.

## WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE YOU FROM (ELA, SOCIAL STUDIES)

Let MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME inspire a unit on learning about diversity. In MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME, five different countries, languages and cultural backgrounds come together to create a beautiful, engaging piece of theatrical magic. The number of cultural backgrounds represented in your classroom are manifold. What new things can your students learn about about their classmates’ cultural background that they never knew before? Divide your students into groups and have them share one story about where their grandparents, parents, etc., are from. Build on that by having them share one family tradition they follow. To help fuel these discussions, ask them questions like: *What is your cultural background? Where are your ancestors from? What about your family has changed over the past few generations? Where in the world would you travel to teach people more about your cultural heritage?* To support this unit, use the Creativity Page: What Are You Made Of? in the **BEFORE** section.

## CREATIVITY FROM ADVERSITY (ELA, DANCE)

Khayelitsha, the township from which this show derives its name, is the largest and fastest growing township in South Africa and was originally established as an “apartheid dumping ground” in the 1980s. The town is overpopulated and suffers from extreme poverty, poor community infrastructure and high crime rates. Still, the cast of MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME has risen above these hardships to create a piece of theater that celebrates their culture and humanity. Use the experience of seeing MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME to inspire a unit on adversity, conflict and perseverance. Divide the students into pairs or small groups and instruct them to think of a moment when something didn’t work out the way they planned, but how they ultimately overcame the challenging situation. Have them share that moment with a partner or group, describing the moment and three emotions which illustrate what they were feeling in that situation. Afterwards, lead a discussion with your students about what you would like to create as a group using everyone’s story: a collage, a mural, a dance piece or even a play? To support this, have your students do the Creativity Page: Tell It Or Dance It! in the **AFTER** section.

CIRCUS DER SINNE  
**MOTHER  
AFRICA**  
MY HOME



## WHAT'S THAT ACT?

Here are some of the acts you will see as you watch  
MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME on the New Victory stage.

Imagine how each act will start and finish. Think about the music and  
sounds you'll hear during each act and prepare to be amazed!



**UNICYCLE**—a vehicle that touches the ground with only one wheel

**HULA HOOP**—a toy hoop that is twirled around the waist, limbs or neck

**FOOT JUGGLING**—a performer juggles objects using only their feet

**HAND TO HAND**—a balancing act with performers sharing weight in various acrobatic ways



**BREAK DANCE**—acrobatic dancing distinguishable by intricate footwork, pantomime, spinning headstands and tumbling

**LADDERS**—a performer balances while climbing a precarious ladder

**ICARIAN GAMES**—a performer juggles their partner with their feet while lying down

**ROLA BOLA**—a balancing act with a board teetering on objects layered underneath

**GUMBOOT DANCE**—a rhythmic dance

**ACROBATICS**—extraordinary feats of balance and agility

**TUMBLING**—acrobatic gymnastics

**KORA**—a West African musical instrument shaped like a lute with 21 strings passing over a high bridge; it is played like a harp

**BASKET SPINNING**—a performer spins baskets and other objects on poles without them falling off

**CONTORTION**—a performer bends and twists into unusual shapes and positions

**PYRAMIDS**—performers build a human pyramid





# BEFORE

Ready-to-implement classroom activities that explore the themes and artistry of the show.

## COMMON CORE STANDARDS

**Reading:** 1; 4; 5

**Writing:** 4; 5

**Language:** 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6

**Speaking and Listening:** 1; 4; 6

## NEW YORK STATE STANDARDS

**English Language Arts:** 4

**Social Studies:** 3

**Languages Other Than English:** 1; 2

## BLUEPRINT FOR THE ARTS

**Theater:** Developing Theater Literacy,  
Making Connections



CIRCUS DER SINNE  
**MOTHER  
AFRICA**  
MY HOME



# BEFORE / ACTIVITY

# LOST **FOUND** IN TRANSLATION

The setting for **MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME** is the township of Khayelitsha, which is the Xhosa term for “my home.” The performers use the art forms of music, dance, song and modern circus elements to convey and celebrate the hardships, perseverance and joy of the people of Khayelitsha.

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** A printout of a map of Africa (included on the next page!), strips of paper with one term or phrase in an African language printed or written on them, a list of the official languages of each country the **MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME** cast members come from (located in the Inside section of the School Tool)

1. Divide students into small groups giving each student one word or phrase and its definition with the language of origin noted (Swahili, Xhosa) and a map of Africa.
2. Ask students to discuss the word or phrase and its meaning. Have students brainstorm ways to incorporate the word or phrase into an English language sentence. For example, “I have only ever been to the ukumbi wa michezo once in my entire life!” Here, the Swahili phrase “ukumbi wa michezo” translates to “theater” in English.
3. If you have students that speak other languages, encourage them to say or write their sentence in their native language, and incorporate their African language word or phrase where appropriate.
4. Once each student has brainstormed how to use their word or phrase, have the groups discuss ways to connect their sentences together to create a story or have a complete conversation. Encourage them to mold or change their individual statements as needed in order to create a more cohesive conversation or story.
5. While still in their groups, have the students locate the country of their given word or phrase on the map of Africa.
6. Finally, have each group share with the class where their language(s) is spoken in Africa!

## LIST OF TERMS:

**Art:** Unyanzvi (Shona) **oon•yonz•vee**

**Celebrate:** Célébrer (French) **ceh•leh•brair**

**Community:** Jumuia (Swahili) **joo•moo•ee•uh**

**Culture:** Inkubeko (Xhosa) **een•ku•beko**

**Dance:** Ngoma (Swahili) **in•go•mah**

**Diversity:** Kusiya (Shona) **koo•see•yah•nuh**

**Humanity:** Uluntu (Xhosa) **oo•loon•too**

**Instruments:** Hati rasmi (Swahili) **hah•tee rahs•mee**

**Music:** Muziki (Swahili) **moo•zee•kee**

**Spectacle:** Kwaleyo (Xhosa) **kwah•lay•yo**

**Stage:** Isigaba (Zulu) **ee•see•gah•bah**

**Theater:** Ithiyetha (Xhosa) **ih•thee•yay•thuh**

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

*What did you learn by speaking a new language?*

*What surprised you about your group's brainstorm?*

*How did it feel to create your own conversation using two (or more) languages?*

CIRCUS DER SINNE  
**MOTHER AFRICA**  
MY HOME

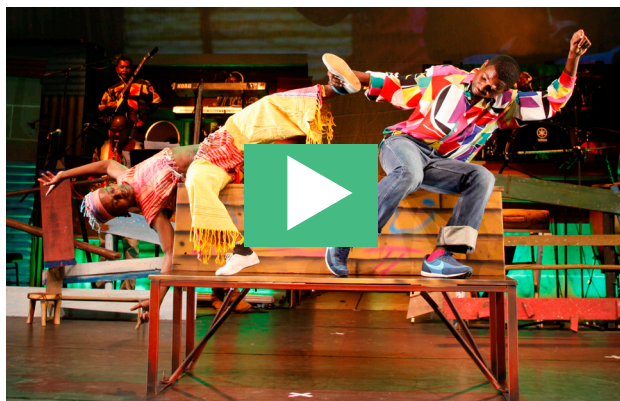


# HANDOUT





# BEFORE / RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES



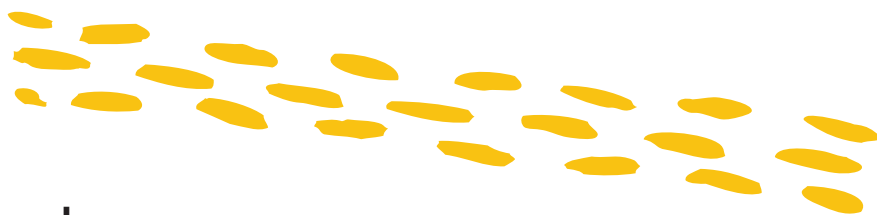
## watch

Check out the video trailer and a message from MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME!

## NEWVICTORY.ORG

While you're there, do the suggested Family Activities to learn more about the show.

## ask



### Ask your kid **BEFORE** the show:

*How is Modern Circus different from Traditional Circus? Let's figure it out together!*

*What are you most excited about for your trip to The New Victory Theater?*

### Ask your kid **AFTER** the show:

*What was your favorite part of the show?*

*Did anything about the show surprise you?*

*What different circus acts did you see?*

## visit



The New Victory is New York City's only performing arts theater exclusively devoted to kids, their families and classmates, bringing exhilarating stories, innovative art forms and unparalleled performers from around the world to its historic stage in Times Square. For a full list of shows in the New Vic 2016-17 season, visit **NewVictory.org**.





# WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME features 26 talented performers from five different African nations who combine their cultural heritage and come together to perform music, dance and gravity-defying feats of spectacular skill! Now it's time to test your knowledge and see what you're made of—literally!

**We all have a long family history complete with a storied past. Do you know where you come from?**

**FILL OUT THE QUESTIONS BELOW!**

If you don't know all of the answers, this is a great chance to talk to different members of your family about your history and traditions!

**What language(s) do you or your family members speak?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**What countries are your family members from?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**What types of music are native to your family's culture?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**What foods are specific to your culture?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**What types of dance or other social activities are a part of your culture?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**In your native language, what is one word that represents the arts?**



Once you've completed all of the questions above,  
**connect with a partner and discuss**  
with each other what you learned from this!



# EN ROUTE

Trip logistics and a brief student activity to be completed shortly before seeing the show (either in class or on the way to 42nd Street).

## COMMON CORE STANDARDS

**Reading:** 1; 4; 7

**Language:** 1; 3

## NEW YORK STATE STANDARDS

**Arts:** Standard 1; 2

## BLUEPRINT FOR THE ARTS

**Theater:** Developing Theater Literacy;  
Making Connections

## Heads Up!

MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME is a production that employs live music, dance, costumes and acrobatics rooted in African tradition. Prepare your students to watch closely and be amazed by this visual spectacle!

**PROVIDE THIS RESOURCE TO ALL  
TEACHERS AND CHAPERONES**



CIRCUS DER SINNE  
**MOTHER  
AFRICA**  
MY HOME

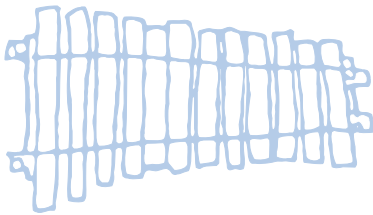


# LIFE RHYTHMS AND POWERFUL BEATS

In MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME, the performers sing and dance to the sounds of traditional African music inspired by the township of Khayelitsha.

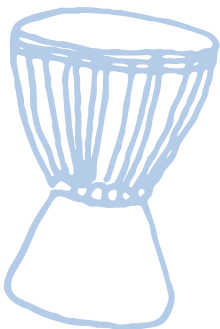
**Think about the sounds you hear in your everyday life,**  
in your house, your neighborhood or throughout the city.

**Close your eyes and imagine yourself in one of those places. Create a beat, or a series of beats, inspired by that place using your hands, your feet, your pen or pencil, or do all three!**



**Your rhythm could  
look like this!**

**BOOM, BOOM**  
**RAT-A-TAT**  
**BOOM!**  
**TAP-A-TAP-A**  
**RAT-A-**  
**BOOM**  
**BOOM!**



**Write or draw the rhythm that you just created below!**

Share your rhythms with a friend and listen to theirs.  
Work together to create a small rhythm section.

**Finally, share your rhythms with the whole class!**



# TRIP GUIDE

Provide this resource to the School Trip Leader and all teachers/chaperones attending the performance.

## Before you leave school

We advise you to LEAVE ALL BAGS AND LUNCHES at school, if possible. If not, bags will be collected by NEW VICTORY staff and stored during the performance.

Plan to arrive at the NEW VICTORY venue at least 30–45 minutes before curtain time. The building opens one hour prior to curtain (i.e. 10am for an 11am performance). If you realize that your group is running late, please contact the theater DIRECTLY at **646.223.3020**. If you will be arriving by bus, please ensure that your driver drops your group off on the **north side** of 42<sup>nd</sup> Street between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenues.

## Arrival

When you reach 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, a member of the New Victory Front of House staff wearing a green vest will check in with the school trip leader.

If you arrive by bus, they will direct your bus to a location on the street where it is safest to unload the students.

It is important to wait until our staff checks in the School Trip Leader and Bus Driver before unloading the students.

They will record the bus number and give the School Trip Leader and the Bus Driver correlating tags.

**Please remember to have the School Trip Leader and the Bus Driver exchange cell numbers.**

The Front of House staff will give a time for the bus to return to pick up your school group.

## The question of lunch

NEW VICTORY venues are not equipped to host lunch/snacks. In the early autumn and spring months, nearby Bryant Park (42<sup>nd</sup> Street at 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue) offers a pleasant place for lunching, and there are also public restroom facilities.

## Seating

In order to make your experience at the theater as efficient and safe as possible, you will not be issued tickets. Your group will be assigned seats in advance by the Education Department. Your seating assignment will not be available prior to the performance. If you have any questions, please contact the Education Department at: [Education\\_Tickets@NewVictory.org](mailto:Education_Tickets@NewVictory.org).

## Accessibility

Wheelchair accessibility: Wheelchair seating must be requested in advance, at the time of the ticket request, and is subject to availability. Assisted listening devices are available for patrons who have hearing impairments.





# TRIP GUIDE

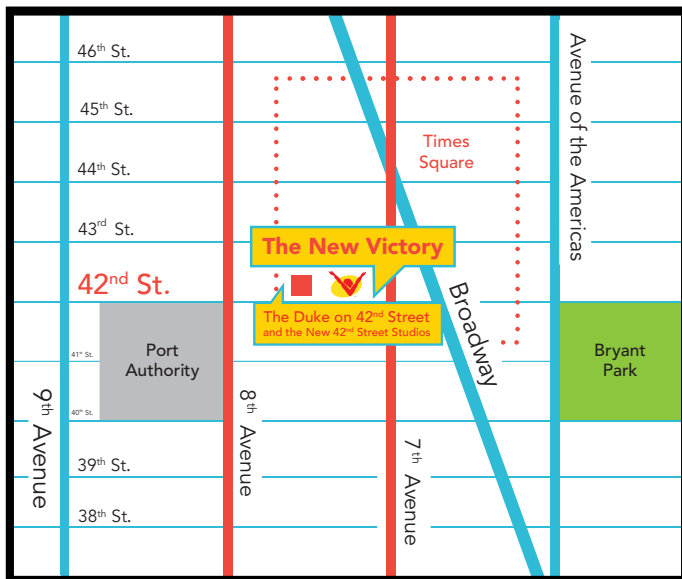
If you are traveling by bus, please also share this important information with the bus driver.

## Directions to

THE NEW VICTORY THEATER OR THE DUKE ON 42ND STREET/  
NEW 42ND STREET STUDIOS  
**209 West 42nd Street**  
**229 West 42nd Street**

### BY SCHOOL BUS

It is safest to drop off and pick up your school group on the north side of the street in front of the venue. Turn onto 42nd Street from 7th Avenue so students can unload in front of the theater space.



### During the show

42nd Street is extremely congested and has a high volume of traffic. According to the New York City Department of Transportation, vehicles are not allowed to sit idle or park on the street without special permission. Once your bus is empty, it is important that the bus driver find parking at a nearby location—see possible parking locations below.

If a driver chooses to park on 42nd Street, they do so at their own risk of being ticketed by the police. The New Victory Theater is not responsible for bus drivers who receive parking tickets.

### Possible parking locations

8th Avenue (both sides) between 38th and 39th Streets  
11th Avenue (both sides) between 39th and 40th Streets

### Pick up

Taking Midtown traffic into consideration, bus drivers should leave their waiting location approximately 10 minutes prior to the return time given by the Front of House staff. Front of House staff will also help find a spot on 42nd Street to safely load your student group after the show has ended.

### BY MTA, SUBWAY OR BUS

#### 1/2/3, N/R/Q/7

Exit the station at 42<sup>nd</sup> Street/7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. When you come out of the turnstile, take the stairs to your right. All NEW VICTORY venues are directly to the west of the subway station.

#### A/C/E to Port Authority

Exit at 42<sup>nd</sup> Street/8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Walk to 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, turn east, and continue walking until you arrive at NEW VICTORY venues.

#### B/D/F/M

Exit at 42<sup>nd</sup> Street/6<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Walk west on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street until you come to 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The venues are on the north side of the street at 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, next to the subway station.

The M10, M16, M27, M42, M104 buses all stop within one block of the venues.



# AFTER

Ready-to-implement classroom activities that offer the opportunity to reflect on and extend the experience of attending the performance.



## COMMON CORE STANDARDS

**Reading:** 1

**Writing:** 2; 3; 4

**Speaking and Listening:** 1; 2; 3; 4; 6

**Language:** 1; 2

## NEW YORK STATE STANDARDS

**The Arts:** 1; 2; 3; 4

**English Language Arts:** 1; 3

**Social Studies:** 2; 3; 4

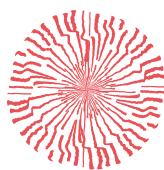
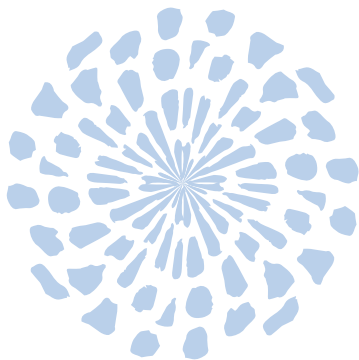
## BLUEPRINT FOR THE ARTS

**Theater:** Theater Making, Developing Theater Literacy; Making Connections

**Dance:** Dance Making, Developing Dance Literacy; Making Connections

**Music:** Music Making, Making Connections

**Visual Arts:** Arts Making, Making Connections



CIRCUS DER SINNE  
**MOTHER  
AFRICA**  
MY HOME





# AFTER / PERFORMANCE REFLECTION

Following your trip to The New Victory, you may find that your students want to discuss the performance and their own opinions. Reflecting on the show and voicing an aesthetic response is an important part of the theater-going experience. Allowing your students the opportunity to articulate their own thoughts and hear the ideas of their classmates will increase the impact of the theater experience.

**Engage in a conversation with your students regarding their thoughts and feelings about MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME. Use the following questions as prompts:**

*Did this performance of MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME change your view of what circus can be? If so, how or why not?*

*What were your favorite acts?*

*How much practice do you think the different acts took to master?*

*Did you find yourself worried for the safety of the performers or did you trust that they knew what they were doing?*

*What traditional African instruments did you see on stage?*

*What themes did you notice in the show?*

*What do you think inspired their costumes and set designs?*



## TEACHER TIP

Engaging in dialogue, asking questions and recalling observations are skills that we believe should be fostered and encouraged. When leading a performance reflection discussion, try the following model of critical response:

*Describe (I saw...)*

*Analyze (I wonder...)*

*Interpret (I think/feel...)*

*Evaluate (I believe...)*

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# AFTER / PERFORMANCE REFLECTION



Take a look at these images from MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME. Choose one that catches your eye and take a few minutes to imagine a day in the life of this performer. Combine what you saw on the New Victory stage with what you see in your imagination!

**Write their story in the spaces below!**

- What image grabbed your attention first?
- Was it the person, costume, object(s) or lights that caught your eye?
- What African country do you think they come from?
- What were they like when they were your age?

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- When they're performing their circus act, what's going on in their mind?
- How long do you think they had to train to learn how to do that?
- If they could speak through this image and say something to you, what would it be?

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- How did they discover their talent?
- How and when did they decide to become a circus performer?
- Have they ever been in another circus or stage show before?

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- When this performer is on stage, what do you think they want the audience to think and feel?
- What kind of reactions do they want from the audience?

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## TELL IT OR DANCE IT!

In MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME, music and dance combine to capture the essence of the township of Khayelitsha. Dance, as we know it, is a method of storytelling and conveying human emotion.

Gumboot dancing originated with South African gold miners during Apartheid. Workers were separated from their families and forced to work in harsh conditions. The mines were void of light and flooded with water, leading to skin ulcers and disease. Instead of draining the water to alleviate the problem, they bought the workers rubber gumboots to protect their skin. Mine workers were chained and shackled to their work areas and speaking to one another was forbidden, for months at a time in some instances. So, the miners developed their own means of communication: the **gumboot dance**.\* The miners would make sounds by slapping their boots, stomping their feet and rattling their chains and shackles.

1. Remind your students that, in MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME, they saw a gumboot dance performed. Have a group discussion about how and why the gumboot dance came about, optionally referring to the story above. You can even show them another example of a gumboot dance by using the link in the paragraph above.
2. After your discussion, divide the students into groups of three or four.
3. Have the students come up with a theme, such as “My typical morning routine” or “A night out with my family” and ask the groups to devise a scenario based on their chosen theme. Each student should come up with one sentence or idea to convey the scenario.
4. Then, ask each student to create one rhythm, without any language, that clearly represents their scenario.
5. Have them notice how their body is moving to the rhythm and ask them to make that rhythm more intentional. Then, have them put all of their movements together.
6. After each student has created their own movement, each group should work together to connect the various movements. For now, speaking is permitted.
7. Next, encourage the students to repeat the full dance with no verbal communication. The students should only communicate through rhythmic sounds.
8. After they’ve created their rhythmic conversation, have each group share it with the class.
9. Culminate this activity by asking the students to stay with their groups and stand in a large circle. Have each group go around the circle sharing their percussive conversations, ultimately creating a classroom gumboot dance!

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

*What was your favorite moment from today's activity?*

*What was it like to convey an idea or story using only rhythm and movement?*

*What was it like to create something that conveys meaning without speaking?*

*What did you learn from today's activity that you didn't know before?*

### \*TEACHER'S NOTES

This hyperlink will direct you to a video of performers doing a gumboot dance!

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# Make Your Own Costume!

Draw your unique costume below!

The costumes in MOTHER AFRICA: MY HOME are inspired by traditional African garb and modern streetwear. If you were featured in a circus, what kind of costume would you wear? Be a costume designer and think about what act you would want to perform, the functional needs of your costume, the type of material it would be made of and what type(s) of designs would be on your costume.

# Sources

<http://www.worldtravelguide.net/dar-es-salaam>

<http://www.afkinsider.com/69362/10-things-didnt-know-khayelitsha/>

<http://www.esbnyc.com/>

<http://www.ctbuh.org/>

<https://www.ethnologue.com/>

<http://www.beyondourborders.net/the-khayelitsha-project/>

<http://www.our-africa.org/south-africa/people-culture>

[https://www.teachervision.com/tv/printables/uk/Africa\\_Map\\_Blank\\_key.pdf](https://www.teachervision.com/tv/printables/uk/Africa_Map_Blank_key.pdf)

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/music/world\\_music/music\\_africa4.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/music/world_music/music_africa4.shtml)

<http://www.dancehistorygumbootdancing.weebly.com/narrative.html>

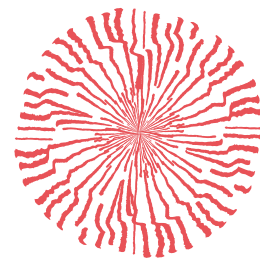
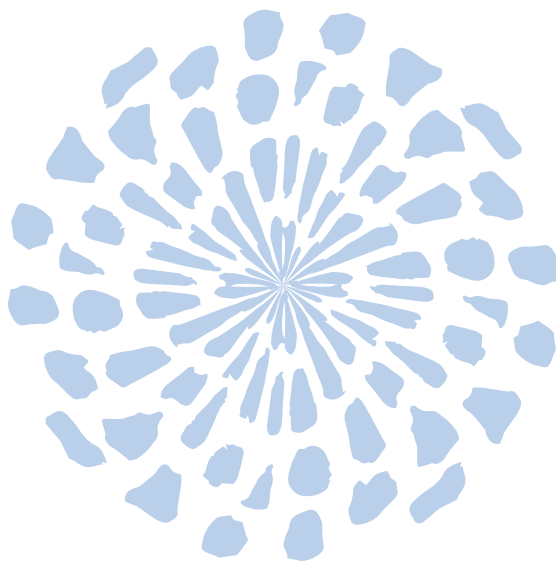
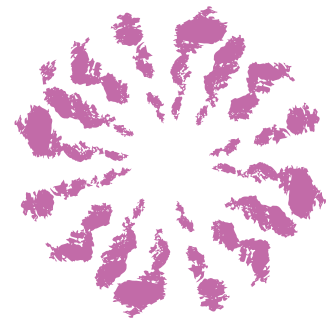
<http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/south-africa>

<http://www.circushof.com/glossary.html>

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/>

Per the Teacher's Note in the AFTER / ACTIVITY section, this hyperlink will direct you to a video of performers doing a Gumboot Dance!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gj7Y2Mq6jvl>



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