

**HANDSPRING & SOGOLON**  
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# Tall Horse

Handspring  
and  
Sogolon  
Puppet  
Companies

Education Resource  
Guide

*Intended for teachers of students  
grades 7-12.*

# Tall Horse

## Education Resource Guide

*Intended for teachers of students in grades 7-12*



*Prepared for the Fall 2005 USA tour of the Handspring and Sogolon Puppet Companies production of*  
**TALL HORSE**

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[www.ums.org/education](http://www.ums.org/education)

NOTE: This guide is intended to enhance the experience of students and teachers attending performances of *Tall Horse*.

This guide is not comprehensive. Please use the information here, at your discretion, in conjunction with other materials that meet curricular standards of your local community in such subjects as history, geography, arts & culture, etc.

**Puppets in transition. Some of the puppets featured in Tall Horse in costume, but before final painting. Photo courtesy Handspring Puppet Company. Unless otherwise credited, all production photos of Tall Horse are by Geof Grundlich**

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# The Performance at a Glance

## *Tall Horse*

**Tall Horse** is an original theater work that puts a distinctly contemporary spin on a set of 19<sup>th</sup> century historic events. It is the result of an intra-African partnership between the two extraordinary troupes, **Handspring Puppet Company** from South Africa and **Sogolon Puppet Troupe** from Mali. *Tall Horse* is inspired by a true story about the unusual gift of a giraffe from the Pasha of Egypt to King Charles X of France. In this fable of Africa and Europe, past and present, puppets and people turn the tables on historic perspective; it is the discovery of Europe by Africa that is explored here.

The script for the production was written by African-American **Khephra Burns**; the production features choreography by **Koffi Kôkô** (a native of Benin now living in Paris). Puppet design and construction was jointly undertaken by Handspring's **Adrian Kohler** and Sogolon's **Yaya Coulibaly** and their artisans. The director, **Marthinus Basson**, music composer **Warrick Sony**, video projections designer **Jaco Brower**, lighting designer **Wesley France** and many of the other collaborators are from South Africa.

During its seven week 2005 USA tour, TALL HORSE will be presented in 6 cities.

## The Story

The story centers on the life of a giraffe (portrayed by a 16-foot tall puppet manned by two puppeteers on stilts) that is captured in the Sudan in 1826, floated up the Nile in a felucca, and sent across the Mediterranean by Pasha Mehmet Ali of Egypt as a gift to King Charles X of France. It over-winters in Marseilles and in the spring of 1827, begins its 500 mile walk to Paris together with its handler Atir (played by Sandile Matsheni), and the French gout-ridden scientist, Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire (played by Bheki Vilakazi).

The idea of the giraffe-gift is put forward by the crafty Bernardino Drovetti, the French consul in Egypt. Drovetti, described as the first “wholesale tomb robber” by some historians, persuades the Pasha that this extraordinary gift will help cement relations between Egypt and France as the two countries are on the brink of war.

On its arrival, Marseilles, and then all of France, succumb to “Giraffe Fever.” Women style their hair “a la giraffe” and wear tawny giraffe hues. Europe’s “Egyptomania” and general fascination with all things African at the time is explored throughout the production, most specifically in the nobles’ need to own artifacts and keep well-stocked exotic animal menageries. An instant celebrity, this extraordinary creature is said to have inspired the very symbol of France, the Eiffel Tower.



**Atir (actor Sandile Matsheni) with Sogo Jan, the 16-foot high Tall Horse.**

## What will I see at the performance?



**A Malian castelet – here representing an antelope. The puppeteer is inside the tent-like body. Photo by Luke Younge.**

*Tall Horse* is a richly textured production that brims with innovation and ingenuity, commingling various African performance traditions and contemporary forms. Moving between present day and the past, African-American playwright Khephra Burns sets the action of the play in the storage room of a museum in Mali. It is played by a cast of 13 actors and 60 puppets; it features animated projections and an original sound score.

There are towering Malian *castalets* (see photo at right) with golden horns and sweeping grass skirts. The Pasha is a massive ten-by-ten-foot assemblage. The sixteen-foot giraffe is an engineering marvel with ears that twitch, a tail that moves, and a six foot-long neck that swoops and turns with a life-like grace.

## IMPORTANT NOTES:

*Tall Horse* contains some puppets that display the abstracted nude female figure. We realize that teaching children about the human form is always a sensitive issue and a challenge. As teachers, you have a great responsibility to educate your students. Please talk with your students about the human figure in art before coming to the performance. The photo on the right is an example of the kind of representation that will be displayed by some of the puppet characters. This representation is typical of the Bamana puppet tradition of West



Africa – one of the world's oldest, richest and most important puppetry and visual art forms. The puppets of this tradition are often abstracted rather than naturalistic portrayals of the human form; color is often employed for dramatic effect, features may be exaggerated, scale and size may be larger than life.



**A Malian puppet from the oulibaly Family Collection**

**Left: Picasso's famous cubist painting *Les Femmes d'Alger (O Version O K)* (1907). One of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's greatest artists, Picasso was heavily influenced by African art.**

# TALL HORSE Cast and Crew

<b>Director</b>	Mathinus Basson
<b>Assistant Director</b>	Mervyn Millar
<b>Scriptwriter</b>	Khephra Burns
<b>Choreographer</b>	Koffi Kôkô
<b>Puppet Design</b>	Adrian Kohler & Yaya Coulibaly
<b>Set Designer</b>	Adrian Kohler
<b>Music Composer</b>	Warrick Sony
<b>Video Animator</b>	Jaco Bouwer
<b>Costume Designer</b>	Adrian Kohler
<b>Lighting Designer &amp; Production Manager</b>	Wesley France
<b>Stage Manager</b>	Leigh Colombick
<b>Assistant Stage Manager</b>	Enrico D. Wey
<b>Sound Engineer</b>	Simon Mahoney
<b>Puppet-Makers</b>	Yaya Coulibaly & Adrian Kohler
<b>Assistant Puppet-Makers</b>	Téhibou Bagayoko, Thami Kittu, Nana Kouma, Yacouba Magassouba, Mervyn Millar, Kevin Willemse
<b>Set Fabrication</b>	Ismail & Son Set Construction
<b>Costume Makers</b>	Hazel Maree
<b>Puppeteers</b>	Adrian Kohler, Yaya Coulibaly, Busi Zokufa, Fourie Nyamande, Basil Jones, Ousmane Coulibaly, Mamady Keita, Téhibou Bagayoko, Enrico D. Wey, Mbali Kgosidintsi, Craig Leo
<b>Actors</b>	Sandile Matsheni (Jean-Michel/Atir) Bheki Vilakazi (Geoffrey St-Hilaire)
<b>Photographer</b>	Geoffrey Grundlinch
<b>Translators</b>	Nellie Orvain-Edwards, Libby Meintjies, Catherine Du Plessis, Janni Younge, Luke Younge
<b>Language Coach</b>	Fiona Ramsay
<b>Producer</b>	Basil Jones
<b>Producer, 2005 USA Tour</b>	Deirdre Valente, Lisa Booth Management, Inc.

## **2005 USA Tour Sites**

'62 Center for Theatre and Dance at Williams College; Next Wave Festival at Brooklyn Academy of Music; Pittsburgh Cultural Trust & African American Cultural Center; University Musical Society at University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Carolina Performing Arts Series at UNC Chapel Hill; The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

# Cast of Characters

**Jean-Michel/Atir (jean ME-shell/ah-TEER) (Actor)**, the play's protagonists of the present and past.

**Dr. Konate/Geofrey Saint-Hilaire (dr. Co-NAH-tay/geofrey sahn-ill-AIR) (Actor)**, scientist of today and yesterday

**Newspaperman (Actor)**, contemporary commentator and Brechtian devise, meaning that this character talks to the audience about what is happening in the story. He also serves as a narrator.



**King Charles X and his Queen, Marie-Therese in *Tall Horse*.**

**Charles X (Puppet)**, King of France

**Marie-Therese (marie-TEH-rez) (Puppet)**, Queen of France

**Bernardino Drovetti (ber-nar-DEAN-o dro-VEHtee) (Puppet)**, tomb robber and counselor to the Pasha

**Mehmet Ali (mem-et ali) (Puppet)**, Pasha (Sultan) of Egypt

**Sogo Jan (sogo john) (Puppet)**, a giraffe, the central figure of the play

**Count Grandville-Largemont (gran-vee-LARG-mon) (Puppet)**, Prefect (or chief officer) of Marseilles

**Clothilde Grandville-Largemont (clo-TEAL gran-vee-LARG-mon) (Puppet)**, the Prefect's wife

**Fashion Designer (Puppet)**

**Polito Politesse (po-LEE-toe po-LEH-tess) (Puppet)**, Mayor of Lyon

**King's Minister (Puppet)**

**OTHER CHARACTERS (PUPPETS) WHO POPULATE THE PLAY:** Assistants, Tea Lady, Valets, Guests, Ladies, People of Marseilles and Lyon, Jolie, Fifi

# Scene by Scene Synopsis

*The production is played in one uninterrupted act – 90 minutes*

## **1. Museum/Bamako, Mali**

A storeroom/archive which serves as the set for the play. Characters of the present day, Jean Michel and Dr. Konate, are introduced.

## **2. Jardin des Plantes/Paris**

The Royal gardens and menagerie in Paris. Introduction of the King and Queen of France. The play moves backwards into the 1820s.

## **3. Museum/Bamako, Mali**

As before...Present to the past. Jean-Michel is transformed into Atir and travels back to 1826 Egypt.

## **4. Sultan's Palace/Alexandria**

The idea of sending a political gift -- the giraffe-- to France is formulated.

## **5. The Hunt**

On the African Savanna. The hunt for the giraffes, which will be given as gifts, takes place.

## **6. The Nile**

Travels on the River. After they are caught in the Savanna, the giraffe, Sogo Jan, and her sister are transported up the Nile with Atir.

## **7. Port of Alexandria**

Atir and Sogo Jan leave for France.

## **8. The Journey**

Ship-bound- Atir and Sogo Jan travel from Egypt to France.

## **9. Soiree a la Giraffe/Marseilles/Debut/Prefect's Stable**

An anticipatory celebration among French society of Sogo Jan, Africa's gift to Europe. The giraffe is introduced by Count Granville-Largemont, prefect of Marseilles, and his wife, Clothilde.

## **10. Preparation**

Of haute couture coats, and scientific evaluation. The giraffe gets a raincoat.

## **11. Prefect's Stable/A shed en route**

As before...Final preparations for the walk to Paris; a meeting between Clothilde and Atir.

## **12. Egypt/French Forest/Pasha's Palace/Aviary**

A collage. This scene tracks the progress of the giraffe on the road, and by those in Paris and in Egypt.

## **13. The Storm/Strange Stable**

On the road to Paris, Clothilde visits Atir and presents him with a set of French clothes.

#### 14. Court of France

King Charles X impatiently awaits his giraffe's arrival as his queen readies herself for the day.

#### 15. Lyon

Sogo Jan is chased by an angry mob and lost.

#### 16. Storeroom/Palace

King Charles X hears the news that the giraffe is safe.

#### 17. The Forest

En route. Atir finds that Sogo Jan has run off into the woods and the two are reunited.

#### 18. Paris/Court of France

A royal procession and the presentation of Sogo Jan to the King.

#### 19. Jardin des Plantes

With Sogo Jan now installed in her new home, Atir decides to remain with her in Paris.

## Historical Context



From ancient times the giraffe has been symbolically, the most potent animal from Africa. It is by far the most frequently depicted animal in the rock art across the continent and through the centuries African kings have given giraffes as gifts to China and Arabia. The most dramatic and well-documented version of this very African form of diplomatic initiative occurred in 1827, when the Pasha of Egypt, Mehemet Ali sent a giraffe to Charles X, King of France as a diplomatic gift as the countries were on the brink of war.

Many consider this event as the beginning of an increasing flow of cultural and artistic influence from Africa into Europe. This grew throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and laid the groundwork for important developments in the fields of dance, music and sculpture that were to become so influential in world culture in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

“The center of our production is our giraffe,” says Basil Jones, co-director of Handspring Puppet Company and Producer of *Tall Horse*. “She was the beautiful gift that Africa gave to

Europe and symbolically, her progress from the Sudan, down the Nile, and across the Mediterranean to France evokes the slave journeys of that period. For the Europeans, the giraffe had aesthetic and scientific value and her arrival presaged other ‘gifts’ that were to flow out of the continent, leading to Cubism via African sculpture and to jazz and modern

dance via African music. This contact with Africa led to the revitalization of western Art, and in a very real sense, to the birth of Modernism.

## A Theater Work of the 21st Century

Drawing on the story's complex socio-political and cultural implications, *Tall Horse* explores historical and contemporary African-European relations and unites a coalition of artists. "What people sense on stage is a kind of visual politics of past and present. Two African companies are clearly sharing, merging and blending different forms of theater," says Basil Jones, co-founder and co-director of Handspring Puppet Company.

"All of Handspring's work, in some way, reflects the politics of the period our country has been traversing. For us the new century is a time for South Africans to begin our exploration of Africa. All sorts of contacts are being established in the countries far to the north of us, where it was forbidden to go during the [apartheid](#) period.\* *Tall Horse* is South Africa's first really large-scale theatrical collaboration with a West African country."

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\* [Apartheid](#), which means "separateness" in Afrikaans, was a social and political system enforced by white minority governments in twentieth-century South Africa. The apartheid era covers the period of South African history from 1948, when the formal legal framework for apartheid was created, to 1990–94, when the apartheid legal code was dismantled and the first free elections were held.

[Apartheid](#) consisted of numerous laws that allowed the ruling white minority in South Africa to segregate, exploit and terrorize the vast majority. Black Africans, Asians and 'Coloureds' (people of mixed race), were violently repressed. In white-ruled South Africa, non-whites were denied basic human and political rights.

[Beginning](#) in 1948, racist beliefs were enshrined in law and any criticism or resistance was suppressed. [Apartheid](#) was racism made law. It was a system dictated in the minutest detail as to how and where the large non-white majority would live, work and die. This system of institutionalized racial discrimination defied the principles of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



Ultimately, Blacks demonstrated, held strikes and rioted over such discriminatory practices. As a result, diplomatic pressure mounted abroad for change. In 1990, Nelson Mandela (pictured at left), who had devoted his life to democracy, equality and learning for all South Africans, was released from prison after serving almost 30 years for those beliefs. He was elected president of the African National Congress the following year, and in 1993 received the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of all South Africans who suffered and sacrificed so much to bring peace and equality to their country. On May 10, 1994, Nelson Mandela was elected South Africa's first black President, in that country's first truly democratic election.

*I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.* – Nelson Mandela, in a statement from the prison dock during his trial for treason in 1962.

# Major Themes

## Whose Story is It Anyway? Africa Discovers the West

“History will be kind to me for I intend to write it.” As Winston Churchill wryly, succinctly and accurately notes, history is determined by those who set it down. And if you are a former Prime Minister of a major world power, ‘facts’ may be recorded -- analyzed, described, teased out, dismissed – in one way . A popular historian may spin an interpretation much differently. Who you are – your prejudices and expectations – and the period, place and circumstances in which you live, play as great a role in what you write as the ‘facts’ you chronicle.

In many histories of 19th and 20th century forays by Europe into Africa, what is at stake is often nothing less than world civilization. But who civilized who? And is this even the appropriate question?

Moving from present to the past and back again, *Tall Horse* considers the signal event of a giraffe-gift from Africa to Europe as the beginning of an increasing flow of cultural and artistic influence from Africa into Europe. This influence grew throughout the 19th century and laid the groundwork for important developments in the fields of dance, music and visual arts that become so influential in world culture in the 20th century.

But it’s not all seriousness; the artists’ aim here is also to have some fun and at times, they’ve been rather fast and loose with the facts. With wit and ironic glee, *Tall Horse* turns the tables on historic perception and Africa tells its story of the discovery of Europe.

Playwright Khephra Burns: “*Tall Horse* is the product of a collaboration of artists from diverse cultures – Malian, South African, Béninoise/French, American and English. It is the story of a collaboration among Malian, French, Egyptian and Italian individuals, slaves and kings, scientists and tomb robbers, to bring an exotic, regal and exceedingly rare gift to Enlightenment-era France. Like the story’s principal characters, we ended up somewhere other than where we imagined we were going at the outset of the journey. But the road from there to here, like that taken by the Malian former slave and the French scientist, was also one of discovery. Writing for puppets presented one new challenge. Writing for actors and puppets in English and French, Arabic and Bamana presented another. But in a world where words swirl around us and delude and deceive as often as enlighten, and silence is overlooked as a wellspring of wisdom, this writer found inspiration in Sogo Jan, our giraffe, who steadfastly kept her own counsel.”

## Synthesis, Preservation

Yaya Coulibaly, director of Sogolon, constantly speaks of synthesis - things being neither one thing nor another, but both: “Africa is the wealthiest and the poorest continent, the oldest and the youngest. Europe has colonized Africa politically but Africa has colonized Europe (and America) culturally,” he says. Yaya Coulibaly, Director, Sogolon: “*Tall Horse* creates a necessary awareness of the need to preserve, celebrate and extend our traditions, not only for future generations within Mali, but for all humanity. Too, I want to show the world that that not everything important has left Africa.”

# Puppetry in *Tall Horse*

Two different puppet theater companies have joined together to create TALL HORSE and the puppets themselves and techniques used to manipulate them reflect this artistic dialogue.

**Handspring's** puppets are contemporary yet borrow from a number of traditions from around the world, including various European models, and the Japanese puppetry form called *Bunraku* – Handspring's puppets look and behave in very naturalistic albeit stylized ways. As in *Bunraku*, each puppet may be manipulated by one or, more often, several puppeteers, who are generally visible. The puppets are often  $\frac{3}{4}$  or nearly life size. The range of realistic expression is a result of the intricacies of the puppets themselves – eyes, fingers, heads, arms and legs may all move – and of the expertise of the puppeteers whose synchronized movements literally breathe life into the figures. One of Handspring's distinguishing characteristics is that characters in the company's productions are portrayed both by actors and puppets that interact together without regard to form (flesh and blood or wood and steel).



Scenes from  
Tall Horse

*Top from left:*

Yaya Coulibaly  
as King Charles  
X of France.

Introductions  
in Marseilles.



*Bottom from  
left:*

Dr. Konate  
Bernadino  
Drovetti and  
an Egyptian  
mummy.

Newspaperman  
with The Lady  
of Lyon.

**Yaya Coulibaly's Sogolon Puppet Troupe** works in the *Bamana* African tradition where naturalism is not as important and character is instead shown through very strong abstractions. Features may be exaggerated, color is vibrant and not necessarily representational, scale and size are often larger than life. Facial elements may be indicated sculpturally, by cutting deep cavities into the wood with an adze. A pair of eyes, for example, is not indicated by paint, but by the shadows thrown off by the negative space produced by the expertly carved wood cuts.

Puppetry in Mali is important in many contexts; it plays important roles in initiation societies, rites of passage and other ritual ceremonies. Puppet plays are also staged as part of marriage or funeral ceremonies, or as part of other secular celebrations. Representing the artistic expression of an ancient and extremely complex culture, the objects are often invested with spiritual and symbolic meaning.

*Sogo-bo*, a traditional and popular theater, some of whose elements are seen in *Tall Horse*, literally translates as meaning "the animals come out." It is also known as animal masquerade theater but also includes human puppet figures, masks, dancers and musicians. Primarily played outdoors, this Malian performance form is played in a highly bravura/burlesque style.

*Tall Horse* collaboration aims to merge the best of two traditions. According to Adrian Kohler, Handspring's co-founder and co-director, both parties benefit - the Mali puppetry tradition can break free from its ethnographical mode, while the Handspring puppets benefits from the dramatic effects of some of the Mali creations.

## In Their Own Words...

### A note on the puppets by Yaya Coulibaly



I am from a traditional family where the puppet tradition has been handed down for seven generations. The meeting between Handspring and Sogolon, and in particular between Adrian and my techniques of design and construction, has been a good thing, a great opportunity for meeting and exchange between countries, companies and individuals. Adrian and I are like two lungs with one heart. The relationship expands the creativity, both cultural and artistically of the production of *Tall Horse*.

As well as offering a broadening of perspective of African cultures, the opportunity to meet is developing the social connection and development between the two countries. The piece of theatre that's been created has been given both a richness of technique and of cultural diversity, a specific expression that's both physical and intellectual.

It has been a process of initiation. Both companies have been learning to manipulate each others puppets. At first they seemed like different universes, but on stage, they have combined to create a unique universe of their own. Because of *Tall Horse* these artists have grown to know each other and now they are a family. That is the social function of puppetry - to make a family of artists, and of the audience. For example, many South Africans don't know where Mali is on a map, but collaborations like this broaden all our knowledge. Africans cannot but create things together; this has been a great dream of mine that has now been realized.

It is always difficult to work with a language barrier-when you are reliant on translators; you are denied some of the direct understanding you would get in your mother tongue: in the text, and also in communicating with each other. Also it's always difficult the first time you work with a new director. When you don't know a director, you can't immediately see his vision. But as we have grown to know Marthinus, the process has become easier. It's the enthusiasm, appetite and willingness of everyone who has worked on *Tall Horse* that I have loved most - everyone from the puppeteers and actors to the technical crew. I've loved the sensibility, solidarity and friendship of the company-It's a great environment, and fascinating. I'm certain that in the performance, the public will see something spectacular....and our English is beginning to come.

## A note on the puppets by Adrian Kohler

The opportunity to collaborate with one of the oldest and most diverse forms of puppet theatre from Africa has been both a thrilling and challenging experience. With my encounter with Sogolon, I have learnt that basic forms and uses of the puppet are common to both of us, but within the Malian tradition there are many types of figure that we do not know. The Malian *castelet* - a large antelope with a fringed skirt, and the *meren habitable* - a figure carried on the head, are two highly poetic forms that we have been able to explore first hand in this collaboration.



The challenge was to find a way to mix Handspring's highly eclectic forms of puppetry, borrowed from traditions as far afield as Czechoslovakia and Japan with the Malian style. I hoped the idea of setting the piece in a west African museum would allow the many objects in the story, each with their own memories to reside side by side, despite their differences.

Early on in the project, I was fortunate enough to travel to Mali's ancient mud city, Djenne on market day. Against the background of grey-brown earth, the market was filled with every color imaginable: piles of vegetables, powdered dyes, the flowing fabrics in which the crowd was dressed. It presented me with an opportunity to move away from the monochrome design-style which we'd employed in the past. I did balk at the idea of painting the wooden carved heads, but Hazel Maree, the puppet costume designer said, "been there, done that".

When I was working in the home of Yaya Coulibaly, I had the opportunity to dig around amongst the mountains of puppets that are to be found in sacks, boxes, crates, and shelves in every room. Photographs of these served as a reference for the puppets that both Yaya and I have made for *Tall Horse*. This encounter with the ancient tradition of Mali and with Yaya Coulibaly has been one of the richest experiences of my life as a puppeteer.

## Handspring Puppet Company (South Africa)

When Basil Jones and Adrian Kohler formed it in 1981, Handspring Puppet Company initially focused on creating plays for children. This changed in 1985 when they produced their first play for adults, *Episodes of an Easter Rising*, which was an unanticipated success both in South Africa and at the triennial international puppetry festival in Charleville-Mézières, France. On returning to South Africa they staged *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1986/87), the first production in which puppets and actors interact, a device which has become an important part of their style. In the 1990s Handspring's became known internationally for several productions made in collaboration with visual artist and filmmaker William Kentridge. Handspring has appeared at major festivals and venues throughout the world.



**A Handspring puppet by Adrian Kohler.**

## Sogolon Puppet Troupe (Mali)

Yaya Coulibaly hails from an ancient family of puppeteers rooted in the Bamana kingdom of Segou. He began as an apprentice to his father and later studied at the Institute International de la Marionette in France. He formed the Sogolon Puppet Troupe in Mali in 1980. Coulibaly has created a new and dynamic puppet theater, and is the 7th generation custodian of the Bamana puppetry tradition, Africa's oldest surviving puppetry tradition.

Sogolon's performances incorporate traditional folk tales and legends and episodes from Mali's great epics, as well as colonial history and commentary on contemporary life in Mali. Hand puppets, rod puppets, marionettes, masks and live music. He has performed widely in Europe and the USA. Coulibaly is also the custodian of a vast collection of puppets, many of which have come down to him through his family. A selection of this collection was exhibited at the Gold of Africa Museum in Cape Town, South Africa in 2004.



**A performance staged by Yaya Coulibaly. The puppeteer is inside the tent-like body (called a castelet)**

*Photo by Luke Younge.*

# Arts Resources

Sources below are recommended by the Education Program at University Musical Society at University of Michigan/Ann Arbor [www.ums.org/education](http://www.ums.org/education)

## [www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org](http://www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org)

The nation's most comprehensive web site for arts education, including lesson plans, arts education news, grant information, etc.

## **Tall Horse**

<http://www.handspringpuppet.com> - The official website of the Handspring Puppet Company. Site includes cast biographies, a picture gallery, press releases about the play and giraffe tidbits.

## **Puppetry**

<http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/middle/puppets.htm>

A comprehensive website with links to resources on puppet traditions all over the world, including the Bamana tradition of Mali.

<http://www.euronet.nl/users/edotter/mali/mali.html>

A very descriptive account of the use of puppetry, song, dance and music in the Bamana annual masquerade, a public event performed on the village plaza in the beginning of June.

## **Africa**

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/africa/>

Students can explore the regions of Africa and its current social issues with this interactive website. Site also contains information about the PBS series *Africa*, teacher tools and resources.

[http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African\\_Studies/Home\\_Page/AFR\\_GIDE.html](http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/Home_Page/AFR_GIDE.html)

This guide assists K-12 teachers, librarians, and students in locating on-line resources on Africa that can be used in the classroom, for research and studies. Includes sections on country-specific information, multimedia, languages, the environment, travel, and lesson plans.

<http://www.anc.org.za/people/mandela.html> and

<http://nobelprize.org/peace/laureates/1993/mandela-bio.html>

Two biographies from two different web sites of 20<sup>th</sup> centuries most important political figures.

*A selected list of recommended books to help reinforce the Tall Horse and puppetry through literature:*

***Zarafa: A Giraffe's True Story, from Deep in Africa to the Heart of Paris***  
by Michael Allin

*Zarafa* recounts the same historic events which inspired TALL HORSE and places the story within a distinctly Western context.

***Strings, Hands, Shadows: A Modern Puppet History (DIAGram (Detroit Institute Arts))* by John Bell**

John Bell shows how puppets have been used to relay myths, poke fun at political figures, express moral stories, and entertain adults and children alike. This richly illustrated book gives a historical overview and looks at the wide variety of this traditional art form. Definitions and descriptions of a variety of puppet styles, including shadow puppets, marionettes, hand puppets, rod puppets, and many others, add to the understanding of this fascinating form of art.

***Puppetry : A World History* by Eileen Blumenthal**

Through her narrative and 350 illustrations, Blumenthal, a professor of theater arts, takes the reader through an exhaustive history of the puppet world, from prehistoric times to Tony-winning Broadway hit *Avenue Q*. Although writing from a Western European-North American perspective, she doesn't neglect non-Western forms (Javanese shadow puppets, Japanese rod puppets, the Bamana puppets of Mali, etc.).

***History of Africa* by Kevin Shillington**

In a single volume, *History of Africa* offers an illustrated and critical narrative introduction to the history of the continent from earliest times to the present. Beginning with the evolution of mankind itself, the book traces the history of Africa through the millennia of the ancient world to the centuries of medieval and modern Africa. The clear and simple language the wealth of carefully chosen maps combine to make an essential and accessible text.

***Hands-On Africa: Art Activities for All Ages Featuring Sub-Saharan Africa* by Yvonne Merrill**

The latest in this series of lavishly photographed and fact-filled craft books invites children to explore the wildlife and indigenous peoples of Africa. Making masks from Zaire and hats in Nigerian fashion are two of the many ways readers can evoke the spirit of Africa. The crafts use common materials in unusual ways.