



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 22, 2009

Kuungana: African Drum and Dance Family Concert in Midland

What: African Drum and Dance Concert
When: Friday, February 13, 2009, 7. 30 – 9 pm
Where: Creative Spirit Center, 1517 Bayliss Street, Midland
Cost: \$10 per person/\$30 per family (up to five persons)
Information: Call 989-837-1885 or visit www.creativespiritcenter.org

[Midland] – Creative Spirit Center brings a return engagement of Kuungana African Drum and Dance to Midland on Friday, February 13. The high-energy troupe of more than 25 performers offers a non-stop show that brought a sold-out audience to its feet when Kuungana performed at Creative Spirit Center in 2008. Ticket prices are family-friendly for this fun and festive show. Making audience participation a part of the fun, the expert yet engaging performers create a comfortable environment for people to listen, dance, or join the troupe in drumming onstage. The powerful rhythms, colorful costumes, and natural demeanor of the performers leave audience members energized and relaxed, smiling and satisfied. “We are delighted to bring Kuungana back to Midland,” says Creative Spirit Center’s Creativity Director Sarah Gorman. “Like The Pigeon Creek Shakespeare Company, whom we hosted in December, these performers have a passion for their art and their greatest joy is to share it with an appreciative audience.”

About Kevin Collins and Kuungana

As a longtime member of the music scene in Flint, percussionist Kevin Collins spends countless hours teaching his many students about African culture through his Kuungana African Drum and Dance Company. “We have a mantra: In order to reach one, we have to teach one,” says the 48-year-old Collins, who has recorded his own CDs, played with plenty of local jazz musicians over the years, and keeps his troupe busy with shows around the state.

For their Midland performance, the members of Kuungana will demonstrate their skills on exotic instruments such as the djembe and accompany the drumming with traditional dance. “We do music that is thousands of years old,” said Collins, who formed the group 12 years ago. “We don’t make any of it up. “There’s so much tradition that the children learn -- what the drum is for, how to get the sounds out,” he says. “Maybe they can learn the craft and keep doing it. It’s meant to be passed on.” Happy to bring African culture to local audiences, Collins has members of his troupe explain the motives behind the music. “We talk about the folklore, the meaning of the dances, and the meaning of the drum rhythms,” he said. “I think people have to go in and search their own culture as well. The culture is just so important.”

More than 25 vividly costumed performers, some as young as three years old, bring authentic African rhythms, color, movement, and high energy to the programs. “*Kuungana* means ‘to be connected’ in Swahili,” says Collins. “When we come into a community, we want to make connections with people and help them connect with each other. We bring connections to the history of this music and in Midland we will offer audience participation in our program.”

About Creative Spirit Center

Creative Spirit Center is a not-for-profit community arts organization founded in 1994. The Center's mission is to create an environment for people of all ages to experience the creative process through ongoing classes, conferences, concerts, speakers and outreach programs; and its goal is to enhance the development of physical, psychological and spiritual wellness through the arts and humanities.

Printed Winter/Spring 2009 schedules showing all classes and events at Creative Spirit Center are available at no charge. Telephone 837-1885 to have schedules delivered to your business or location, or mailed to your home.

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Baba Kevin Collins leads Kuungana