

MEET CHARLES AHOVISSI

Charles is a professional dancer, performer, drummer, choreographer, costume designer and tailor. He is also artistic director of African Culture Connection, a non-profit organization.

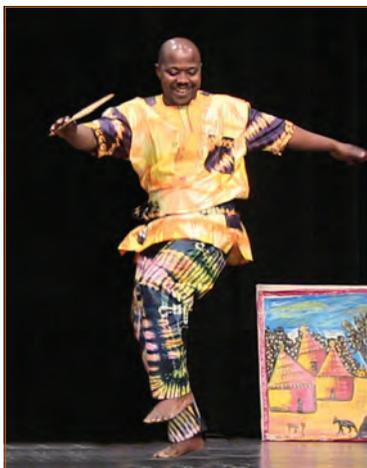


From 1986 – 2000, Charles toured Africa, Europe, Asia and the United States as a member of the Ballet National of Benin performing and teaching traditional African dance and drumming.

When Charles relocated to Omaha, NE in 2000, he brought his passion for authentic African drumming, dance, and arts with him and began providing cultural education as a registered teaching artist for both the Nebraska Arts Council and the Iowa Arts Council.



Charles has become an American citizen and retains his love for his birthplace. He encourages other African Americans to take pride in their heritage and everyone to treasure the richness all cultures offer.



Charles has been a recipient of the Governor's Heritage Arts Award as well as the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award.

TESTIMONIALS

This project showed us a new way to tell stories and communicate. Now I can get up in front of others and do things I never thought I could.

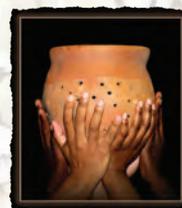
Briana, Student, Beveridge Magnet School

I would absolutely recommend this program. Students were able to immerse themselves into African culture more readily with Charles than with classroom teachers. It supports national arts standards in multiple subject areas, increases knowledge of another culture, exposes students to the ideas and reasons for customs that seem unusual to them and engages them through many modalities.

Rebecca Gibson, Music Teacher, Pinewood Elementary School

We all had to work as a team to get it right. Some of us found it hard but we did it. We all got better.

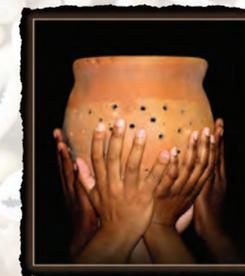
Manuel, Student, Lewis & Clark Middle School



HWENDO
Celebrating the Culture of West Africa

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7925 South 157th Street, Omaha, NE 68136



HWENDO
Celebrating the Culture of West Africa



TRADITIONAL AFRICAN DRUMMING, DANCING & CRAFTS

WITH *Charles Ahovissi*



Through Hwendo, Charles Ahovissi provides multicultural lessons by giving students authentic, hands-on experiences with West African culture.

“Hwendo” in Charles’ native language, Fon, means “Our origin and culture will not disappear.” It is his goal to keep his culture alive by sharing his love of Africa and knowledge of its fascinating cultures.



Charles believes every child deserves a past, present, and future. As students discover Africa’s diverse cultures, they are encouraged to consider how their own culture impacts their life.

He creates an authentic African village ambiance on site and uses ceremonial African clothes and traditional instruments to engage students while teaching about West African dancing, drumming and singing.



A variety of activities can be included in educational programs. Charles is available for short term engagements, teaching residencies and advanced level drumming and dance classes.

AFRICAN DANCING

Traditional African dance movements are athletic and teach how to move every part of the body to the rhythm. Students warm up with basic African movements and learn an authentic African dance.



AFRICAN DRUMMING

Drumming is an essential component of African dance. The energy of the drums forms a triad with dance and song which is very important in African Tradition.



Rhythm activities use traditional instruments – Zinli drum, Beoun Beoun drum, Kpawle drum, Djembe drums, cascagnetes, gongs, balafon, talking drum, and water percussion. If resources are available, students can create their own instruments.

AFRICAN CRAFTS

Students can imprint fabric with hand carved Adinkra stamps made of calabash (gourd) while learning each symbol’s meaning. They could also make masks, headbands, ankle bells, jewelry and shakers.



AUTHENTIC AFRICAN PERFORMANCES

Rhythmic drums, voices calling the ancestors, and traditional ornate costumes captivate audiences of all ages.

Performances are a wonderful blend of music, dance and narration and are typically 45-60 minutes long.

Audiences see three types of traditional West African dance: sacred, royal and popular. Each dance has its own vibrant costumes and traditional music.

Charles performs both individually and, for larger events, with a group of other African master drummers.



LEARN MORE

A DVD of Charles teaching and performing is available for organizations and schools to preview. Please contact Charles to receive a copy.

For more information or to schedule lessons or performances, call (402) 238-8259 or send an email to charlesahovissi75@gmail.com.