

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Shawn Farley or Carolyn Kilmer at 545-3671



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 15, 2006

WHAT: Center Series presents: Children of Uganda

WHEN: Wednesday, April 26 at 7:30pm

**WHERE: Fine Arts Center Concert Hall
University of Massachusetts Amherst
Call 1-800-999-UMAS or 545-2511 for tickets or
go online to www.fineartscenter.com/tickets**

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“Boundless exuberance, athleticism and high-energy abandon.”

- *The Oregonian*

[Children of Uganda return to the Fine Arts Center for a celebration through dance and song.]

Hailed as “first rate” and “inspiring” by *The New York Times*, the award-winning Children of Uganda bring their breath-taking performance to Fine Arts Center audiences on Wednesday, April 26 at 7:30pm. With pulsing rhythms, quicksilver movements, powerful drums, lyric flutes, songs of joy and hope, Children of Uganda perform exhilarating programs of East African music and dance with commanding skill and an awesome richness of human spirit. These twenty children, ages eight to eighteen, are ambassadors for Uganda’s 1.7 million AIDS and war related orphans. They promote global awareness of the AIDS crisis in Uganda and raise funds for fellow orphans in their homeland.

Directed by Peter Kasule, a musician/composer born in Kampala, Uganda and produced by the Uganda Children’s Charity Foundation (UCCF), these performances are cultural presentations of the highest caliber for audiences of all ages. Through appearances at universities, community and civic theaters, schools, churches, and on local and national television, Children of Uganda confirms the transformative power of art, and demonstrates the importance of sharing culture across generations and across borders.

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The performers live in one of several orphanages supported by the UCCF. They tour to the USA every other year to raise awareness about the worldwide HIV/AIDS crisis and to raise funds to support themselves and the more than 700 other children in UCCF's grassroots programs. Children of Uganda has appeared on *The Late Show with David Letterman* and *The Sharon Osbourne Show*. They have performed at the White House and for corporate events for such organizations as the World Bank, MTV/Nickelodeon, Morgan Stanley, Pfizer and Nike. Other appearances include AIDS benefits chaired by Elizabeth Taylor and Magic Johnson and in 2003; they performed as part of Grammy week in NYC at the MusicCares benefit honoring U2's Bono.

The dual crises of civil war and AIDS in Uganda pose a serious threat to the complex fabric of family and village life that previously nurtured and depended on a rich and varied oral culture. Children of Uganda was originally founded to teach orphaned children the songs, dances and stories that were in danger of being lost. At home, the ensemble includes many young people who perform at special events, weddings, and memorials, for visiting dignitaries, and at other celebrations. Twenty of these extraordinary performers share their stories on tour, promoting East African culture and increasing awareness of the HIV/AIDS crisis in their homeland.

Tickets are \$35, \$25, and \$15; Youth 17 and under are \$10; and Five College Students are \$15, \$10 and \$7. For tickets and information, call the Fine Arts Center Box Office at 413-545-2511 or 1-800-999-UMAS, or tickets may be safely purchased online at www.fineartscenter.com. For a downloadable press release and pictures, go to www.fineartcenter.com/press. This performance is sponsored by WFCR 88.5, The Recorder and Valley Kids.

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