

## LAMBARENA

Dear Educators,

This winter, Oregon Ballet Theatre brings to Portland, *Lambarena*, the exuberant ballet choreographed by Val Caniparoli with music from the CD entitled *Lambarena – Bach to Africa (An Homage to Albert Schweitzer)*. Since the ballet's creation in 1995, more than 20 companies from South Africa to Cincinnati have welcomed it into their repertoires. We are pleased to perform *Lambarena* in its entirety to a full house of students at the Keller Auditorium for our Student Performance Series on February 26th at 11:00 AM with doors opening at 10:30. The performance will also include a demonstration of Ghanaian drumming by nationally acclaimed local artist Obo Addy, joined by Charles Armah.

This Curriculum Study Guide is offered as a resource for preparing students to get the most out of this ballet. *Lambarena* weaves ballet and African dance movements together with vocal and instrumental music from works by Johann Sebastian Bach and the Gabon region of Africa, with costumes and lighting that complete the mix of aesthetics. While the dance is a tapestry rich with elements, Caniparoli said in an interview with OBT dance historian Linda Besant,

*"People try to read more into Lambarena than it is. Relax. It wasn't meant for anything more than a celebration of cultures, music and dance and collaboration."*

So when you come to the ballet, be prepared to simply enjoy the beautiful celebration.

See you at the theater!

Kasandra Gruener, MA  
Director of Education and Outreach



Alison Roper and Ilir Shtylla  
in Val Caniparoli's *Lambarena*  
Photo by Andy Batt

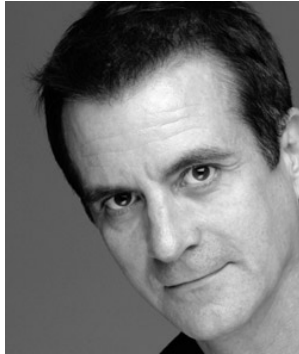
### CONTENTS:

- The Choreographer
- Elements of *Lambarena*
- Internet Sites

A hands-on visual activity entitled "Lesson Plan: Weaving *Lambarena*" represents the information from this study guide and is available for download at: [www.obt.org/outreach\\_sps.html](http://www.obt.org/outreach_sps.html)

## LAMBARENA THE CHOREOGRAPHER

Val Caniparoli grew up in Renton, Washington studying music but not dance. He went to Washington State University and studied music, education and theatre. When a touring dance company performed and taught dance classes at WSU, the instructor saw his talent and suggested that he audition for San Francisco Ballet School. In a 2005 interview by Dean Speer for Ballet-Dance Magazine, Caniparoli recounts, "I quit school at WSU, much to the objections of my parents, but those objections went away after I was offered a company contract with the San Francisco Ballet after only a year and a half of study. That contract started around 1972 or 73. This year I signed my 32nd contract with SFB! I'm still considered a 'dancer.' I use that term loosely though, but now consider myself a choreographer first and foremost."



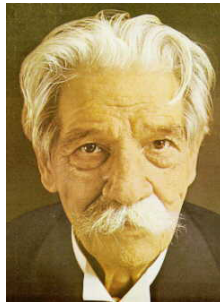
Caniparoli wanted to create a work for San Francisco Ballet that especially suited one of the principal dancers. In his search for music, a friend sent him a CD that had been produced in Paris. After hearing it, Caniparoli said, "Within seconds I knew that this was it!"

**LEARN MORE** about Val Caniparoli by going to San Francisco Ballet's 75th Anniversary website:

<http://www.sfballet.org/at75/events/valcaniparoli.asp>

## LAMBARENA'S MUSIC

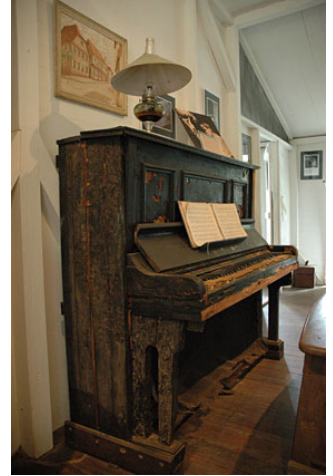
French composer and producer Hughes de Courson and African author and musician Pierre Akendengué conceived the CD *Lambarena – Bach to Africa (An Homage to Albert Schweitzer)* in 1993 from the original concept by Mariella Bertheas. It is a work born out of respect for Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965), a 1952 Nobel Peace Prize winner who is remembered as one of the 20th century's greatest humanitarians for his medical missionary work in Africa and for his work for peace in the world. Living in the Alsace region of Germany (later to be part of France), he was an accomplished musician and organ scholar with a special reverence for the music of Bach. He began his career as a professor of theology, becoming principal of a school for a time before determining that he would go back to college and become a medical doctor in order to go to Africa and create a hospital there.



ELEMENTS OF LAMBARENA: A WEAVING—NOT A MELTING POT—OF MUSIC, DANCE AND CULTURES

## LAMBARENA'S MUSIC, CONTINUED

When Schweitzer went to Lambaréné in what is now the African country of Gabon, his friends shipped him a piano with an organ-like pedal upon which he played the music of his beloved Bach daily at noontime. Meanwhile, the sounds of equatorial Africa pulsed outside his rooms. Since Schweitzer's time, many have been drawn to the indigenous music of West Africa. In an article for *Dancer Universe*, Lisa M. Browder recounted the words of ethnomusicologist Ivan Lantos. After traveling with a National Geographic crew to Africa to record traditional Gabonese music he said, "This is some of the rarest music on the planet. Traditional Gabonese singing is predominantly **polyphonic** and **polyrhythmic**, which means that they do autonomous melodies and rhythms at the same time. You'd imagine that you've got a billion insects, gorillas and mandrills shouting at once. The village music represents that same thing. There might be 50 women, each singing a different song, but the combined noise is audio perfection. Beautiful, insane and raw." Browder further explained that traditional accompaniment may include the mouth bow, harp, Kora (a complex chordophone), Balafon (also known as the marimba) and of course, a predominance of percussion instruments like the Djembe, Sabar, Tama (Talking Drum) Kutiro and Djun Djun.



It is this European and African juxtaposition of Schweitzer's "sound world"—the music of Bach and the native melodies and rhythms of Gabon, his adopted homeland—that join together in the music for the ballet *Lambarena*.



photos this section from [www.legabon.org](http://www.legabon.org)



**QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS:** What would it have been like to stand near the buildings of the Lambaréné hospital at noon while Schweitzer was playing an orderly and melodic piece of Bach on his instrument? You are near the lapping Ogooué river and a lush rainforest where apes whoop and great birds loudly call out, where women **chant** traditional songs as they walk by. A drummer's hands beat out a rhythm on his **djembe**. Imagine the combination of sounds you would hear.



**QUESTIONS FOR OLDER STUDENTS:** Think about the idea of inventing new music by mixing recorded music and environmental sounds. For example, if you sat on a park bench during the 1980's, you might have heard the accidental mixture of car horns, children singing jump rope songs, teenagers with their high volume boomboxes and birds squawking. This variety of sounds could be considered a musical score. Nowadays people walk around with ipods and earbuds so that they alone hear the juxtaposition of sounds. How does new technology have an effect on the way we hear and create new music?

#### VOCABULARY:

**chant:** A vocal phrase or musical passage that may be repeated over and over with a simple singsong styling, often in unison by a group.

**djembe:** Pronounced *jem-bay*. A hand drum played with bare hands. It has ropes tied around the drum which effect the tone of the drum. The name means "to gather" and "everyone"—so it is a drum for bringing people together. This drum can be heard in *Lambarena*.



**polyphonic:** In music, consisting of two or more largely independent melodic lines, parts, or voices that occur simultaneously.

**polyrhythmic:** More than one, often many, rhythms going on simultaneously. We hear this when a group of drummers work together each doing their own rhythm at the same time.

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*"The dancing in Lambarena is not 'contemporary' dance. It is ballet dance along with African dance—done together. Both are to be respected."* - Maiqui Mañosa, *repetiteur* for Lambarena, in a talk to the OBT company dancers

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#### SEARCH THE INTERNET:

Google "Johann Sebastian Bach" for many resources. Here is just one: <http://www.jsbach.org/index.html>

Go to iTunes and search *Lambarena – Bach to Africa (An Homage to Albert Schweitzer)* You can listen to 30 seconds of each track for free, or download the entire CD for a fee.

Here is the direct link: <http://itunes.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewAlbum?id=215515975&s=143441> *Lambarena – Bach to Africa (An Homage to Albert Schweitzer)*

Hear a recording of Albert Schweitzer playing a fugue on the organ. Includes pictures of Schweitzer and his original vinyl record. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sXJ\\_v9fHqG0&NR=1](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sXJ_v9fHqG0&NR=1)

Hear a track from *Lambarena – Bach to Africa (An Homage to Albert Schweitzer)* and see pictures of animals from the Gabon region of Africa. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtOpSOqh4-U&feature=related>

A site that has a large catalogue of recorded animal sounds. <http://www.junglewalk.com>

This is a site that has a very interesting virtual museum of art, archeology, and cultural history of the land and peoples of Gabon. <http://www.gabonart.com/>

A gallery of archival photos of the medical compound in early Lambaréné. The 36th and 37th pictures show the piano-organ and the room in which Schweitzer played. [http://www.legabon.org/livre/Lambarena\\_en.php](http://www.legabon.org/livre/Lambarena_en.php)

#### LEARN MORE ABOUT ALBERT SCHWEITZER

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

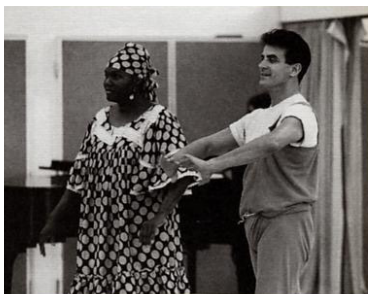
Click on the "English" tab. On the left hand side of the English homepage, click on the section "Life and Work" to learn more about Albert Schweitzer. Click on "Lambaréné" to learn more about the hospital he established in Africa's equatorial rainforest.



## WEST AFRICAN DANCE AND BALLET

*Lambarena* was choreographed in the United States, built from movements that originated from the cultures of Europe and Africa—it is a choreographic mingling of ballet and traditional West African dance. Ballet evolved into its present movement style out of the royal courts and folk dances of Europe and is now taught and performed all over the world. Dance in Africa has always been integral to the culture of its people and continues to travel the world as African people find themselves in new lands. Traditional African dance comes from observations of the world and activities of daily life—about such things as fishing, harvesting, local animals, life transitions and stories. African dance is passed from dancer to dancer, as is ballet, down through the years, heedless of national borders. At a Master Class held at OBT's studio African Dance specialist and *repetiteur* for *Lambarena*, Naomi Diouf, spoke about the effect of dividing Africa into countries, thus severing cultural exchanges and dividing families. "The dances people knew didn't have any boundaries, they were part of the people and if the people moved over here, the dances went with them and if the people moved over there the dances went there. But if someone put a line between them... the people still had the dances." And those dances continue to freely travel the world.

Diouf pointed out an important distinction about the dance of Africa. She stated that African dance and music are completely linked—there is no dance without the drummers' laying down rhythm upon rhythm. African dancers don't count the beats or measures as dancers do in ballet. Instead they listen to the cues from the drummer to know what to do next.



African traditional dance utilizes the whole body—shoulders, hips, spine, arms, legs, feet, hands, head and eyes—often engaging every part at once in different **spatial directions**, **levels in space**, and rhythms. It is very **aerobic**. Ballet uses the whole body as well. At the theater we will look at both dance forms.

Val Caniparoli was a ballet dancer before becoming a choreographer so it is natural to assume that he creates a ballet working from the ballet movement vocabulary. He does this in *Lambarena* with the addition of West African dance movements. It is very important to him that when ballet movements are to be done, they must be done purely—the legs must be in **turn-out**, toes pointed, ballet poses accurate. The same attention to detail is true when the dancers do the West African movements. These two cultural movement forms come together in rapid succession, even simultaneously within the body of the dancer—especially when we see the women dance lightly on **pointe** while staying grounded to the earth. In *Lambarena* the women reach to the sky on **pointe**, and then softly flick their hips to the side in an African turning pattern. They do this pattern in a **canon** form such as Bach employed in his music. The men leap high in the air, doing a **grande jeté**, and then chug forward with deeply bent knees, hands outstretched as if offering large plates of grain.

### VOCABULARY:

**aerobic:** An aerobic activity increases the heart rate and respiration.

**canon:** Canon form is also used in dance composition where a phrase is done exactly by 2 or more people, but started at different times. It originates from the musical technique in which different instruments or voices enter one after the other, each playing or singing exactly the same sequence of notes, resulting in often complex counterpoint. An example is the song "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" when sung by groups of people one after the other.

**grande jeté:** A large flying leap in the air where the two legs are flung widely apart.

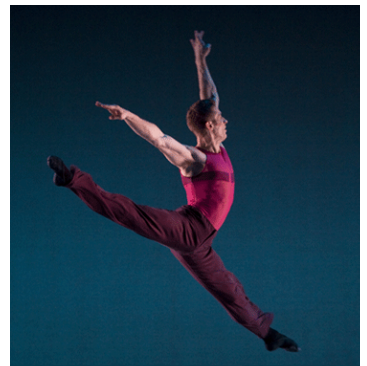
**levels in space:** Movements that range from low near the ground to highly lifted to the sky.

**pointe:** To stand on the tips of the toes

**repetiteur:** A person who knows the choreography of a ballet and teaches it to a dance company. Often this person was in an early cast of the ballet or was an assistant to the choreographer.

**spatial directions:** The various directions that body parts move in relation to the body—such as arms to the front, to the side, above the head. It can also mean the direction the body is traveling—jumping forward, falling backward.

**turn-out:** The outward rotation of the legs which starts at the thighs and continues down the whole leg, resulting in the toes pointing away from the midline of the body. Turn out is a very important aspect of ballet and less often employed in other forms of dance.



grand jeté



levels in space



pointe



turn-out



**ACTIVITY FOR STUDENTS:** Try to do a canon (like the singing of Row Your Boat). Make up your own or use this simple 4-part movement pattern.

march in place for 4 counts,  
spin for 4 counts,  
jump in place for 4 counts,  
slowly bend to touch toes for 4 counts.

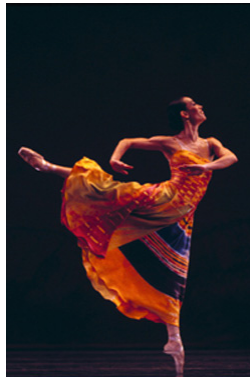
Everyone learns to do it. Then break into 3 groups and do it as a round: 1st group starts, 2nd group begins after 4 counts, 3rd group begins 4 counts later. Then break groups in half, so students can watch each other.

## UNANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

While Caniparoli did not intend a dance about Schweitzer, it seems that it nonetheless reflected something of the time and place of Schweitzer's *Lambaréné*. Dance historian Linda Besant recounts in her playbill article that when Rhena Schweitzer Miller, Albert Schweitzer's daughter, saw the ballet in San Francisco she came to Caniparoli and declared to him, "You must have been there, you captured the colors and feelings of *Lambaréné* perfectly." Of course he had never been to *Lambaréné*.

## COSTUMES AND LIGHTING

Sandra Woodall designed the costumes and background for *Lambarena*. The costumes are hand painted silk in patterns that remind us of African textiles. The cut of the women's dresses reflects the **bodices** and long skirts of Bach's era. The men's trousers remind us of the **breeches** worn in Bach's era, too. The lighting's colors and patterns created by **gobos** compliment the warm, joyful and natural tone of *Lambarena*, suggesting lighting at different times of day or the light that filters through jungle trees.



Evelyn Cisneros in "Lambarena"  
Photo: Lloyd Englert

### LEARN MORE:

Sandra Woodall  
See Oregon Ballet Theatre's Student Performance Series Study Guides: October 2007 Germanic Lands 10-18-07)  
[www.obt.org/outreach\\_links/SPS\\_Germanic07.pdf](http://www.obt.org/outreach_links/SPS_Germanic07.pdf)

Lisa Pinkham  
See her biography: [http://www.abt.org/education/archive/designers/pinkham\\_l.html](http://www.abt.org/education/archive/designers/pinkham_l.html)

### VOCABULARY:

**bodice:** The part of the dress that covers the upper body

**breeches:** Pants with legs that come to the knee

**gobo:** A template cut into a design pattern that sits in the lighting instrument between the bulb and the lens, allowing the light to shine only through the holes in the template. The word may come from **G**oes **B**efore **O**ptics or **G**raphical **O**ptical **B**lack**O**ut.

## COLLABORATION: LAMBARENA AND BEYOND

OBT's is collaborating with Obo Addy and Homowo African Arts and Cultures. The two companies' Education and Outreach teaching artists have joined together for a residency that explores ballet and the dance and music of Ghana. For more information on how to bring this residency into your school, please contact [outreach@obt.org](mailto:outreach@obt.org) or call: 503 227 0977 x212.

### SEARCH THE INTERNET:

Go to OBT's website to find out about residencies for your school [http://www.obt.org/outreach\\_residencies.html](http://www.obt.org/outreach_residencies.html)

Learn about Portland's own direct link to Ghana: Homowo African Arts and Cultures [www.Homowo.org](http://www.Homowo.org)

Check out a West African secondary school in Ghana!  
<http://pbskids.org/africa/myworld/westafrica.html>

### RESOURCES FOR THIS CURRICULUM STUDY GUIDE

<http://www.africanartandobjects.com>

Speer, Dean, *criticaldance.com*, *ballet~dance* magazine, *Evoking Ethnic Ballet*, May 2005 <http://www.ballet-dance.com/200505/articles/Lambarena200504.htm>

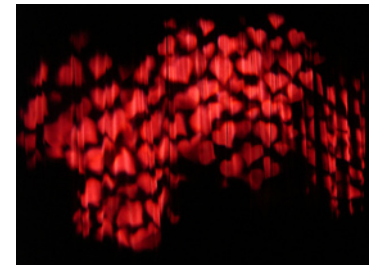
*Lambarena – Bach to Africa (An Homage to Albert Schweitzer)*, ©Sony Music Entertainment, Liner notes

Besant, Linda, Interview with Val Caniparoli, OBT, January 16, 2009

Browder, Lisa M., *Dancer Universe*, Nevada Ballet Theatre's *Lambarena*, Sept. 1, 2007  
<http://danceruniverse.com/stories/issues/200709/nevada-ballet/>



[www.idjnow.com](http://www.idjnow.com)



examples of gobo lights  
[www.lclark.edu](http://www.lclark.edu)

## CONTENT STANDARDS

This *Student Performance Series* and Study Guide provide opportunity for engaging in Oregon Content Standards for the Arts, especially:

**Historical and Cultural Perspective:** Understand relationships of works of art to their social, historical, and cultural context, and the influence of arts on individuals, communities and cultures. (AR.05.HC.03, AR.08.HC.03, AR.CM.HC.03) PASS Criteria: Standard B.3

**Aesthetics And Criticism:** Respond to and analyze works of art, based on essential elements, organizational principles and aesthetic criteria. (AR.03.AC.01, AR.05.AC.01, AR.08.AC.01, AR.CM.AC.01) PASS Criteria: Standard A.1

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BALLET

### Why do the guys wear tights?

Almost every activity requires a special uniform of some kind. Just as football players, wrestlers, and baseball players wear stretchy material to help them move with flexibility and speed, ballet dancers often wear stretchy tights so they are able to leap, kick, and stretch as they dance. Another reason tights are worn is so the audience can see the incredible leg muscles that allow them to jump so high.

### How do the ballet dancers stand on their toes?

Female ballet dancers wear special shoes called "pointe shoes" to help them achieve dancing on the tips of their toes. Pointe shoes are hard at the ends, and are handmade with layers of satin, glue and leather. Dancers must take several years of ballet lessons before they are allowed to wear pointe shoes. With hard work and good training to develop strong ankles and feet, most young ballet students begin working *en pointe* at age 11 or 12.

### This ballet has no plot! Or does it?

Some do, and some don't. Ballets with plots, like *The Nutcracker*, are called story ballets. There are also abstract ballets, with a focus on movement instead of a specific story. Abstract ballets are meant to evoke ideas or emotions, and the audience can interpret them many different ways.

### How old are the dancers?

Oregon Ballet Theatre's professional company members range in age from 18 to 34, but most are in their early-to-mid-20s. A few of the apprentices, however, are still in high school. All of the dancers began studying ballet when they were children, as it takes many years of dedication to become a professional ballet dancer.

### How often do they practice?

Ballet dancers take class every morning for 1.5 hours, and then they rehearse all day. They have Sundays and sometimes Saturdays off, and they have a lunch break. Dancing is their full-time job.

### Where are the dancers from?

Oregon Ballet Theatre dancers come from all around the world: Japan, Russia, Albania, and different areas within the United States. There are dancers from Nebraska, California, New York, and several who grew up right here in Portland.

### APPLAUSE

**DO** clap after a really spectacular movement. Laugh if the situation onstage is funny. Applaud and yell "Bravo!" at the end.

**DON'T** boo, whistle, hiss or make noise during the performance. It is distracting and disrespectful of the performers and to your neighbors in the audience.

### FOOD

**DO** eat before you get to the theater if you think you might get hungry before the performance is over.

**DON'T** bring food or gum into the seating area. It makes noise, trash, and distractions.

### TALKING

**DO** wait. Make a note on your program or a piece of paper if you want to remember something. Tell your friend at intermission or after the ballet is over.

**DON'T** whisper or discuss things with other people during the performance. Your friends may want to listen to the music or pay attention to the dancers' movement or the story.

### DRESS & BACKPACKS

**DO** dress neatly as a sign of respect to the artists and the theater.

**DON'T** wear over-powering perfume, big hats, or jingly bracelets. Leave backpacks at school. If you must bring one, you'll be asked to leave it in the lobby.

### CELL PHONES, CAMERAS, IPODS, MP3 PLAYERS, ETC.

**DO** relax when the lights in the house (seating area) get dark. Sit back and enjoy the live performance with your eyes, ears, and imagination.

**DON'T** bring electronic devices into the theater. The noise and clicking can be distracting to your neighbors, and camera flashes can be dangerous to the dancers.