

CENTER FOR WORLD MUSIC WORLD MUSIC IN THE SCHOOLS PROGRAM

“To understand a man, you've got to walk a mile in his shoes, whether they fit or not.” (Moslem proverb)

The question is . . . How can the traditional performing arts of cultures East and West help to promote a healthy and enriched world?



Odissi Dance (India)

[The Center for World Music](#) is a unique 45-year-old nonprofit organization whose primary purpose is to draw public attention to the diversity of the world's performing arts traditions: Asian, African, European, Latin American, and American. The four main goals of the Center for World Music are (1) to encourage public appreciation of the varied cultural expressions of the world through the performing arts, (2) to provide opportunities that promote understanding of the world's diverse cultures through their performing arts traditions of music and dance, (3) to promote the diverse multicultural assets of the San Diego region, and (4) to encourage appreciation and understanding of the world's culturally diverse performing arts

traditions through direct experiences in different countries and cultures around the globe.

The Center for World Music was created by Samuel H. Scripps and his wife Luise in 1963 as the American Society for Eastern Arts. The Society's scope was broadened when Dr. Robert E. Brown was appointed Executive Director in 1973, when it was reborn in Berkeley, California as the Center for World Music. In 1979 the Center moved to San Diego, where it continued to foster world music appreciation and performance through association with local universities and colleges, and expanded its outreach through projects developed with the local Hmong, Filipino, Indian, Persian, and Chicano communities.



Son Jarocho (Mexico)

The Center has many high-quality programs. However, for this article we wish to focus on our [World Music in the Schools Program](#) (with 20 native and native-trained artist-teachers in residence.) During the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years, the Center served over 8,000 students in the San Diego area. Many of the Center's cadres of 20

artist-teachers are currently teaching weekly music and dance classes to thousands of San Diego's public school children. These offerings include traditional performing arts of India, Java, Bali, Iran, Mexico, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Senegal, and Europe.



Persian Music (Iran)

The California Arts Council (CAC) has supported Center for World Music artist-teacher residencies in K-12 schools for over 10 years. The residencies have provided thousands of San Diego students with weekly, year-round, hands-on workshops in the performing arts from six broad cultural areas of the world: South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, Africa, and Europe. The CAC's support has helped these residencies become a part of each school's identity. Phil Beaumont, principal of the Museum School in San Diego, states, "The Museum School strives to provide students with unique opportunities that take them beyond the classroom and their local environment. The Center for World Music's program not only allows for our students to learn the cultural arts of different regions, but to experience the value of performance and sharing their learning within their own community. Putting learning into practice is a capstone skill at the Museum School, and this program is a perfect example of this."

The Museum School showcases its student Balinese *gamelan* ensembles during an annual school concert each year, and its *gamelan angklung* orchestra was a highlight of the Center for World Music's Gamelan Festival 2011 in San Diego. After studying Balinese *gamelan* at the Museum School as a child, Elizabeth Keck recently wrote a paper on *gamelan* for one of her college courses. "It's fun to learn another culture's music" she recalls, "because then, you can 'speak with them', in a way."



Student and Artist-Teachers

The CAC also supported school programs taught by Kwame Degbor from Ghana, the Center's West African artist-teacher in residence for over five years. Mr. Degbor had a special talent for building accomplished, enthusiastic, traditional Ewe music and dance ensembles and reached thousands of students at multiple schools in San Diego. Teachers and administrators often cited his high expectations as having a significant positive impact on overall student attendance and academic performance.



Students and Kwame Degbor (Africa)

To learn more about the unique Center for World Music, please visit our [website](#).

[2009-2010 World Music in the Schools Program](#)

[2010-2011 World Music in the Schools Program](#)

All photos by John Gabriel.

The Center for World Music receives funding from the California Arts Council's [Artists in Schools Program](#) (managed by Wayne Cook) which supports residencies in schools. (wcook@cac.ca.gov).