

Dig That World Music Beat!



Ladysmith Black Mambazo at the Belly Up on Jan. 19

PHOTOS BY MAURICE HEWITT

Center offers stirring sounds from Thailand, Zimbabwe, Iran

BY LONNIE BURSTEIN HEWITT

The Center for World Music, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2013, started 2016 by co-sponsoring a concert by Ladysmith Black Mambazo at the Belly Up Tavern in Solana Beach and announcing a trio of cool-sounding lecture/performances in collaboration with the Kalabash School of Music and the Arts in La Jolla.

Ladysmith Black Mambazo, the South African choral group first introduced to the world in 1986 on Paul Simon's landmark album "Graceland," wowed the sold-out crowd at the Belly Up on Jan. 19, as part of their "Singing for Peace Around the World" tour. Known for soulful harmonies and exuberant rhythms, the group won a Grammy (their fourth) for Best World Music in 2013. This year, they're nominated again — for the 16th time — and may well take home Grammy No. 5 at the Awards ceremony Feb. 7.

LBM was founded 56 years ago by Joseph Shabalala, a farmboy-turned-factory worker, who put together a group of relatives to sing songs based on traditional sounds of the Zulu people. Shabalala isn't touring these

days, but four of his sons were onstage, in what was a heart-stirring performance that suggested a mix of gospel, hip-hop and African Rockettes. Most of the words were in Zulu but the feelings came through bright and clear.

In the audience were several VIPs from the Center for World Music: CEO Lewis "Pete" Peterman, and two of the teaching artists who design special programs for schoolchildren around San Diego County, Garit Imhoff and Nomsa Burkhardt.

Peterman, who was for years director of ethnomusicology at SDSU's School of Dance & Music, has been CWM's president since 2005.

"I came to San Diego State in 1980, specifically to be part of their world music program, and I joined the CWM Board in 1983 to help develop cross-cultural programs here and abroad," he said. "When enthusiasm for world music began fading among concertgoers, we decided to focus on the next generation, and started our programs of music and dance in the K-12 schools."

Imhoff, who has been funded by grants from the NEA and the California Arts

Council, is teaching third-graders at the French-American School in La Jolla to play the mbira, a Zimbabwean thumb piano. Trained in Zimbabwe, and part of a local group called Zimbeat, he's an expert on the instrument, and says that the students are tremendously receptive.

"The exposure to something that's not familiar excites their imagination," he said. "They're so relieved to have something different to do, and with the mbira, they can get the basics fast."

Burkhardt, who teaches South African singing, drumming and dance, was born in Soweto, and shares the Zulu heritage of Ladysmith Black Mambazo, whom she first met years ago — in Philadelphia. After leading her own dance troupe and touring the world, she was an artist-in-residence at Bird Rock Elementary School (2012 to 2014).

Starting Feb. 27, CWM and the Kalabash School of Music and the Arts will present "Passport to Worlds of Music," a series of lecture/performances of music from Thailand, Zimbabwe and Iran, with proceeds going to support their programs in the schools.

CWM's new executive director, Monica Emery, said she is looking forward to

Passport to Worlds of Music

■ **Where:** Kalabash School of Music and the Arts, 5725 La Jolla Blvd.

■ **When:** 6 p.m. Feb. 27: Music of Thailand, Christopher Adler, USD ethnomusicologist and acclaimed performer on the khaen (mouth organ), with his wife, ethnomusicologist/musician Supeena Insee Adler on traditional Thai fiddles.

• 6 p.m. March 26: Music of Zimbabwe, Zimbeat, featuring CWM artist-teacher Garit Imhoff, and ethnomusicologist and musician Randall Griswold on two types of mbira (thumb piano).

• 6 p.m. April 30: Music of Iran, CWM artist-teacher Kourosh Taghavi, master musician and recording artist, will perform on the setar.

■ **Contact:** (858) 456-2753

■ **Tickets:** \$15, (858) 882-7734

■ **Website:** centerforworldmusic.org



LAUREN SHARON

In the first of the Passport to Worlds of Music concerts, Christopher Adler will play the khaen at the Kalabash School in La Jolla on Feb. 27.

introducing more people of all ages to the delights of world music.

"We have an amazing and very diverse community of artists here, and we like to celebrate the diversity, not look for similarities to the kinds of music we already know," she said. "It's almost like wine. You start out just drinking it, and then maybe you take a wine-tasting class and learn to taste notes of blueberry and vanilla. Our Passport concerts take place in an intimate setting, with the musicians actually walking you through their music, giving you special insights and inviting you to interact with them, as if they were in your living room. You can bring your own wine, and we'll have some snacks, too."

Emery's one-and-a-half-year-old son, Kai, is already experiencing musical diversity in a "Music Together" class at the Jewish Community Center, where little ones are exposed to music from different cultures. "I want him to be a good audience member," she said.



At the Belly Up Tavern concert, Center for World Music CEO Lewis Peterman with teaching artists Garit Imhoff and Nomsa Burkhardt



Two mbiras, Zimbabwean 'thumb pianos' that sound like music boxes. The larger is played for ancestor spirits; the smaller is the type used for teaching in schools.