



Youth Performance Program Requirements 2009-2010

Expectations of Youth Members:

1) **A Long-Term Commitment**

A one-year commitment to the program is required. This allows members to move confidently forward with the knowledge that everyone is working toward a common goal of spring and summer performance season.

Although the Performance Program requires a one-year commitment, members of Shamwari and Tamba! participate with the understanding that it is their intention to remain with the group long-term. Members of Shamwari and Tamba! graduate from the program when they graduate from High School, making room for younger members to join. Vana Vedu members make the yearlong commitment, but the expectation of their long-term commitment is less stringent, giving children and families an opportunity for different levels of commitment in different groups.

Over the lifetime of any group, membership changes are inevitable. To minimize the disruption that these changes can cause, members of the Performance Program renew their commitment to the group each year in the summer. When new members join to enlarge the group or fill vacancies, they join in the fall. Likewise, it is expected that current members will honor their one-year commitment and leave the group after the summer session. This allows an open window for change in membership. (Directors reserve the right to allow additional members to join at other times during the year at their discretion for the benefit of the group and the program.)

2) **Consistent Attendance**

"Being there" is the default expectation of each member for all rehearsals, performances and other ensemble activities. Families may make choices about priorities in each child's life, but the Performance Program expects that the child's ensemble is a top priority and that other extracurricular activities will not prevent members from "being there" for all ensemble functions. If a child does need to miss an ensemble event (rehearsal, performance or other activity), advance notice **must be given** to both the music and program directors **in writing** (by e-mail). Phone calls and verbal notice alone are not reliable ways of informing directors of an absence.

In a group that is so interdependent on each member, even one child's absence can severely impact the forward motion of the group. When everyone is present, the group moves forward together and receives the same information from directors. When advance notice is given for necessary absences from parents, directors can plan lessons for members in attendance much more effectively.

Directors have found that dress rehearsals for each performance provide members with a sense of groundedness, preparedness, and unity with their group. Therefore, members must attend the rehearsals immediately preceding a performance in order to perform with their group. If dress

rehearsals are missed, a private lesson may stand in for a dress rehearsal before the performance takes place in order to participate.

Group Rehearsals

Both Shamwari and Tamba! ensembles meet twice weekly to work on group musicianship skills, existing repertoire, new repertoire, staging, set list development, and MCing. It is critical that all members be present each week for their rehearsals. Rehearsals take place every week that the Kutandara Center is in session. Vana Vedu meets once weekly to work on the same elements.

New Member Orientation Period

In addition to the group rehearsals, directors may require new members in the Youth Performance Program to take private lessons during their twelve-month orientation period.

3) **Musical Dependability**

Focus and Attention During Rehearsals

The level of precision and accuracy that this style of music requires is high. In order to achieve a high level of proficiency, it is essential that children are well fed, well rested and encouraged to do their best at home and at rehearsals. Most children need a healthy, protein rich snack during their rehearsals. Please be conscious of sending your child to rehearsal with everything they need to do well with their group, including a healthy snack and water bottle.

At Home Practice

Each member must be able to play his or her parts accurately and solidly. Everyone struggles to varying degrees in learning new material and mastering existing material. Members are expected to actively be working toward mastery of their parts – playing the right notes at the right time at the right speed with the right level of volume while entering and exiting. Everyone will make mistakes, but mistakes should be the exception and not the rule, especially as songs become “existing” rather than “new”.

Many songs require extreme precision in their basic patterns to provide glue for the ensemble. When variations are taught, members should use those variations responsively and sparingly, as well as pre-rehearsing them at home to ensure their musicality within the context of the group.

To this end, it is essential that each member practice their parts with focus and intention at home between rehearsals and sectionals. It is required that **each member has his or her own instrument at home**. Instruments should be in good working condition and set up in an area to which the child has easy access.

Notebooks, Calendars and Recording Devices

Each member is responsible for learning and remembering what is taught to them in the large group rehearsal and the small group sectionals. Again, as each individual has their own musical path, it is understandable that each member will have their own timeline of learning. It is critical, however, that each member keep their musical commitment to the group by asking for help when they need it and having the necessary resources to help them learn and remember the required material.

To this end, each member is required to have a **notebook, calendar and recording device** that is brought to every rehearsal, performance and other ensemble activity. Each member must know how to operate their recording device and how to effectively use it as a learning tool at home. Each week, parents should review any written notes in their child’s notebook to check that written material is being understood and acted upon by the child.

4) **Family Commitment to the Youth Performance Program**

The Youth Performance Program relies on family support in many ways. Logistically, the ensembles depend on parent transportation of members and instruments to and from performances. At performances, parents staff the literature and CD sales table. Families that place a high priority on the Youth Performance Program in the family's life impact their own child's morale and, indirectly, the group's morale.

At Home

The level of ensemble work that the program expects of children will only be achieved if the program is seen in a positive light in the home and is an important part of the family's culture. By engaging your child either in discussion or demonstration of the group's work, you show that the program, and the success of your child in the program, is important to you. For children to achieve the kind of focus and attention necessary during rehearsal, it is critical that they have the resources that they need in order to do their best. It is essential that families provide these resources and support the participation of their child in the program.

At the Studio

Directors of the Youth Performance Program have been engaged in this project for many years. It is helpful to assume that the directors are thinking well of each child in the program and also thinking well of the group as a whole and making decisions for the good of the group and of the program. It is expected that families will trust directors' thinking and decisions about the program. Upbeat, helpful advice and comments made in a positive light are always welcome and encouraged.

Directors of the Youth Performance Program will make every effort to communicate respectfully and kindly with both ensemble members and families. If there is information you need but do not have, please ask.

The Youth Performance Program at the Kutandara Center is intended to be a program that requires a high level of commitment from children and families and delivers an exceptional experience for all involved. If your child and family are willing to make the commitment to be active participants in this program, you will be taking part in a rewarding experience that will teach your children many valuable life skills and engage your family in a vibrant community.

The Youth Performance Program meets 42 weeks out of the year:

- Fall term: 15 weeks
- Winter term: 15 weeks
- Summer term: 12 weeks

Shamwari will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:45-7:15 pm

Tamba! will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4-5:30 pm

Vana Vedu will meet on Wednesdays from 5:30-7:30 pm

2009-2010 Youth Performance Program Fees are:

Vana Vedu \$1345 per year (per session \$448.33)

Shamwari and Tamba! \$2015 per year (per session \$671.67)

Youth Performance Program **session fees** are due in full at the beginning of each session (before your child's first rehearsal) in one payment or a series of post-dated checks for that session. Your payment of these fees constitutes your and your child's agreement to the requirements outlined in this document. If your child withdraws from the program before the end of the year, no refunds are given and you will be billed for any remaining tuition.

In addition to the rehearsals each week in which your child participates, the Youth Performance Program also provides the following benefits:

- Participation in the Kutandara Center student sharing each term
- Additional performance opportunities throughout the year
- Performance costumes
- Opportunities for Recording Projects
- Opportunities for Fundraising Projects
- Opportunities for Community Service Projects

New members also pay a one-time \$100 membership fee. New members will receive:

- Band T-shirt
- Band hooded sweatshirt
- Rehearsal shoulder bag
- Use of a band uniform for performances

Replacement Tshirts, hooded sweatshirts and bags are available at a wholesale cost. Please inquire if your child has misplaced these items or needs new size. Misplaced dashikis and wraps will be billed at \$20 each.

In order to participate in the Youth Performance Program, members will provide:

- gumboots
- performance shoes and pants/skirt/top
- at-home practice marimba
- recording device and notebooks/calendars