



You're in the theatre watching **Za Boom Ba**. You want to leap off your seat, ignited by the electrifying dancing...the explosive grooves of a powerful drumming ensemble. Wait...you are not just listening to the drumming, ***you are drumming!*** Every audience member becomes a part of the unified beat when percussion instruments, from shakers to a full on, thumping, West African Djembe drum, are given to everyone in the 500-member audience.

SYNOPSIS

In a 75 minute professionally produced theatrical show, the audience is taken on an incredible rhythmic and dance journey via the percussion and hybrid grooves from the West African and Afro-Brazilian traditions.

A team of professional percussionists rotate through the drums in the stage set, playing infectious choreographed grooves. During the drumming segments, a powerful team of dancers adds dynamic visual to the production, using traditional movements from the culture being 'drummed.'

At the transition to each cultural drumming segment, a team of 'runners' dispenses hand percussion to the audience. ***The hand percussion progresses from Egg Shakers, to Drumsticks to Boomwhackers® to Drums (djembes).***

As the percussion is dispersed; an interactive rhythm facilitator (IRF) appears as part of the stage team. The IRF thrills the audience by facilitating their use of the hand percussion. The stage team's groove becomes a backdrop for the audience's interaction. After 8-10 minutes the audience's groove links back to the stage team's beat and provides a sonic transition to the next cultural drumming segment.

Simultaneously, striking, semi-abstract motion video is projected on the stage's massive circular background screen, beautifully enhancing the power of the drum and dance.



QUICK SHOW DETAILS

Running Time: *c.a. 90 minutes* Max Audience: 500
 Optimal Venue: *300-500 seat theatre with single level seating*

Cast Size: 13
 Extras: *16-20 ushers (instrument 'runners')*

PROVISIONS

Za Boom Ba provides the following:

- *300-500 drums and hand percussion*
- *Round scrim and suspension kit*
- *All microphones and stage percussion gear*
- *Training for Instrument Runners*
- *Poster/postcard templates*

Za Boom Ba *can* provide the following as necessary with applicable fees:

- *Complete theatrical quality PA system*
- *Complete theatrical quality rear projection system*

THE DIRECTOR

Kenya Masala is inspiring and invigorating! For over 20 years, his charismatic style and effusive energy has engaged participants in organizational and community development training, rhythm and percussion based keynotes and conference sessions, and outdoor adventure programs. As the Director of [Source Consulting Group](#) and a national organizational development consultant and trainer, he continually ushers groups through the hard work of deepening and expanding excellence, and lifts them to celebration. Kenya is one of the premier rhythm program facilitators in the U.S., is [REMO](#) endorsed, and the published author of the international classic rhythm activity book, [Rhythm Play!](#)[™]. He has released two recordings, [Soul Journey Groove](#) and [Spacious Time](#).





Za Boom Ba Stage Set



The Audience Loves Za Boom Ba

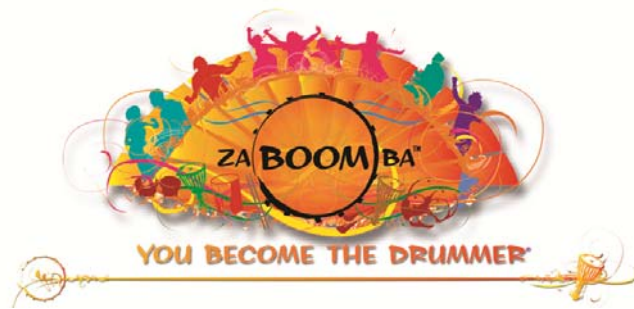




The Za Boom Ba Percussion Team Rocks Maracatu



The Za Boom Ba Dance Team jams to Cou Cou



The Audience Is Ecstatic



The Za Boom Ba Percussion Team





The Za Boom Ba Facilitator Thrills the Crowd



The Za Boom Ba Dance Team Flies





FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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March 25, 2010

**NEW LOCAL PERFORMANCE GROUP BRINGS RHYTHM, DANCE, AND 500 DRUMS
TO TUCSON AUDIENCES**

WHAT: Za Boom Ba Inaugural Performance
WHEN: Friday, May 7, 2010, 8:00 p.m. and Sunday, May 9, 2010, 2:00 p.m.
WHERE: Tucson Convention Center's Leo Rich Theatre, 260 S. Church Ave., Tucson, AZ 85701

(TUCSON, AZ) Kenya Masala likes big sound. Big, choreographed sound, that is.

That's why he and his new interactive performance group, Za Boom Ba (www.zaboomba.com), will bring 500 drums to the Tucson Convention Center's Leo Rich Theatre in May and ask audience members to play them. In sync, of course.

But more than creating big sound, Masala and his troupe want to let audiences directly in on the infectious, transformative power of drumming, dancing, and community. Through his work as an organizational development consultant in various corporate and private settings, Masala has helped non-musicians around the world pound out relatively complex rhythms using drums and other percussion instruments for the past 20 years.

"Most people say, 'Artists are the ones on stage. I can't do that,'" Masala says. "But we want to give people a very exciting and very easy opportunity to discover that, 'Hey, I can make art, too! I can make music!'"

To do that, Za Boom Ba takes audience members on a 75-minute, energetic and rhythmic journey of percussion and dance inspired by West African and Brazilian traditions. In each segment of the show, audience members are given instruments—from egg shakers and drumsticks, to Boomwhackers® and djembe drums—as Masala leads them in playing rhythms. Their inspiration and guidance will come from a dynamic group of professional drummers and dancers performing against a backdrop of projected images illustrating the power of rhythm and the message of unity around the world.

-more-

Because Za Boom Ba invites the audience to become the performers, it offers an alternative to the dominant form of entertainment in society, Masala says, which tends to be people sitting and watching passively.

“When people become part of the performance they feel the experience more deeply, they connect with the intention more deeply, they leave feeling more satisfied,” he says.

Masala has seen how hands-on participation can empower people, enliven people, and bring them together. “By putting a drum in each person’s hand, not only do you invite them to become an active participant in the experience, but they also become fully engaged. It’s not virtual reality. It’s the interactive dimension with respect to entertainment,” Masala says.

For Masala, bringing Za Boom Ba to the stage has been a long-time dream and one that he wanted to realize in Tucson.

“From logo design to set design to the talent on the stage – every aspect of it has been Tucson, Tucson, Tucson. We have everything we need right here to produce a high-quality show in our community,” Masala points out.

He hand picked his professional team of drummers and dancers from among Tucson’s finest performing talents.

Percussionists include: Cliff Berrien, Artistic Director of the Tucson-based Afro-Brazilian drumming ensemble, Batucaxé; fellow Batucaxé percussionists, Mike Zecchino and Alfie Villegas; Jeff Simpson, a percussionist and vocalist who previously performed with Batucaxé; and Robert “Swami” Peizer, a pan-African percussionist who also plays for the global-rhythm band, Key Ingredients of Africa Soul.

Directed by Gabriela Masala, Kenya Masala’s wife and long-time teacher and student of dance and yoga, the Za Boom Ba dancers include: Jade Beall, a teacher of West African dance; Kimi Eisele, the Special Projects Director of NEW ARTiculations Dance Theatre; Yarrow King, Dance Director for Batucaxé; and Bete Pfister and Kenya Johnson, who also dance with Batucaxé.

Masala also commissioned Nadia Hagen and Paul Weir, the founders of the Tucson-based Flam Chen Pyrotechnic Theater, to design the stage set and costumes.

Ultimately, Kenya Masala wants Za Boom Ba to transmit to the audience the same cohesion and unity that has been built among his team of drummers and dancers.

“It’s the inspiration of community music making that’s exciting. The Za Boom Ba show stokes the energy so that people will say, ‘Wow, this is amazing! I want to be a part of it!’ And they can be.”

About Za Boom Ba

While most theatrical productions entertain you while they act, **Za Boom Ba** thrills you while you *interact*. It’s experiential. The 500-member audience is not just the audience – they are part of the ensemble...a moving, drumming, sweating, whooping part of the excitement and action! Created and produced by Kenya Masala, Za Boom Ba premieres in Tucson, Arizona, on Friday, May 7, 2010, at 8:00 p.m. at the Tucson Convention Center’s Leo Rich Theatre in downtown Tucson. A matinee performance will be held on Sunday, May 9, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. at the same location. This 75-minute show is an all-ages event, perfect for families and children. Tickets are \$22 (adults) and \$17 (12 and under) and can be purchased online, in person at the Tucson Convention Box Office or by phone at (800) 745-3000.

For video clips, photos and more information about Za Boom Ba, please visit www.zaboomba.com.



Arizona Daily Star

Discover your innate sense of rhythm, talent

Za Boom Ba takes art of drumming, audience participation to new level

Andrea Rivera Arizona Daily Star | Posted: Friday, May 7, 2010 12:00 am | [Comments](#)

Audience participation is a must at Za Boom Ba.

The Tucson-born production debuts tonight and features local percussionists and dancers, and 500 drums and other instruments. There are not enough hands among the cast of 12 to hit all 500 drums, so that's where the audience steps in. Audience members are asked to be percussionists at Za Boom Ba performances. But don't expect random beats to pour from the drums.

Everyone has an innate sense of rhythm, said Kenya Masala, who produced the show. Masala and other cast members will guide the audience on a 75-minute tour through West African and Brazilian drumming. "We know how to facilitate them so they get into the groove," he said.

Masala didn't start out as a drummer. He was an educator who learned how to drum, and then he incorporated drumming into learning through his work in curriculum development. Masala, 41, left the field to start his own consulting firm, where he uses the drum as a team-building tool.

Za Boom Ba is a product of his consulting work and will be performed as a theatrical experience for the first time at 8 p.m. today. "We want to break the veil that says performers are on stage and the audience is in their seats," Masala said. "This is about all of us, and we are all artists. We want to share that with everyone."

Masala, who moved to Tucson with his wife from Austin, Texas, about a year ago, decided to take his work to the stage after finding a wealth of talent in Tucson.

His wife, Gabriela, is the dance director and choreographer for Za Boom Ba. Everything the couple needed to produce Za Boom Ba was found right here in Tucson, Masala said. The show's percussionists and dancers are Tucson talent. Stage sets and costumes were designed by the founders of Tucson-based pyrotechnic group Flam Chen. And even the show's logo and T-shirts were produced locally. "We want to demonstrate what an incredible art scene Tucson has," Masala said. "There is tremendous talent here. We'd like to support the community." Everyone came together to create a show that will entertain and excite, Masala said.

Za Boom Ba performances also will build a sense of community among 500 strangers. "Rhythm has a unique power to unify people who are all contributing to the beat and to making a greater sound," Masala said.

If you go: Za Boom Ba

- When: 8 p.m. today and 2 p.m. Sunday.
- Where: Leo Rich Theatre at the Tucson Convention Center, 260 S. Church Ave.
- Cost: \$22 adults and \$17 for children 12 and younger.
- Tickets, information: Available in person at the Tucson Convention Center ticket office or at 1-800-745-3000. Go to zaboomba.com for more information about the show.

Contact reporter Andrea Rivera at arivera@azstarnet.com or 807-8430.

http://azstarnet.com/entertainment/arts-and-theatre/article_0fd82914-2908-599c-b3b8-90b24f3926cf.html



Tucson Weekly Interview

Reporter: Mari Herreras, staff writer

Kenya Masala has a big plan to change people's lives with drumming. Masala and his cohorts are planning *Za Boom Ba*, an interactive rhythm project slated to make its premiere in May at the Tucson Convention Center's Leo Rich Theatre. Through his work in leadership development, Masala has seen drumming change how people work together, he says. On May 7 and 9, everyone who walks through the door will be handed a percussion instrument and encouraged to get busy. For more information, visit zaboomba.com.

Where did this idea come from?

My background is actually in education and organizational development, and I've studied music for 25 years. As soon as I learned to drum, my first thought was: How could I share this, and how can I use this as a tool? I would bring elements of percussion in the corporate-training work I was doing, and the response was always positive. People would get it, and they would be naturally energized just from the experience. The more I kept using drumming and rhythm, the more it seemed natural in all trainings—working with young people or Dell, Chevron, Premera Blue Cross and almost every Fortune 500 company. By the end of the day, they knew that talking about working together is a good idea, and by end of the day, they could feel it through the rhythm.

So taking to the stage was the next step?

Za Boom Ba was born out of that. We thought: Wouldn't it be cool to have people go to a theater where they are also interacting?

What if you fill the Leo Rich Theatre? Do you have enough instruments?

We have 500 instruments, and the audience will get a chance to start with a simple instrument, and then build up to a drum. It's the combination of using the dance (team) and the percussion team to excite the audience, but instead of saying, "Here is this; isn't it great? Clap for us now," we say, "Here you go; become part of it." This is what rhythm is all about, what community rhythm is about, and what people have been doing for hundreds of years.

Who are the people performing onstage?

Community members; some have been professional dancers; some semi-professional dancers, mainly selected from the spirit they bring and the sheer energy they share; and (the same goes) with the percussion team, many of whom are part of Batucaxé, and they bring some immense talent. I also want to demonstrate that something with this much power and excitement, and this much excellence, can come out of Tucson.

Are you from Tucson?

I moved to Tucson about 10 years ago, and we lived here for about 5 1/2 years and moved to Austin (Texas). After our daughter was born, we realized all our peeps are in Tucson, and Tucson is such an amazing jewel. Having lived here before, we knew the richness and what you find when you pull back the cover. ... There is an amazing arts scene here, and the community pool of talent in Tucson is quite incredible. ... We're also lucky to have commissioned Flam Chen to do the costumes and set design—again, more amazing creative talent that's right here in Tucson.

What do you want people to leave feeling?

When they leave, the intention is that one, that feel energized, and they've been able to connect with themselves in joy and joyful experience, which we find happens when people experience drums and rhythm. And (two), that they feel the power that happens with rhythm and community, the unification that happens through the music when 500 people come through that theater. Some will know each other; most will not, but you will be contributing your voice via your instrument to a jam that will be musical and rhythmic. ... (It will be) a unified beat, and each person, we hope, will recognize: "I contributed to that. I was a part of that, and I felt the beat, and it was all of us."

Do you have an ultimate goal or vision?

The vision would be to stimulate more community rhythm jam activity here in Tucson. ... (The goal for) *Za Boom Ba* itself it is to let it grow to *Stomp* proportions—it is an interactive *Stomp*. Maybe we can tour or find a producer who wants to take it and build it up. We're dreaming big, but our desire is to first create an experience right here in Tucson.





***Za Boom Ba* Ignites the Power of Community**

By Kenya Johnson

"Za Boom Ba-licious!"

That is how Kenya Masala, the creative director of the live theatrical production, *Za Boom Ba*, describes what the audience will feel after experiencing this interactive show.

"When we come together using the power of rhythm, there is a joy and an excitement that is purely invigorating! Rhythm is one of the most amazing community building tools," Masala explains.

Za Boom Ba takes the audience on an incredible journey with a hybrid of percussion grooves and dance choreography from West African and Afro-Brazilian traditions. This 75-minute production, however, uniquely transforms the audience from spectator to performer.

As professional percussionists and dancers perform on stage, Masala, the interactive rhythm facilitator, guides the crowd with thoroughly exciting and engaging body language. A team of runners distribute the instruments like a well-oiled machine, and as the rhythms change, all audience members are playing shakers, drumsticks and plastic hollow tubes called Boomwhackers, jammin' right along, both freestyle and with masterful poly-rhythmic orchestration.

Then, for the finale, the 500-member audience plays 500 real, full-sized, hand drums – *together! Yes, 500 drums – one for everyone.*

"It's almost two hours of pure, family-friendly fun, and an opportunity for us to tap into joy, unity, community connections, interaction, and the power of rhythm," says Masala.

A dream that he has envisioned for about 15 years, *Za Boom Ba* was realized because the alchemy of the perfect team existed right here and right now in Tucson. "When you have a vision," says Masala, "find the right people who align with your vision, and go for it!"

Along those lines, he wants everyone who sees *Za Boom Ba* to remember two things after they leave the theatre.

"First, I want them to know they made real music. Secondly, when they sat down, they may have known three or four other people in the audience. By the end, all 500 people became a community; connected within the unity of the beat...co creating a fine-tuned ensemble. This is *truly* working together."

Za Boom Ba opens Friday, May 7th at 8 p.m., with a matinee on Sunday, May 9th at 2 p.m. at the Tucson Convention Center's Leo Rich Theatre, 260 S. Church Ave. Tickets are \$17-\$22. For more information and to enter a drawing to win a free *djembe* drum, visit ZaBoomBa.com.



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