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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.

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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.