

DISCUSSION GUIDE

QUEENS OF THE NILE, NOW

Celebrating Queens and Kings (leaders) of ancient Africa

THE PROGRAM

QUEENS OF THE NILE, NOW spotlights the rich and glorious ancestry of African Americans, from 1500 B.C. to 1896 A.D. The Queens of ancient Africa are presented in a magnificent collection of royal attire researched and designed by Sakkara Ingrid Thomas and depicted through classical ballet, jazz, modern and African dance and is dramatically narrated in the style of the African Griot (storyteller). This stimulating visual history performance includes audience involvement, student participation in the actual performance and Discussion Guide.

THE COMPANY

Queens Historical Society, an innovator in America's multicultural education explosion has emerged as a leader in presenting performances that assert African royal history and culture. The Society's signature production, "Queens of the Nile, Now", written by Founding President, Ingrid Thomas, spotlights the lives and visual styles of the Great Queens of Africa and their contributions to world civilization. The success of this unique visual history drama has led to the evolution of a professionally directed performance series, entitled The Crown Jewels. This strong and vibrant repertoire covers three thousand years and over five thousand miles of the continent's history. Adaptable for all stages and ages, The Crown Jewels repertoire presents a startling exploration into the depth of beauty which emerges from Africa throughout the centuries, fostering a new respect for women's roles in human progress.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Children's Titles

1. Thomas, Sakkara Ingrid, Royal Court. 2006. Queens of the Nile, Now Literature Guide and Instructional Materials.
2. Jackson, Barbara Dean, We are the Children of the Great Ancient Africans. 1986
3. Kunjufu, Jawanza. Lessons from History: A Celebration in Blackness. (Elementary Edition) Chicago: African Images, 1987. A Black history textbook showing our strengths and weakness (for grades 4-6).
4. Sibbet, Ed. Jr., Ancient Egyptian Design Coloring Book. Dover Publications, Inc. N.Y. 1978 (paperback)
5. Anhuser-Busch, Inc., Great Kings & Queens of Africa Portrait Series. Distributor: One Busch Place, St. Louis, MO 63118.

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BRIEF NOTES ON THE QUEENS

HATSHEPSUT (Hat-shep-sut) 1500 B.C. – In ancient African societies, women had respect and equal rights. Hatshepsut became the greatest female Pharaoh of Kemet (Egypt) of whom we are informed. She ruled for approximately 33 years. During her reign there were no wars, instead she established trade, built a vast navy and built the Temple of Deir el Bahri, which still stands today.

TIYE (TEE) 1405 B.C. – One of Africa's most remarkable Queens was Tiye, co-ruler of a great royal family in Kemet. She was married to **Amenhotep III**. Their union gave birth to three sons: Smenkhare, Akhenaton and Tutankhamon, "the boy king."

NEFERTITI (Ne-fer-te-te) 1386 B.C. – African women enjoyed a partnership in the building of lasting states and societies. Kemet's Queen Nefertiti and her husband **Pharaoh Akhenaton** ruled one of the most extraordinary monarchs in history. Teaching a doctrine of love and peace they were among the first rulers in history to proclaim to the world the concept of one God.

MAKEDA (Ma-ke-da) 960 B.C. – In ancient African societies, wisdom commanded the highest position of honor and respect. Queen Makeda of Ethiopia, better known to the world as the Queen of Sheba, journeyed all the way to Jerusalem to meet King Solomon, whom she heard, was a very wise man.

CANDACE (Can-da-ca) 332 B.C. – In many instances, African Queens lead armies to war, as was the case of Candace Queen, who had 44 predecessors and ruled 80 clans. When invaders prepared to cross her borders, this Empress of Ethiopia stood ready with her armies in personal command.

CLEOPATRA VII (Cle-o-pa-tra) 69 B.C. – Of all the African Queens mentioned throughout history, probably none is more celebrated by western civilization than Cleopatra VII. This Afro-Asian Queen came to the throne when she was seventeen. Through her intelligence and beauty she won the favor of two successive Roman rulers.

NZINGHA (N-zing-ga) 1620 A.D. Queen Nzingha was a visionary political leader. She was Queen of Ndongo, later called Angola. By organizing the Moni Congo, she awakened and encouraged the resistance movement of the slave trade in West Central Africa.

YAA ASANTEWA (Yaa A-san-te-wa) 1896 A.D. – Of utmost importance in African societies was the respected role bestowed upon the Queen Mother. Queen Mother Yaa Asantewa reigned on the Gold Coast, later called Ghana. She led the final battle against foreign domination in defense of the Ashanti nation. Her courage prompted the emergence of modern Africa. Ghana was the first African nation to achieve its independence after colonialization.

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Suggestions For Preparation

New Vocabulary: Terms that will assist students in their understanding of the program. Ancestor, Migration, Matrilineal, Pharaoh, Dynasty, B.C., Civilization, Archeologist.

KEMET (Kam-t): One of the original names given to ancient Egypt.¹

MOTIVATION ACTIVITIES:

△ Discuss the meaning of ancestors, identifying on a world map where the ancestors of the diverse ethnic groups in the class originated. Attach strings from points of origin to their state or city of birth.

△ Locate select African countries on a map. Determine the physical characteristics of the country (tropical rain forest, Savannah, ocean ports, rivers to the sea). Ask students, which types of animals do they think lived in each country.

△ Discuss the meaning of B.C. and A.D. Prepare a large timeline indicating key historical dates.

△ Read the selections on Queens Hatshepsut, Queen Tiye and Pharaoh Amenhotep III. Have one student write unknown words on the board. Using a dictionary, define and discuss each of the unknown words. Explore and discuss each passage with students.

POST-PROGRAM ENRICHMENT:

△ Have students draw portraits of one or more of the Queens represented in the performance. Choose student judges to select pictures to be displayed in a school display case. Exhibit the others in class.

△ Have students prepare personal timelines. As a take-home exercise, have them research the birth dates of their parents, grandparents, great-grandparents. When they return have select students place their finding on a classroom timeline.

△ Have students write a "rap" or poem about their favorite king or queen as a creative writing exercise,

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Queen Hatshepsut

I am **Queen Hatshepsut**. I was Pharaoh of Kemet (Egypt) from 1501 B.C. to 1479 B.C. During my reign there were no wars.² I used my mind and skills to develop the empire. I expanded trade, built a fleeting navy and sent an expedition south to Punt and brought back myrrh, spices, ebony, eye-paint, leopard skins and baboons.³

I was a great builder. My funerary temple Del El Bari still stands today. Some people say that I was the greatest female ruler of all time.

Pharaoh Amen-Hotep III

I am **Pharaoh Amen-hotep III**. My "Great Chief Wife" was Queen Tiye.⁴ I became the Pharaoh of Egypt in 1412 B.C. Under my leadership, Egypt became the trading center of the known world and one of the wealthiest.⁵ I completed several expeditions to Western Asia. The kings of Babylon, Assyria and the chiefs of Syria were my friends.

¹ E.A. Wallis Budge, The Mummy: A Handbook of Egyptian Funerary Archaeology, KPI Ltd. 1987, p. 2

² Ibid., 53

³ Ibid., 53

⁴ Ibid., 57

⁵ Ibid., 58

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Adult Titles

1. Diop, Cheikh Anta. The Cultural Unity of Black Africa. Chicago: Third World Press. 1978
2. Jackson, John G. Introduction to African Civilization. New Jersey: W.W. Norton. 1974
3. Rodger, Joel A. Africa's Gift to America. New York: Helga Ma Rogers.
4. Van Sertima, Ivan (Ed.). Nile Valley Civilizations. New Jersey Journal of African Civilization. 1985