## Ugandan children step toward life without shame

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN STAFF WRITER Ichomin@ce.homecomm.net

It's not easy growing up an orphan of parents who've died from AIDS. That's why Frank Katoola is dedicated to the Ugandan children who just left his hotel room in Washington, D.C.

Katoola spends a lot of time on the road with the 18 orphans who are members of the Children of Uganda. He's directed the East African music and dance troupe since its founding by the Uganda Children's Charity Foundation in 1994. Orphaned by AIDS and war, the children, ages 6 to 17, live in the Daughters of Charity Orphan-

age.
On Jan. 18, they arrived in
New York for a 17-city tour
which comes to the Power Cen-

ter for the Performing Arts in Ann Arbor Friday-Saturday, Feb. 8-9 as part of the University Musical Society series.

"I was a volunteer when I saw the kids performing in one of the hotels in Kampala so I volunteered to direct them," said Katoola. "I was teaching in one of the schools there. I took five kids to this school through a scholarship program." Katoola was 10 years old when he began playing an instrument so he knows it's never too early to learn about traditional Ugandan music and dance. In fact, Katoola was so inspired he went on to earn a diploma in performing arts for music, dance and drama at Makerere University in Kampala.

in Kampala.
"We're doing a cross section of dances from Uganda and songs," said Katoola. "The opening piece

is a melody with Swahili and Uganda songs. I take folk dances then choreograph them using the same traditional rhythms.

then choreograph them using the same traditional rhythms. We have a 12-dance reportoire. This is a 1 12-hour program with six dances linked together with drum rhythms.

Kateola worked with 40 to 60 children in Uganda three to four months during the school semester before narrowing down the troupe to 18. He believes because of the Children of Uganda, they will have a future in a country where life expectancy is 44 years for men, 45 years for women. And it's not just AIDS which has killed the people. Uganda was notorious for human rights violations under dictator Idi Amin from 1971 to 1979 and then Milton Obote whe was ousted by Amin. From the 1970s to 1980s, half a million

people were killed in the vicience.

"My country was coming out of turnoil in 1987 when I was coming out of college in 1989 with a sense of duty to my country," said Katoola, founder of Tender Talents Theatre Company which focuses on issues of child abuse and the welfare of Ugandan children. I believe our culture has a lot to offer young people and it has to be kept alive.

"With the Children of Uganda they find a way of understanding life and escaping from their fears, not only caring for themselves but the funds they raise go to help children back home. There's a sense of prepose and duty, a new understanding of themselves, a sense of prepose ibility and helping others."

There's no doubt in Katoola's mind the benefits derived from Children of Uganda. It's more than just ankle bells and colorful costumes filling a stage.

"It's fulfilling in a way because I get to see my work but to see someone's life is turning around, to see them again as a woman or man of 20 and you see they're facing life without shame or fear."



East African production: The Children of Uganda per-form Friday-Saturday, Feb. 8-9 at the Power Center for the Performing Arts in Ann Arbor.

Children of Uganda
What: The 18-member troupe perform traditional East African

music and dance
When: 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 8, and 8 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 9
Where: Power Center for the Performing Arts, 121 Fletcher

Street, Ann Arbor Tickets: \$32, \$28, \$20, \$16, call (734) 764-2538

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## Marcll from page B1

with African American history, as witnessed by blues, jazz, and more recently, hip-hop and funk. Rudy Lauerman, who books most of the music for the Black history. Besides the Fairfield Four, Lauerman booked Mamés Lickin 'Stick Clarinet Ensemble, who plays rhythm and blues, be-bop, and classic jarshy betroit saxophonist Donald Walden, known for his unique style of improvisation and composition, performs with his quartet. Another Detroit group, the Black Bottom Collective, fuses hip-hop, poetry, funk and reggae. Their music is grounded in urban culture and is created in the spirit of progress and change.

change.
Programs on African American history would not be complete without including the oral tradition of storytelling. When planning programs for Black History Month, assistant educator Mary Jarvis knew it was essential to feature this traditions.

Black History Month, assistant educator Mary Jarvis know it was essential to feature this tradition.

"Oral history is embedded in African American culture, and storytelling is an important, enjoyable way to learn about history," said Mary Jarvis, who invited storyteller Alma Greer-and-a-popular-African drummer to present African Folkatics Stories from the Motherland. Other storytellers present programs every Sunday.

Two major eras in Black history, the Underground Railroad and the Great Migration come alive though performances by the Mosaic Youth Theatre. This internationally acclaimed youth theater presents two plays in one. North to Midnight tells the story of the Underground Railroad through one family's daring escape from slavery and journey to the town code-named "Midnight"—Detroit. North to Sunrise presents a lesser-known journey to the north: The Great Migration of the 1940s. Workers struggling with harsh economic and social conditions in the South left what they know the content of film is represented through a film.

and loved.

The art of film is represented through a film series, collaboratively developed by DIA staff.

Jarvis met with a committee to decide which films

We decided to focus on films we feel deserve more attention, and that might have been overlooked by the general public, said Jarvis. The three films chosen roven different aspects of African American history. Daughters of the Dust is a poetic, turn of the century tale of the Gullah, descendants of slaves who reside on islands near South Carolina and Georgia and maintain their

West African heritage. Director Spike Lee's Four Little Girls is a shattering documentary about the fatal bombing of a black Birmingham, Alabama, church on Sept. 15, 1963, which not only killed innocent children but also galvanized the entire nation and accelerated the civil rights movement. The final film in the series is Beloved, an adaptation of Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize winning novel about a woman who made her way from slavery to a free life in Ohio in 1873.
Ongoing programs at the DIA, such as classes, workshops, tours, and lectures, are focused on African American art and culture. Fine Arts Friday offers an insider's view of works by African American artists in the American galleries. Visitors can learn about African proverbs and make their own Adinkra cloth in a drop-in workshop. An adult class explores three influential Detroit poets, and teachers can take a workshop to learn to make traditional African mud cloth paintings. Families can always enjoy the self-guided tour of African American art, available at the information desks. As Black History Month copnes to a close, the DIA opasa. The special-cythidition Over the Line: The Art and Life of Jacob' Laurence on Feb. 24. This comprehensive review of Lawrence's work is in itself a lesson in African American history. His art tells a visual story, using bold colors and vivid realism to give the viewer a unique perspective of historical events such as abolitionis John Brown's robellion, World Wor II, and the Great Migration of African Americans from the rural South to the Industrial North in the 1940s.

The exhibitions is just the most recent in DIA Apenia chibitions that focused on Black History. Reflections in Black: Smithsonian African American Floography was featured last summer, and in 1999 the museum exhibited Hall Past Autumn: The Art of Gordon Parks.

nenections in Diack: Sminsonian African Ameri-can Photography was featured last summer, and in 1999 the museum exhibited Half Past Autumn: The Art of Gordon Parks.

The Art of Gordon Parks.

Beal explains this is just part of the commitment
the DIA has made to the African American community and to the community at large.

"We plan to continue to fester our relationships
with local collectors, schools, and others in the
community," said Beal. "The DIA belongs to all of
us, and we are dedicated to making the museum
accessible to everyone in metropolitan Detroit."

Pam Marcil is public relations manager at the Detroit Institute of Arts. Observer & Eccentric arts and entertainment reporter Linda Ann Chomin

## Painters from page B1

in April the Shuey Collection at the Cranbrook Art Museum. Booth's love of art began early so it's no wonder she's trying to expose children to a range of media. Booth teaches children's clusses for ages 4-9 at the BBAC where she's been a member for 30 wars.

where sho's been a member for 30 years.
"I came from an artistic family. I asked for paints for Christmas for my 11th birthday and I've been painting over since, said Booth who was an art major at Kent State University in Ohio. "I was exposed through my grandfather who was an architect so I was around all the material. My parents took me to the Cleveland Institute of Arts to see all the shows. At age 12, I took classes there in summer

took classes there in summer and got on a bus all by myself." Nancy Nordlie shares Booth's commitment to art so she was excited when asked to become a member of the Birmingham Socimember of the Birmingham Society of Women Painters in 1974. Booth laid down blocks of blue and green to indicate bodies of water, line for movement the abstract acrylic, Lake Superior. "I was flattered to be invited to become a member," said Nordlic, a Birmingham resident who earned a bachelor's degree in art/design from the University of Michigan. "It's nice to be with people who speak the same lan-

Poppy passion: This triptych by Carole Hadley is titled "Papawer."

guage because I think art is are yet have have from the gallery. Said Sylvester takes pride in being a member of the group. She created Froggy's Gone a Courtin with colored ink.

"I've made close friendships," and Sylvester, a Bloomfield Hills resident whos also a member of the Farmington Artists Club and Palette & Brush.

"There is a high standard of work and it's not easy to get into. I don't want to sound like I'm, bragging but we do have high standards."

standards.

And Sylvester couldn't be more pleased to showcase their work in the Fine Arts Gallery in Livenia. She had a one woman exhibit of her work there last fall.

What city has a room like this devoted to art? said Sylvester as she pointed to a glassed wall in the well lit space designed specifically for painting, sculpture and ceramics.