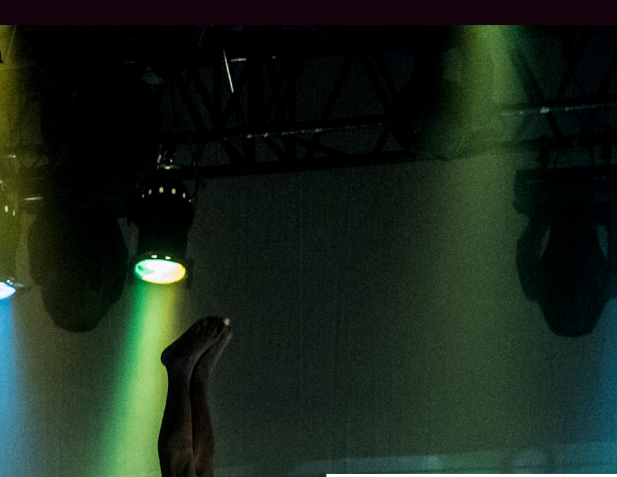


MOSS ARTS CENTER



cirque kalabanté
afrique en cirque
study guide



study guide

cirque kalabanté
afrique en cirque

School-Day Performance
Wednesday, November 13, 2024, 10-11 AM
Recommended for students in grades 3-7

This event is dedicated to the memory of
Patricia Buckley Moss.



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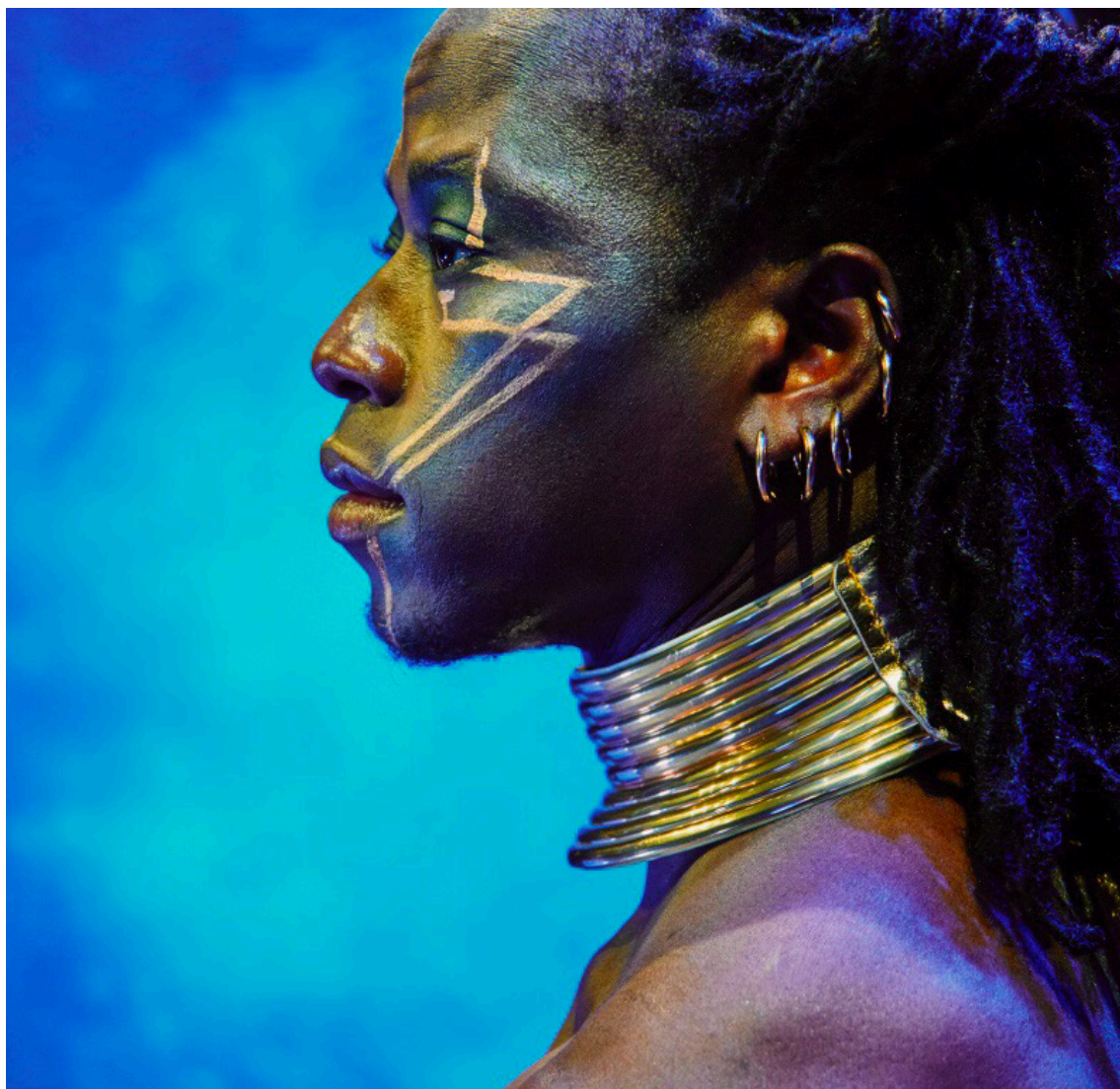


we want everyone to enjoy the show

Please prepare your students for their visit to the Moss Arts Center by practicing audience etiquette before you attend a live performance. The following guidelines will ensure that everyone can enjoy the show:

- Find your seat before the show begins. If you arrive after the show has started, the ushers may need to wait for an appropriate time in the performance to seat you. Always follow the instructions from the ushers.
- Turn off your cell phone and any other device that creates light or could make noise and distract others during the performance.
- Photography, audio, or video recording is not allowed inside the theatre.
- Food, gum, and beverages are not allowed inside the theatre.
- Keep the aisles clear and stay seated so that those behind you can also see the stage. Please keep your shoes off the seats.
- You can show appreciation and enthusiasm for the performance by paying attention and clapping at the proper time. Save personal conversations and questions for after the show.
- Some performers may invite you to clap, sing along, or even dance in your seat! We want you to have fun, but please make sure you are not ruining the experience for your neighbors. Use your self-management skills to control your voice and body.

about the program



about *afrique en cirque*

Afrique en Cirque is a show by Yamoussa Bangoura inspired by daily life in Guinea. This performance shares the beauty, youth, and artistry of African culture. A colorful show even beyond its scenery, costumes, and staging, it makes any theatre vibrate with energy and represents the strength, agility, and joys of young Africans. The audience will see acrobats execute gravity-defying moves and human pyramids, accompanied by the contemporary sounds of Afro-Jazz, percussion, and *kora*. Welcome to the universe of Kalabanté Productions and prepare for an unforgettable journey.

about cirque kalabanté

Kalabanté Productions was created by Yamoussa Bangoura, a Guinean multidisciplinary artist. Bangoura's dream was to found a school of circus arts and to direct his own multidisciplinary company specializing in the African arts.

Bangoura first became interested in the circus arts as a young man growing up in Conakry, Guinea in the 1990s. He studied the circus performers he saw on European TV and practiced on the beach and dirt around his home. He also studied the Nyamakala tradition of circus, practiced by the Fula people of West Africa. He eventually joined Guinea's original circus company, Circus Baobab, with whom he toured Africa and Europe.

In the early 2000s, Bangoura was recruited to come to Canada with Cirque Éloize, a Montreal-based Canadian cirque company. While in Canada he also performed with Cirque du Soleil and Cavalia (cirque with horses). In 2007 Bangoura realized his dream and opened his own company, Kalabanté Productions, in Montreal Canada. He recruited many of his extended family members to join the company, including his twin sisters, brothers, and cousins.

The company began doing shows in Quebec and over the years expanded to all of Canada and the U.S., now performing all over the world. In 2018 Kalabanté opened its own studio and school in Montreal, where it offers classes in African dance, cirque, and drumming.

Kalabanté Productions is proud to be able to share its work, achievements, and skills to inspire others and to assist with the humanitarian mission to help the Guinean community, from which Bangoura and many of his company members come.

learning activities

language arts

Griots: West African Oral Historians

What is a “griot?” *Griot* (pronounced GREE-oh) is the French name given to the oral historians of West Africa. Traditionally, griots travel from city to city and village to village as living newspapers, carrying in their heads an incredible store of local history and current events. Griots pass on their knowledge of history by singing traditional songs, which they must recite accurately, without errors or deviations.

Griots are seen as leaders in their communities. They are an essential part of many West African events such as weddings, where they sing and share family history of the couple getting married. Griots also serve as peacemakers in their community, helping to settle disputes.



Guinea, circa 1910. A Susu griot poses with his *koni* (lute) behind two women.

Discussion Questions

1. How do you learn about the history of your family and your community?
2. Is there a talented storyteller in your life? What makes them so good at telling stories?
3. Are there stories you have heard told over and over again? Why do you think that story gets repeated? Why do we enjoy hearing stories more than once?
4. What is a story that has had a significant impact on you?
5. What are stories that taught you a lesson or helped you understand something about your own life or the world around you?
6. How do stories change over time?

► **Virginia Language Arts SOLS:** 3.1, 4.1, 5.1, 6.1, 7.1

Community Narratives

Prompt students to tell a story that captures something important about their community or personal history using an artifact as their inspiration. The artifact may be a personal possession, a photograph, a news story, something from nature, etc.

Students will imagine that the story they tell will be passed down from generation to generation. What would be important to share about their community in this time and place?

Students may tell a story about their family, neighborhood, town or city, or a specific community that they are a part of. The story could be based on real events or it could be fictional, but it must reveal something important about what it is like to be a part of their community today.

1. Model how to tell a story about a community using an artifact. Ask students what the story reveals about the community you choose and how the artifact helps convey your message.
2. Next, students brainstorm which community they will tell a story about and what artifact they could use to help tell that story. It may be helpful to provide multiple modes to brainstorm — both in writing and in a short discussion with a peer.
3. Assign a day for students to tell their stories. Continue short, regular check-ins as bell ringers to see how students are thinking about and crafting their stories.
4. On the day assigned for storytelling, divide students into pairs. Provide approximately two to three minutes for each partner to share their story. If a student finishes telling their story and time still remains, their partner should ask questions about the story.
5. Finally, in a full class circle, ask for student volunteers to share their story with the class.

OPTIONAL EXTENSION: You may choose to have students record their stories in videos to create a multimodal class archive.

► **Virginia Language Arts SOLS:** 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2

learning activities, cont.

physical education

Acrobatic Charades

Materials:

- Notecards or slips of paper
- Pencils

Students play charades, using acrobatic movements to create their scene. Remind students about safety protocols and ensure students ask their team members for permission before initiating any physical contact throughout the game.

1. Provide a topic for the first round of charades that would require a lot of action and body movement (e.g., severe weather incidents, Pixar movies, sports, wild animals, etc.).
2. Have the class brainstorm a list of examples within that category and write those down on notecards or slips of paper.
3. Divide the class into three or four teams.
4. When it is a team's turn, select three to four students from that team to draw a notecard and create an acrobatic routine to represent what is written on the card. Give students approximately one minute to plan their routine so that they are able to talk through how to work together effectively and safely.
5. The routine must last no more than 30 seconds to represent the item on the card they drew. The rest of the team has only 15 seconds to guess the word or phrase. Teams have only one guess per round. If the team guesses incorrectly, it goes to the next team to guess. For each correct guess, the team earns one point.
6. To ensure students aren't sitting for too long between turns, consider asking students to stand up and demonstrate how they would have acted out that same word or phrase in between turns.

► **Virginia Physical Education SOLS:** 3.1c, 3.4, 4.1b, 4.4, 5.1b, 5.4

Acrobatics and Acoustics

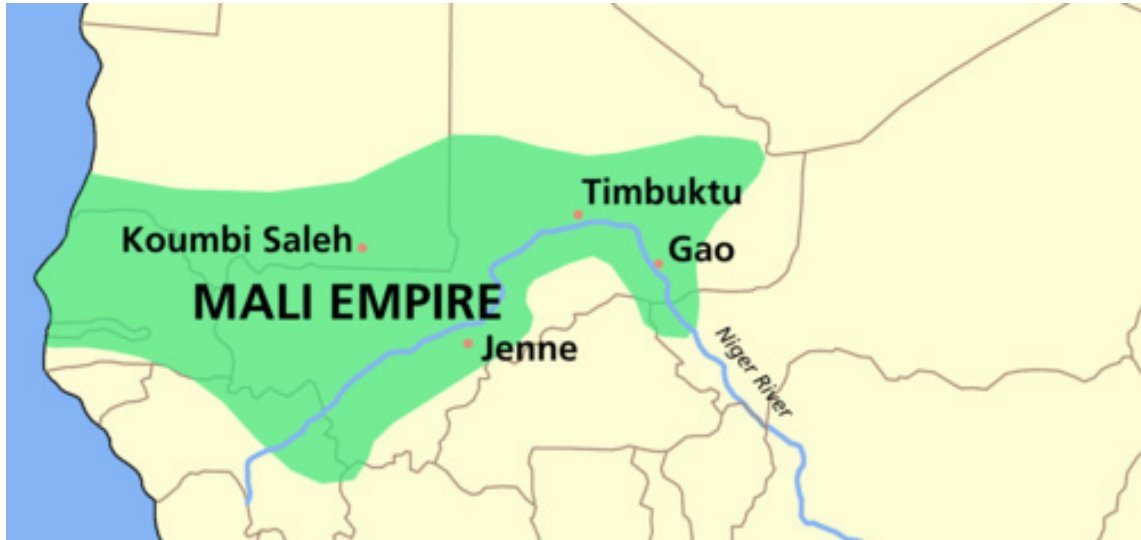
1. In groups of three to six, students create an acrobatic dance routine to a song of their choice.
2. Students will present their routine to the class and be prepared to answer questions about how their routine reflects the themes of the song.
3. Next, students will teach the routine to the rest of the class. Students must teach other students the names of particular dance or acrobatic moves and explain how to modify the moves in order to complete them safely.

► **Virginia Physical Education SOLS:** 6.1e, 6.4, 7.1d, 7.1e, 7.1f, 7.4

learning activities, cont.

social studies



The Ancient Empire of Mali and West Africa Today



1. Before attending the matinee, explain to students that the creator and performers in Cirque Kalabanté are from Guinea and the program is meant to reflect elements of Guinean culture.
2. Next, have students find Guinea on the world map and learn more about the country. Consider having students conduct their own research (see resources in the Research Guinea Today activity below).
3. Then, introduce a study of the Ancient Empire of Mali, which included the territory that is now Mali, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Mauritania, and parts of Niger and Burkina Faso.

Vocabulary

- Empire
- Scholar
- Territory
- Trade
- Resources
- Pilgrimage
- Conquer



The Mali Empire thrived in West Africa from the 13th to 17th centuries — over 400 years! The Mali Empire was established by King Sundiata Keita, or “the Lion King,” in 1226. One of its most famous cities was called Timbuktu. Many scholars lived and studied in Timbuktu, and the city was known throughout the world as a center of knowledge.

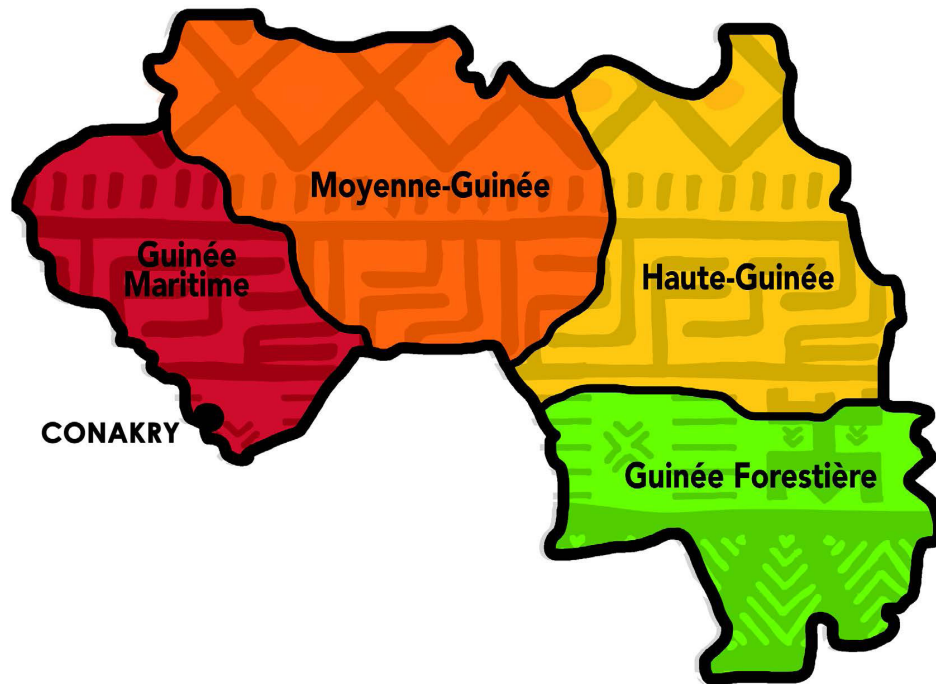
The kings in Mali were called “Mansa.” One of the most powerful kings, Mansa Musa I, reigned from 1312-1337. Under his rule, Mali doubled its territory and became the center of trade throughout Africa. The trade of salt and gold, as well as other resources, made the empire even richer. On Mansa Musa’s pilgrimage in 1324 to the holy city of Mecca, he gave away an enormous amount of gold. Mali became famous around the world as people learned of Mansa Musa’s riches. Some scholars today believe Mansa Musa may have been the richest person in history. Mansa Musa died around the year 1337 and Mali became less powerful. By the 15th century, the Songhay Empire conquered most of the territory that had belonged to the Mali Empire, and by the 17th century, the Moroccan Empire occupied the area that was once the Mali Empire.

1. On butcher paper, have students create a timeline that accurately depicts the rule of the Empire of Mali, the independence of the country of Guinea, and today.
2. Prompt students to ask questions about what occurred between the fall of the Empire of Mali, Guinea’s independence, and today.
3. Finally, prompt students to place other historical events that they have learned about on the timeline.
4. Ask students to reflect on this study of ancient history:
 - What was most interesting?
 - What was surprising?
 - What confused you?
 - What questions do you still have?

► **Virginia Social Studies SOLS:** 3.4, 3.5

learning activities, cont.

Research Guinea Today



Introduce Students to the Country of Guinea

1. Show students Guinea on a world map.
2. Share with students that Guinea is a coastal country in West Africa divided into four subdivisions: Maritime Guinea (Guinée Maritime), the mountainous region of Middle Guinea (Moyenne-Guinée), the savannah of Upper Guinea (Haute-Guinée), and Forest Guinea (Guinée Forestière). The main languages spoken in Guinea are Malinké, Soussou, Peul, and French. Conakry, the capital of Guinea, is in Maritime Guinea. The name "Guinea" means "woman" in English, and "Conakry" translates to "the other side of the shore."
3. As you introduce each subdivision of Guinea, ask students to make inferences about its climate and environment based on its geography.

Research Guinea

1. Divide students into partners or small groups to research Guinea, using the research tracker on the following page. If students are working in small groups, be sure to have them divide the tasks amongst their members so that each student has information to find.
2. Give students a short amount of time, approximately 15 to 30 minutes, to research using [Britannica Kids](#), other online resources, or physical encyclopedias to research their assigned subdivision.
3. It may be helpful to pause students every five to 10 minutes to have students share aloud a fact that they have learned. This can help hold students accountable for their research when given an extended amount of independent work time.

Summarize Findings

1. As a full class, call on individual students to share what they learned about Guinea, questions they have about the country, as well as new vocabulary words they encountered while researching.
2. You may choose to explore some of students' questions in a future lesson.

Optional Extension

As an extension, have students choose a subject to dig into deeper: the capital city, one of the bordering countries, climate, geography, plants and animals, major ethnic groups, religion, major resources, governmental system, history, etc. Consider providing a list of trusted websites for students to use as their sources. Have students report on their subject to the full class.

► **Virginia Social Studies SOLS:** 3.5c, 3.6a

Research Tracker

Country: _____

Draw the Flag:	Captial: Official Language: Population:
Bordering Countries:	Climate:
Geography (rivers, mountains, deserts, etc.)	Plants and Animals:
People and Culture:	Economy:
Government:	History:
Vocabulary Words:	Definitions:
Questions:	

learning activities, cont.

social emotional learning

The Honor Code for Acrobats



Include and Share

The circus is a place where everyone belongs, regardless of origin. It's a way to get in touch with the different cultures of the world, a way to meet people and exchange ideas, even when you don't speak the same language.



Mutual Trust

The circus is an art based on teamwork and mutual trust. When an artist climbs to the top of a human pyramid, they must have unwavering trust in other people because a simple mistake can put one's life in danger.



Transparency

The art of the circus is also a way to be completely vulnerable and exposed. It is only when on stage and under the spotlight that the audience can really see what the artist is capable of.



Courage

The journey of a circus artist is full of difficulties and disappointments. Giving up or being affected by others is not an option. You have to be courageous enough to be yourself, to believe in your own potential and to make many mistakes, since this is the only way to learn and grow.

REMEMBER: A movement may have been repeated a million times before being perfectly performed in front of an audience.

learning activities, cont.

1. Print out the honor code for acrobats and have students brainstorm why this code would be important when performing cirque.
2. Next, ask students to consider other situations when this code would be useful, outside of cirque.
3. Finally, ask students to choose an activity they engage in (sports, music, theatre, etc.) and determine their own honor code for that activity. Have students explain their code to a partner.
4. As a full class, ask student volunteers to share their codes aloud.

► **Virginia Social Emotional Learning SOLS:** SeA2: 3-4c, SeM1: 3-4c, DeM2: 3-4b, SeA2: 5-6b, SeA2: 5-6d, SeM1: 5-6c, DeM1: 5-6c, DeM2: 5-6b, SeA2: 7-8c, SeM1: 7-8c, ReS2: 7-8a, DeM1: 7-8a, DeM1: 7-8b, DeM1: 7-8c, DeM2: 7-8b



Myths and Mistakes

A mythical character named Tambaloumbé lives in the imagination of Guinean children. It is said that he guides children throughout their lives and invites them to do good around them. He has a crown on his head made of cowries (small white shells). Tambaloumbé teaches children that when someone does harm around them, they always have the power to make up for it. This person can do wrong once or twice and still be forgiven. At the third offense, their luck is exhausted and the Tambaloumbé is there to remind them.

Reflection Questions

1. Think of a time when you did something that caused harm and someone forgave you or you had the chance to fix what you did wrong.
2. How did that experience feel? Have you had the opposite experience, when you were not given a chance to repair what you did wrong? How did that experience compare?
3. How are people usually treated when they cause harm at school? In the broader community? Throughout the country? Throughout the world?
4. What do you think is the best way to teach children to treat others with kindness and respect? How should people respond when children cause harm? Does your answer change for adults? Why or why not?

► **Virginia Social Emotional Learning SOLS:** SeA2: 3-4b, SeA2: 3-4c, SoA1: 3-4a, SoA2:3-4c, ReS1: 3-4c, DeM1: 3-4c, DeM2: 3-4b, SeA2: 5-6b, SoA1: 5-6a, SoA2: 5-6a, ReS1: 5-6c, DeM1: 5-6b, DeM1: 5-6c, DeM2: 5-6b, SeM1: 7-8c, SoA1: 7-8a, SoA2: 7-8a, ReS1: 7-8c, DeM1: 7-8a, DeM1: 7-8b, DeM1: 7-8c, DeM2: 7-8b

additional resources

Teacher Resources

[Maps, Merchants, and Mansa Musa: The Powerful Mali Empire](#)

Bibliography

[America's Black Holocaust Museum: What is a Griot](#)

[Brittanica Kids: Guinea](#)

[Cirque Kalabanté Productions \(kalabanteproductions.com\)](#)

[National Geographic Mali Empire](#)

what to know before you go

Changing your reservation

If you cannot attend or your party turns out to be smaller than the number of tickets you have reserved, please inform the Moss Arts Center as soon as possible by contacting Bethany Costello, engagement manager, at bethanycostello@vt.edu so that Moss staff can release your tickets to those on the waiting list.

Accessibility

The Moss Arts Center is committed to being accessible to all of our patrons. Patrons with disabilities and their companions are accommodated through wheelchair seating, parking, and other special requests throughout the center at all levels. Assisted listening devices are available. Service animals are permitted. Sign interpretations and large-print programs are available with advance notification. If you or your students have questions regarding accessibility or would like assistance, please contact Jamie Wiggert at wiggertj@vt.edu.

Drop Off

The bus drop-off location is on the Alumni Mall side of the Moss Arts Center, located at 190 Alumni Mall on the Virginia Tech campus. Drivers may pull their buses into the driveway loop directly in front of the center. Staff will be on site to assist. Recommended arrival time is 15-30 minutes before the start time of the performance.

Parking for Cars and Vans

Those driving cars and vans may park in the North End Center Garage (300 Turner Street NW), which is one block from the Moss Arts Center's Turner Street entrance. A valid university parking permit, a validation from one of the retail tenants, or payment of the daily fee is required to park in the North End Center Garage.

Parking for Buses

Bus staging is located in the upper section of the Chicken Hill lot (Football Lot 5) on the Virginia Tech campus. The lot entrance is on Southgate Drive, opposite Sterrett Drive. Parking passes will not be required for buses. For more information about parking at Virginia Tech, please visit parking.vt.edu. Please note that buses are not permitted to park adjacent to the Moss Arts Center's Turner Street entrance.

what to know, cont.

Checking In

When you arrive at the center, please check in with Moss Arts Center staff to confirm that your party has arrived. Staff will be on site to assist seating your group, directing you to restrooms, and answering any questions you may have.

Pick Up

It is recommended that buses arrive back at the Moss Arts Center 15 minutes before the end of the performance. Following the performance, please remain in your seats; school groups will be dismissed by Moss Arts Center staff to ensure a smooth and speedy departure for all. Staff and volunteers will assist school groups in meeting their buses in the center's Alumni Mall driveway.

Feedback

Following the performance, you may receive an email requesting feedback on your group's experience. Please make time to respond, as doing so could significantly improve the Moss Arts Center's PK-12 programs for you and future visitors.

For More Information About Moss Arts Center Programs

Please subscribe to the [Moss Arts Center's email list](#) and join the list for school-day performances and PK-12 programs.

