December 10, 2014

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Menes Yahudah; I am a professional percussionist. Please accept this as part of my submission for consideration of the Baker Artist Award.

 My desire is to bring musical education back to school aged children. I run multiple workshops and programs during the week with children in Baltimore City Schools. I also offer dance classes and percussion classes in the evening and weekends. My group consists of a variety of professionally trained artist who are serious about making an impact.

I am a resident of Baltimore City and I have a deep desire to be a positive male role model for them. I am completely invested in our future, the *children*!

My company Urban Foli (which literally means “City Music”), is a musical theater performance group that expresses traditional African drumming and dance bridged with contemporary sound and movements. Urban Foli encourages its members to combine ancient teachings with the evolution of R&B and hip-hop culture.

Attached you will find a detailed description of the program I run in surrounding schools. I also attached my bio and a more detailed explanation of Urban Foli’s mission.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Menes Yahudah

Urban Foli, Director

Booking@UrbanFoli.com

www.UrbanFoli.com

**Company Profile**

***Urban Foli*** is a musical theater performance group that expresses traditional African drumming and dance bridged with contemporary sound and movements.

The focus is to cultivate a mixture of West African and African American percussion and culture. Under ancient tradition, each ethnic group or percussionist develops their own sound; Urban Foli encourages its members to combine ancient teachings with the evolution of R&B and hip-hop culture.

The goal is not only to preserve traditional music and history, but to continue the legacy of percussion and movement that has been passed down in the Americas. The group’s mission is to expose as many as possible, to this Neo-traditional sound called *URBAN FOLI*!

**Class/Workshops Structure**

**Music History**: Music history of the African Diaspora will provide youth with information regarding how origins of music and dance(drum and African Dance) dates back centuries for the purposes of community rituals such as religious ceremonies, rites of passage and harvest celebrations. Youth will provide their observation of how music and dance can be found in contemporary customs.

**Djembe Drum**: Participants will learn about the djembe drum including construction, sound and as a tool for healing. Youth will have an opportunity to learn specific technical rhythms and sound identification. The workshop will conclude with participants using what they learn to participate as an active drummer in a final performance.

**West African Dance Movement:** Student will learn a specific dance, history and origin of Africa. Technical movement will be taught with a final choreography.

**Performance - finale:** Professional company members will perform with youth participants a final performance incorporating skills and techniques used during the morning workshops. We encourage family, school staff members to come.

**About the Director Menes Yahudah**

Menes Yahudah is a producer, musical conductor, playwright, teacher, professional drummer and a rising music mogul. His West African drumming career has span over 35 years.  He is a 1994 graduate of Baltimore City College. During his musical studies both in the United States and abroad, Menes has blossomed into an accomplished musician. At the tender age of two, Menes began drumming with his father and Baltimore’s Druid Hill “Park Vibe”.  He later began his professional career as a drummer for the Sankofa African Dance Theater in Baltimore Maryland.  Over the years, he has continued to perform with numerous professional companies and ensembles. In 2006, Menes received the Maryland Apprenticeship Grant to Baile McKnight [a Master Drum Craftsman, Drummer, Folklorist, and Educator], through the Maryland State Arts Council. Menes also spent many years studying under, Master Drummer Mamady Keita (and other village drummers during his numerous visits to the continent of Africa).

Menes has written and directed musical experiences including When the Moon Cries, which explores the evolution of African-American relationships on a multi-media scale.

A strong advocate for community work, he facilitates weekly African dance and drum classes, to nurture and stimulate the artistic, personal, and professional development.  Menes developed a concise drum program that he runs in multiple schools. He is a leadership consultant and mentor with OBI (Our Boys Institute) Baltimore, led by Changa Oyango. Menes is also a main program facilitator at The Living Well where Maurissa Stone-Bass is founder.

Menes is the co-director of the annual Baltimore Rhythm Festival. Fellow organizers of the 2014 Baltimore Rhythm Festival said this, “Menes represents the pinnacle of virtuosity as an artist within the Mande djembe tradition.  Menes is attempting to craft a new approach to African traditions amongst the American born, infusing respect for and deep study of African cultures with application of the principles and aesthetics of this culture to his own time and place.”

Menes Yahudah is considered one of the most sought after professional drummers in the Mid-Atlantic region.  Menes has spent extensive time in the African countries such as: Guinea, Senegal, Gambia and the Ivory Coast, for the purpose of both performance and study.  He has also travelled internationally to Asia and the Caribbean.

Menes has performed or collaborated with the likes of Mamady Keita, Omar Penne, Djimo Kouyate, Baile McKnight, Mahiri Fadjimba Keita, Maria Broom, Cleveland Chamber Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Sweet Honey and The Rock, Famoudou Konate, and Papa Ladji Camari.

**Partners/Clients**

* Albright College
* Baile's African Drum Works
* Baltimore International Academy
* Baltimore Rhythm Festival
* Cherry Hill Academy
* Civitas Charter School
* Connections Leadership Academy
* Creative Alliance
* Dallas Nicholas Middle School
* Drum Call
* Farafina Kan
* Goucher College
* Nsoroma Academy
* Stevenson University
* Tam Tam Mandingue International
* The Living Well
* Wombworks

**Business Information**

FEIN 46-2346722

Pay to the order of:

Urban Foli

2443 N. Charles Street

Baltimore, MD 21218

**Performance and Travel**

* 2014 Baltimore Rhythm Festival, Baltimore, MD
* 2014 Make her Story, Alicia Brock, New York, NY
* 2014 Bermuda Donquili Summer Confrence/Workshop, Bermuda
* 2013 When the Moon Cries, Musical, Towson University, Towson, MD
* 2013 Make her Story, Alicia Brock, Baltimore, MD
* 2013 Goucher College & Barclay Exchange, Baltimore MD
* 2012 Pan Afrikan Day of Solidarity Tubman City, Baltimore, MD
* 2012 Harvest Festival, Baltimore, MD
* 2012 Stevenson University Multi-Cultural Student Affairs, Owings Mills, MD
* 2011 African American Heritage Festival, Baltimore, MD
* 2008 Nazo and Company, Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, Africa
* 2008 Reginald F. Lewis Museum Kwanzaa Celebration, Baltimore, MD
* 2008 Dance Place, Washington, DC
* 2007 French Embassy, Washington, DC
* 2007 Farafina Kan, Guinea, Africa
* 2006 Baltimore Rhythm Festival, Baltimore MD
* 2005 Guinea Tour, Tam Tam Mandingue International, Guinea, Africa
* 2002 Rainforest Music Festival, Africa In Motion, Malaysia, Asia
* 2000 Roots Festival, Africa In Motion, Gambia, Africa
* 1997 Sankofa Dance Theater, Senegal, Africa
* 1998 Sankofa Dance Theater, Senegal, Africa