

The Jazz, Culture & Social Justice Project

I am Dr. Pascal Bokar Thiam. I am a Guitarist/Vocalist and a faculty in the Performing Arts & Social Justice Department of the University of San Francisco, CA (USF) where I teach African and African American Music and direct the (USF) Jazz Band.

I am the recipient of the Jim Hall Jazz Master Award from the Berklee College of Music and the Outstanding Jazz Soloist Award from Dizzy Gillespie and James Moody. My CD entitled "Guitar Balafonics" received Downbeat Magazine "Best CD of 2015".

I am also the bandleader of the Pascal Bokar Afro Blue Grazz Band with more than 60 appearances at US Jazz & World Music Festivals. I lecture on the topic of Jazz and its relationship to African culture in colleges and universities in the US and abroad.

www.afrobluegrazzpascalbokar.com



THE PROGRAM

The Program consists of a multimedia presentation involving documentary films, recorded conversational pieces, musical excerpts and a Q&A afterward for the audience to interact with Dr. Pascal Bokar Thiam.

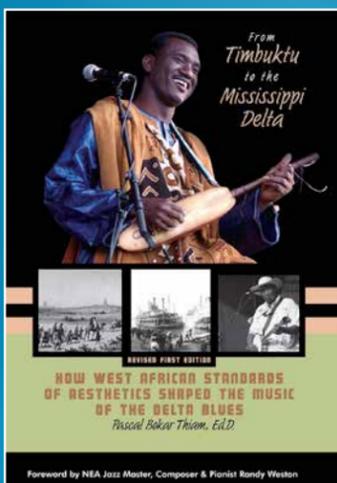
The lecture is a survey covering the enormous cultural importance of the medieval Empires of Ghana, Mali and Songhai (4th-17th century) and the radiance of their civilizational influence.

What cultural standards of aesthetics develop in West Africa that will transfer to the United States through the Atlantic Slave Trade, from the foods (gumbo) to the religious rituals (voodoo) to the agricultural skills (cultivation of rice) to the rhythmic pulse of the drums (swing), to the call and response patterns to the blue notes of the Malian string instrument called the Ngoni which became America's oldest American melodic and harmonic string instrument, the banjo.



Click the image to the Google Talks Presentation

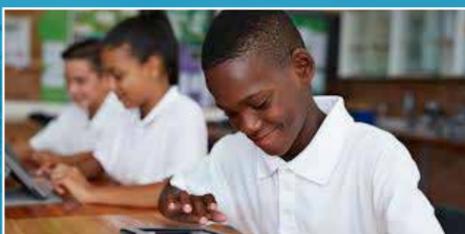
WHY THE PROGRAM?



For far too long academia in America has been silent on the amazing array of cultural contributions that African culture bestowed the United States through the period of the Atlantic Slave Trade that saw the arrival of thousands and thousands of West Africans every day, every week, every month and every year from 1550 until 1888.

This absence of academic recognition of African contributions has been deeply detrimental to the self-esteem and self worth as well as the motivation of young African Americans to participate in the American dream because academia's dearth of information about West Africa's great empires and civilizational centers leads Black children to believe that their history, traditions and heritage begins with slavery in the plantations of the American South when nothing is further from the truth...

It is important for the self-esteem and self worth as well as the motivation to succeed that young African Americans understand and appreciate that they are issued from great civilizations that have defined culture and aesthetics for humanity from the dawn of time. This information is important to all of us beyond race, culture and gender.



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THE MUSICAL PERFORMANCE



CLICK THE IMAGE TO SEE A LIVE VIDEO!

The musical performance is an exhilarating (75 mns) presentation by the powerhouse Pascal Bokar Afro Blue Grazz Band that features the West African sabar drum, the balafon (ancestor of the xylophone), the banjo, the fiddle and a rhythm section.

For more Information contact:

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