



# Etienne Cakpo

**Professional Dancer and Choreographer**  
Contemporary & Traditional African Dance  
Director, Gansango Music & Dance

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## Recent Career Highlights

- **Tour of five cities in Colombia, South America** sponsored by Centro Colombo-Americano and the U.S. Embassy in Colombia. August 2009.
- **Selected for danceWEB Europe's 2007 Scholarship Program** in Vienna, Austria. July-August 2007.
- **Recipient of 2006 Artist Trust/Washington State Arts Commission Fellowship** for Excellence in Performing Arts. October 2006.
- **Winner of 2006 Dance Omi Residency Award** to participate in the three-week internationally-competitive Dance Omi International Dance Collective in upstate New York. August-September 2006.
- **Winner of 2005 UNESCO-Aschberg Bursury for Artists Award** and selected as choreographer in residence to lead three-month choreography & dance residency at Espace Sobo Badé in Sénégal. November 2005-February 2006.

## Selected Dance performances

- 2010      **Horizon: A line that doesn't exist** A performance of purely contemporary African dance revolving around the themes of immigration and identity. Presented with Gansango dancers from Togo, France, Cameroun, South Africa, Senegal, Benin and Martinique. December 3-4, 2010 *Seattle Art Museum*
- 2010      **Born to be Wild, The Nature Conservancy's 50th Anniversary Event**  
Gansango headlined this special event with performances of African dance and drumming with a multicultural team of 12 artists and collaborative pieces with renowned Tlingit Native American storyteller and musician Gene Tagaban. Event honored conservationists Jane Goodall and Harriet Bullit. October 27, 2010 *Fremont Studios, Seattle*
- 2010      **Benn Lañu at Giant Magnet 2010 Festival.** Gansango returned for a second commission from Giant Magnet developed for the 24th annual children's festival. This vibrant show featured sabar and djembe dance from Senegal, song from South Africa and traditional dance from Benin. One full week of performances delighted children from across Western Washington. May 11-15, 2010 *Bagley Wright Theatre*
- 2009      **Tour of five cities in Colombia, South America** sponsored by Centro Colombo-Americano and the U.S. Embassy in Colombia. Five artists from Gansango toured festivals, workshops and performance venues in Medellin, Pereira, Armenia, Quibdo, and Manizales. August 2009.
- 2009      **From Benin to Bahia.** Gansango Music & Dance presented by Seattle Folklore Society & South Seattle Community College. A sold-out performance of Ethnic Dance & Music from Africa with dancers and musicians from Benin, Ghana, Brazil, Zimbabwe and South Africa. March 6, 2009 *Olympic Hall, South Seattle Community College*
- 2007      **La Calabasse** A dynamic and refined, sold-out performance of traditional and contemporary African dance and music presented by Gansango's multicultural group of local and international dancers and musicians. Traditional costumes and live instrumentation. October 5-6, 2007 *Seattle Art Museum*



- 2003-2005 **Kaleta: A Children's Festival from West Africa**  
 A four-man Gansango production of storytelling, percussion and masked dancing from West Africa.
- Sunrise Civic Center Theatre (*Sunrise, Florida*) October 8, 2005
  - Bay Street Theatre (*Long Island, NY*) May 1, 2005
  - Philadelphia International Children's Festival April 25-May 1, 2004
  - John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (*Washington, D.C.*) February 9-15, 2004
  - Philadelphia Museum of Art February 8, 2004
  - Seattle International Children's Festival – World's Premiere! May 2003

- 2003 **Jijoho: Dance of Peace**  
 Performance of traditional and contemporary African dance and music produced by Gansango Dance. A multicultural group of local and international dancers and musicians presented modern and traditional African dance and music. Traditional costumes and live accompaniment of kora and djembe.  
 July 5-6 & 12-13, 2003 *Seattle Art Museum and Kirkland Performance Center*

**Additional performances:**

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|-----------|---|---|
| 2002-2003 | <b>Sankofa Theatre: The Maafa Experience</b><br>Solo performance in Seattle's Sankofa Theatre production of The Maafa Experience, a dramatic representation of dance, drama, spoken word and music commemorating African lives lost during the transatlantic slave trade. | July 24-27, 2003 and<br>July 18-20, 2002<br>The Moore Theatre, <i>Seattle</i>             |
| 2010      | <b>International Music Festival Third Place Commons</b><br>Public performance for children and families.  | May 17, 2010<br>Third Place Books, <i>Bothell</i>   |
| 2010      | <b>Gansango at Town Hall Family Events</b><br>Public performances for children and families as part of Town Hall's family events.   | April 17, 2010<br>Town Hall, <i>Seattle</i>   |
| 2009      | <b>Kasumai Africa: Master of African Drum &amp; Dance</b><br>Public performance as part of West African dance and music show organized by Thione Diop.  | November 1, 2009<br>November 2008<br>Northshore Performing Arts Center, <i>Bothell WA</i> |
| 2009      | <b>Third Place Commons World Music Festival</b><br>Public performance of African dance, music and song for families.  | May 1, 2010<br>October 17, 2009   |
| 2009      | <b>Encompass NW and Si View Community Center</b><br>Performance of African dance, music and song for children and families.   | February 13, 2009<br><i>North Bend, WA</i>  |
| 2009      | <b>Ana Montes and Flamenco Danzarte</b><br>Ethnic Cultural Center<br>Duo choreography of contemporary African dance and drumming fused with flamenco and jaleo.   | August 30-31, 2008  |
| 2008      | <b>Dance This!</b><br>Opening dance piece for Seattle Theatre Group's annual DANCE this! performance  | July 18-19, 2008<br>The Paramount Theatre<br><i>Seattle, WA</i>                           |
| 2008      | <b>Phinney Ridge Romp</b><br>Performance of African dance, music and song for children and families.  | March 1, 2008   |
| 2008      | <b>Gansango Music &amp; Dance</b> presented by Seattle Folklore Society & South Seattle Community College. A sold-out performance of Ethnic Dance & Music from Africa with dancers and musicians from Benin, Ghana, Brazil and South Africa.                              | February 1, 2008<br>Olympic Hall, South Seattle<br>Community College                      |



### Additional performances (cont'd):

2006-07	<b>Shoreline Arts Festival</b> Performance of contemporary and traditional dance and music from West and South Africa.	June 28, 2007 June 25, 2006 <i>Shoreline, WA</i>
2006	<b>Redmond Arts in the Parks Summer Concert</b> Performance of contemporary and traditional dance and music from West and South Africa.	July 16, 2006 Anderson Park Stage <i>Redmond, WA</i>
2006	<b>Juneteenth Festival</b> Performance of contemporary and traditional dance and music from West and South Africa.	June 17, 2006 Idaho Black History Museum, <i>Boise, Idaho</i>
2004	<b>Diversity Celebration, Central Wash. University</b> Performance of traditional and contemporary African dance and music produced by Gansango.	February 26, 2004 <i>Ellensburg, WA</i>
2003	<b>Black Nativity</b> Solo performance in Seattle's annual rendition of Langston Hughes' musical play.	December 6-13, 2003 The Intiman Theatre
2002	<b>DANCE This!</b> Choreographer, instructor and performer in Seattle Theatre Group's DANCE this...an annual youth dance residency and performance program.	June 29, 2002 The Paramount Theatre <i>Seattle, WA</i>
2001	<b>Gbéplé: The Spirit of Union</b> Performance of traditional and contemporary African dance and music by Gansango's multicultural group of local and international dancers and musicians, produced by Gansango.	December 8 & 9, 2001 Seattle Art Museum

*Additional performances prior to 2001 available upon request.*

### Dance Performances for Schools

Assembly performances of dance and African percussion for school groups of all ages.  
Created and performed by Etienne Cakpo and 4-5 artists from Gansango Dance Company.

<b>2008-11 Dates</b>	<b>School name</b>	<b>Event</b>
January 22, 2011	Open Window School & Vista Academy, Bellevue	Multicultural Assembly
March 20, 2010	Kids Create in Monroe	Assembly
February 24, 2010	Lowell Elementary School	Assembly
November 23, 2009	Forest Ridge School of the Sacred Heart, Bellevue	Assembly
February 11, 2009	Broadview Thomson School, Seattle	Assembly
June 9, 2008	Sheridan Elementary School, Tacoma	Assembly
May 30, 2008	Jefferson Elementary School, Mt. Vernon	Assembly
May 19, 2008	The Meridian School, Seattle	Assembly
April 19, 2008	University of Washington, Seattle	Afro-Caribbean Int'l Night
April 15, 2008	Green River Community College, Tacoma	Diversity Event
March 8, 2008	Bellevue Community College, Bellevue	International Night
January 17, 2008	Pierce College, Puyallup	Diversity Event



## **Children's Shows in Libraries & Schools**

Two-man shows of storytelling, percussion and masked dance for children ages 3-12.  
Created and performed by Etienne Cakpo and Won-Ldy Paye, master storyteller from Liberia.

<b>2009 Dates</b>	<b>Library Branch or School name</b>	<b>Show Title</b>
July 2009	Seattle Public Library System Summer Reading Program sponsoring performances at 8 branch libraries.	Kaleta: West African story & dance
July-August 2009	Seattle Public Library System Summer Reading Program sponsoring drum workshops at 7 branch libraries.	African drumming workshop for youth
February 2009	King County Library System sponsoring 10 elementary school assemblies.	Kaleta: West African story & dance

<b>2006-7 Dates</b>	<b>Library Branch or School name</b>	<b>Show Title</b>
June 23, 2007	Bothell Regional Library	African dance workshop
February-March 2006	12 King County Libraries and schools	Presentations of "Story of Cat & Rat," African Percussion Workshop, "The Talking Vegetables," and "Drums, Drums, Drums!"

<b>2006 Dates</b>	<b>Library Branch or School name</b>	<b>Show Title</b>
June 7, 2006	Greenlake Library	The Talking Vegetables
July 1, 2006	NE Branch Library	African Dance Workshop
July 9, 2006	Central Library	African Dance Workshop
July 26, 2006	South Park Library	African Dance Workshop
August 2006	11 Seattle Library branches	Presentations of "The Talking Vegetables" and "Kaleta Masked Dance"
October 28, 2006	Town Hall, Seattle	The Talking Vegetables

<b>2005 Dates</b>	<b>Library Branch or School Name</b>	<b>Show Title</b>
February 2005	13 King County Libraries and schools	Presentation of "Long Ago In Benin And Liberia"
May-June 2005	5 Seattle Library branches	Presentation of African dance workshop, "Story of the Bell, Shaker & Drum," and "The Talking Vegetables"

## **Gansango Mandinka Music Trio Performances**

January 20, 2007	SAM Olympic Sculpture Park Opening	<i>Seattle</i>
February 1, 2007	Scenic Hill Elementary School	<i>Seattle</i>
February 4, 2007	Olympia Sacred Music Festival	<i>Olympia</i>
February 6 & 21, 2007	City of Seattle, Dept. of Planning	<i>Seattle</i>
February 23, 2007	City of Seattle	<i>Seattle</i>
May 6, 2006	Bellevue Multicultural Festival and Kids Fair	<i>Bellevue</i>
May 15, 2006	Valhalla Elementary School	<i>Auburn</i>
June 22, 2006	Tiffany Park Elementary School	<i>Renton</i>
November 4, 2006	Federal Way 320th Library	<i>Federal Way</i>
November 4, 2006	Foster Library	<i>Tukwila</i>
March 4, 2005	The Evergreen School	<i>Seattle</i>
August 15, 2005	Kelsey Creek Summer Camp	<i>Bellevue</i>



**Teaching Experience:**  
**Workshops, Residencies and Classes in African Dance**

2009-2010	The Seasons and Yakima Valley Community College Teaching & performing African dance and music at multiple venues and for various age groups	Yakima
2008-2010	Centrum Artist in Residence, Explorers Program & Blue Heron Program Teaching African dance 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> grade students (March)	Port Townsend
2007-10	Open Flight Studio On-going public classes in African dance	Seattle
2002-10	DanceThis! at the Paramount Theatre Annual instructor of African dance for DanceThis youth	Seattle
2008	Island Fitness Classes in African dance for adults (April-July)	Bainbridge Island
2008-2010	Artist in Residence, Stevens School Teaching African dance to two grade 3 classes (March)	Seattle
2008-10	Artist in Residence, Secondary Bilingual Orientation Center Teaching African dance to immigrant high school students (March-May 2008; October 2008 thru May 2009; Oct 2009 to present)	Seattle
2008	The Meridian School Teaching African dance to grades 3-5 (March)	
2008	Artist in Residence, Spectrum Dance Theatre at The Evergreen School Teaching African dance to grades 3-5 (February-June)	Seattle
2008	Pacific Northwest Ballet Outreach Program at Summit K-12 Teaching African dance to high school students (January)	Seattle
2007-08	Artist-in Residence, Voyager Montessori Elementary School Teaching African culture, dance and rhythm to students ages 6 to 10 (October 2007-March 2008)	Bainbridge Island
2007	Artist in Residence, West Woodland Elementary School Teaching African dance to grades K-5 (February-April)	Seattle
	University Heights Center Public classes in African dance	
2001-10	World Rhythm Festival 2001-2010 (April)	Seattle
2006	Project Drum, Seattle Summer Rhythm Institute for Music Educators	Seattle
	Guest Dance Instructor in Residence, Department of Theatre & Dance, University of Southern Mississippi	Hattiesburg
	Seattle Int'l Children's Festival, Educational workshops for teachers	Seattle
2005-06	UNESCO Choreographer in residence, Espace Sobo Bade	Senegal
2005	Guest Instructor in Preparatory Dance program at Cornish College of the Arts	Seattle
2003-05	Waves Dance Studio Cross cultural exchange instructor (Brazil-Haiti-USA) Whitman College Imagine Festival Workshop at the Grange	Olympia Salvador, Brazil Walla Walla Port Townsend

*Additional experience prior to 2003 available upon request*



## **Dance Training, Classes and Workshops**

- 2007 Intensive workshops, classes, and training at danceWEB Europe's 2007 Scholarship Program. Mentored by Jonathan Burrows. Vienna, Austria
- 2006 Attended workshops at Dance Omi in Hudson, NY by Rebecca Jung (Pilobolus), Gus Solomons Jr. (The Solomons Company/Dance) and Peggy Cheng (In Mixed Company & Dancespace Project). Hudson, NY
- 2000-7 Attend regular classes in modern dance at Velocity Dance Studio and ballet at Belltown Ballet & Conditioning. Seattle, WA
- 2000 Attended 10-day workshop on contemporary African dance with Germaine Acogny, Senegalese Choreographer and Dance Teacher. Bamako, Mali

## **Awards and Achievements**

- Awarded Allied Arts Foundation grant in December 2007 for project *Inspiring Elementary School Students through African Dance and Culture*. December 2007-January 2008.
- Featured artist in *Seattle Cultural Guides: The Artists' Guide to Seattle*, Seattle Convention and Visitors Bureau. Released in August 2007. [www.visitseattle.org/cultural](http://www.visitseattle.org/cultural)
- Selected for highly-competitive for danceWEB Europe's 2007 Scholarship Program in Vienna, Austria. Five week program in July-August 2007. [www.dancewebeurope.net](http://www.dancewebeurope.net)
- Invited Resident selected to participate in the 3-week internationally-competitive Dance Omi International Dance Collective in upstate New York. August 2006. [www.artomi.org](http://www.artomi.org)
- Guest Instructor in Residence at University of Southern Mississippi for one week of master classes in African dance for all levels of students in the Department of Theatre and Dance. March 2006.
- Winner of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)-Aschberg Bursaries for Artists award for a three-month residency in choreography and dance. November 12, 2005 to February 12, 2006 at Espace Sobo-Bade, Toubab Dialao, Senegal.
- Former lead singer and percussionist with the contemporary world jazz ensemble Jazzukha <http://www.jazzukha.com/>
- Original afro-jazz and world music CD entitled "Ji" (voice and percussion) <http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/cakpoatchade>

## **Travel Experience**

- United States, Canada, Austria, Benin, Colombia, France, Brazil, Senegal, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Togo, Mali.

## **Languages**

- French, English, Fon, Kouta-Fon, Mina (Ewe), conversant knowledge of Goun.

## **References**

*Available upon request*

