

VANCOUVER
INTERNATIONAL
CHILDRENS
FESTIVAL

 **ASSAMA and the
BEADED CALABASH**

May 31 - June 2

At the Revue Stage
on Granville Island

A visual story helps people prepare for a new
experience or decide if this show works for them.



What information is in this visual story?

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This is the visual story for the show, there is a visual guide for the theatre on our website.

Schedule / Important times

These times will be a little different for every performance.

The doors to the theatre open 15 - 30 minutes before the show, before that you can wait in the lobby.

The performance is about 40 minutes long.

The Stage

This is what the stage will look like



The Performers



Lua is the storyteller
She also wrote the story



Cécé is the musician
[Click her to see the djembe and other instruments he plays](#)



The Curtain Speech

Before the show starts someone will come to the stage and talk. It might be a little bit different, but these are the things they often talk about:

- The indigenous land we are on
- Thank you to sponsors and donors and volunteers
- How you can donate to the festival or help in other ways

This is a short speech
between 1-3 minutes

[Click here to read the speech](#)

This is someone doing a curtain speech.
When you go, it could be another person.

About the Story

Yassama and the Beaded Calabash is the story of Yassama, a young girl who lives in a village where they have less and less water to drink and grow food. With the help of the old Baobab tree, Yassama saves her village. The story is a lesson about the importance of respecting and honouring Mother Earth.

The storyteller tells the story with the help of the musician.



Things that can be intense in the story

- The story talks about a drought, where there isn't enough rain to grow food
- The storyteller will use some words and sing in an African language.
Sometimes she sings or says the same in English after but not always.
- The storyteller will encourage people to clap along or answer.
 - She will not say that directly.
 - She will clap and look at the audience and at first only some people copy her clap but soon everyone claps along.
 - She says "Ago" and the musician responds "Ame", they do that again and she waves her hands to ask people to say "Ame". Then they do that several times.

Sound

The only sounds coming from the storyteller are talking and singing, while the musician plays several percussion instruments.

There is djembe drumming or other percussion for most of the show.

It is not loud but repetitive and sometimes a little surprising.

It is not a very loud show but sometimes everyone in the audience gets excited and sings along or claps along and that can get loud.

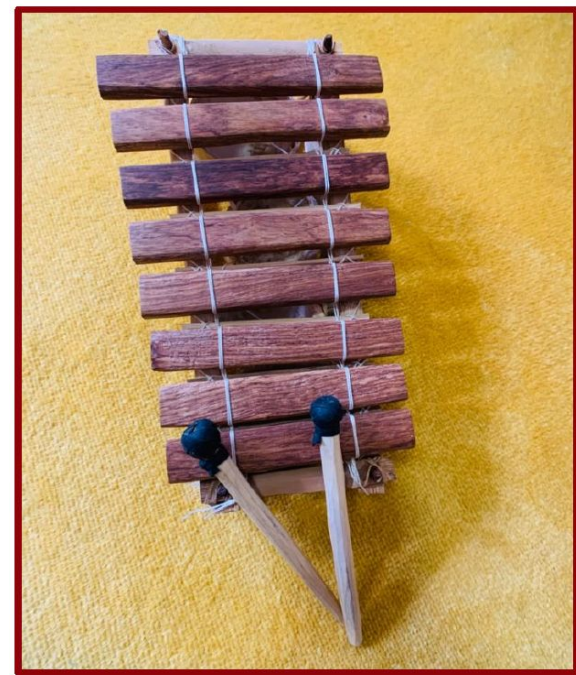
On the next page you can see pictures of all the instruments the musician uses.

The Instruments



The djembe

The musician will play the djembe a lot, especially during the songs.



The balafon

More instruments on the next page



The bell

The caxixi
Makes a sound like a shaker



The rainstick

More instruments on the next page



The ksing ksing

Makes the noise of
trees' leaves shaking in
the wind

The nut-shell handbell



The nut shaker

More instruments on the next page

Lights

There will be slow changes from light to dark but never completely dark.

There is one moment where the lights flash (not a strobe light).

When does this happen?

When everyone in the village is fighting the light slowly goes darker.

Then Yassama goes to the faraway river to the baobab tree. The tree is sleeping and when the baobab tree wakes up from his sleep the lights flash.

After that the lights slowly become brighter again.

This is a picture of the darkest it ever gets.



How people react

In this show people in the audience always laugh a lot.

People clap along and all yell “Ame”.

Sometimes people repeat what the storyteller says.



SPOILER ALERT :

Don't read this unless you want to know everything that happens.

The musician starts playing djembe, he stops when someone comes and does the [curtain speech](#). When they leave, he starts drumming again.



Visual Story: Everything that happens

The storyteller walks onto the stage and claps with the drumming, people in the audience start clapping along. She stops, the musician plays a rhythm, she copies that rhythm by clapping and looks at the people in the audience until people copy her clap. Then they do that a bunch of times but with different rhythms.

She shouts “Ago! Hello!”, the musician responds “Ame! Welcome”. People in the audience join in and also yell “Ame” after she shouts “Ago”. This happens 3-4 times.

Then the storyteller and musician introduce themselves. The storyteller explains that they are telling the story of Yassama and the beaded calabash.



Then she tells us about Yassama and her village and her family and what they are like.

The story begins.

The musician starts playing and the storyteller comes back in singing Yassama's Song, it is in an African language called Bambara and goes like this:

*Tolon дума Yassama gniè
Donkili дума Yassama gniè
Don дума Yassama gniè
E e e e Yassama aaaaa
E e e e Yassama aaaaa
E e e e Yassama aaaaa*

The storyteller tells us about life in the village. Yassama talks to her dad about how important the rain is. It was Yassama's job to get water from the well and she likes to sing when she is doing that.

*E woyala woyala wonga walio
Walinaborémouna wofa validé
Wofa wonga wali wali na borémouna
E woyala woyala wonga walio*

As Yassama grows up, the rainy season gets shorter.
They can't grow as much food.
Yassama is worried. But her father is not worried he says mother earth will care for them.

The well in the village runs dry and Yassama's mother tells her she now has to go to the nearby stream to get water.



Then the nearby stream runs dry.
Yassama is worried. But her father is still not worried.

Her mother tells her she has to go get water from the far away river. It was far under the hot sun.
At the river she sees an old baobab tree. She says "Ago" and the baobab answers "Ame". She asks if she can rest in his shade and the baobab protects her from the sun with his branches.

After a rest, Yassama gets water and goes home singing:

*Soghé bara té
Won faré boro, won faré boro
Soghé bara té
Won sighi saa, won Sighi saa
Under the baobab
Yes we together we sing
Yes we together we dance
Baobabab baobab, baobabab baobab*



Then there was no more rain at all and they had drought. There was very little food and everyone in the village began to argue. Yassama was scared.

The lights go very dark in this part of the story.

One day, Yassama goes to the river to get water and it is all dry. She sits under the baobab and cries singing:

*Soghé bara tè, Won faré boro, Won faré boro
Soghé bara tè, won sigui saa, won sigui saa
Sous le baobab*

When her tears touch the old Baobab's roots, the earth rumbles and, the Baobab shakes his leaves. The lights are flashing on the stage.

The Baobab tells her not to cry and that he wants to reward her for being kind, helpful and respecting her elders. He gives her a calabash with beautiful cowrie shells, it comes out of the earth, and he tells her to shake it 3 times.

She does and the river starts flowing again. She drinks.



The Baobab tells Yassama to shake the calabash 4 times. She does and it suddenly has stew in it. She eats it.

The Baobab says she has to tell the villagers to remember to store food for the next season and honour mother earth with a harvest ceremony. And that the rain will come back.

Yassama thanks the old Baobab and runs to the village.

Yassama shows everyone the calabash and shakes it 3 times. The well fills up with water and everyone drinks.

Then she shakes it 4 times and bowls of stew appear and everyone eats.

Yassama shares the message from the Baobab and everyone listens and agrees not to take Mother Earth for granted again.



The rain came back and the next harvest was plentiful and the village celebrated Mother Earth.

The storyteller sings and dances.

And then she tells us that Yassama always went back to visit the Baobab before the rainy season every year until she was as old and wise as the Baobab himself.

The story is over. The lights go a bit darker.

The storyteller and the musician bow.
Everyone claps.

The show is now over.

If you want you can go look at the musicians instruments and talk to the musician. But you need to have an adult with you, unless you are an adult.

Credits

This Visual Guide and Story was created with the help of a template created with the input of many consultants, patrons, artists and fellow arts organizations.

Special thanks to the Vancouver International Children's Festival, Intrepid Theatre, Vancouver Writers Fest, the PuSh Festival, the Gateway Theatre and Jake Anthony.

Want to create a visual story for your show, event or venue?
Email Anika Vervecken and she will share the template: accessactivator@gmail.com

She also welcomes all feedback!

But most importantly, a bit thank you to Lua Shayenne who put so much work into creating this amazing show and wonderful visual guide. You can find out more about them on their website: luashayenne.com