

## Arizona Wolf Trap Artist Biographies

**Sam Anderson** is a native of Mobile, Alabama and began studying drums at the age of 11. He moved to Arizona in 1976 after receiving his Masters Degree (M.S.W.) from the University of Alabama. For over twenty years, he studied traditional West African drums with Ghanian Master Drummer C.K. Ganyo. Sam is a Teaching Artist in Residence with Arizona Wolf Trap and a childcare training consultant with Southwest Human Development. He is also director of bands for Montessori Day Schools and adjunct faculty in sociology at South Mountain Community College. Sam is the founder and artistic director of Desert Drums, and he performs regularly with Keith Johnson's Sankofa, West African Folkloric group, Frank Thompson's Arizona Rhythm Connection and Lynne Haeseler's "Mysterium" meditative music ensemble. He has worked with the Arizona Commission on the Arts and the National Heritage Foundation. Sam and his wife, Alese, are partners in Anderson Associates where they work as licensed fiduciaries.

**Cynthia Elek** conducts grade K-8 residencies through the Arizona Commission on the Arts as a Music/Education Artist and 0-to-K residencies as a master teaching artist for the Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts. (Vienna, Va.) She holds a Master's of Music in Opera Performance from the University of Maryland's Opera Center and a B.A. in art history from Oberlin College. Ms. Elek has conducted residencies for the Kennedy Center Community Partnerships and the Choral Arts Society arts ACCESS in Washington D.C. public schools. She teaches grades K-6 at-risk students as a guest artist with the Phoenix Conservatory of Music. She has been presenting for the Kennedy Center's Professional Development since 2003. She has appeared as a company actor with the InterAct Story Theatre and appeared in opera, film, commercials and voice-overs in the Washington D.C. area. In Phoenix, she has appeared in productions at TheatreWorks and Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre and has been a member of the Arizona Opera and Phoenix Symphony choruses. Ms. Elek's article on her classroom work with chant, combining music and literacy, appeared in the fall 2009 issue of the *Arizona Reading Journal*.

**Patti Hannon** performed *Late Nite Catechism* in Boston, Chicago and New York before moving to Arizona in 2000 to star in the production at Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts. Originally a Chicago actor, Hannon has a flair for improvisation and has written for and performed with Hit and Run and Bit Players. She earned Joseph Jefferson citations for her roles as Lil in *Ask for the Moon* and Lorette in *Between Daylight and Booneville* and a special AriZoni Award for *Late Nite Catechism's* longevity. When not on stage, she teaches acting and improv classes for the Center's education department.

**Diane McNeal Hunt** is a supervisor and master artist for the Arizona Wolf Trap program and a recognized performer and teacher by the Arizona and Southwest dance communities. She received a B.A. in dance from ASU in 1980. She enjoys designing and conducting school residencies, teaching master classes and choreographing for all ages. Since 1980, Diane has performed, taught and choreographed with Center Dance Ensemble, A Ludwig Dance Theatre and Desert Dance Theatre. She has been a guest performer with Scorpius Dance Theater and, since 1986, she has taught dance to elementary school students at Desert View Learning Center. In 1983, she co-created MarDi Dance Company with partner Mark Vanek. MarDi Dance Company's signature Dia de los Muertos performances have been showcased at Mesa Arts Center, Chandler Center for the Arts, the Heard Museum and the Desert Botanical Garden and feature original masks created by internationally acclaimed artist, Zarco Guerrero. Recognized as "Dancing Diane" throughout Head Start and early childhood classrooms, Diane leads professional development workshops for teachers, trains new artists and models integration of the performing arts with curriculum.

**Jeff Jones** has a long career as a professional musician and has been an educator and children's music performer for over 25 years. Jeff is an active roster member of the Arizona Commission on the Arts and a teaching artist for the Wolf Trap Foundation, and he has taught classroom music in the Scottsdale Unified School District for almost 14 years. In 2007, Jeff produced a recording of his children's music. The recording *Sing a Little Song, Do a Little Dance* is a fun, multicultural, interactive CD that has kids singing and dancing as soon as they hear it. Along with his band, The Earthtones, Jeff mixes old favorites with musical styles, instruments and languages from around the globe. Jeff's goal is to introduce children to the world of music and music of the world.

**Kristina Kirkham** received her undergraduate degree from Olivet Nazarene University in Illinois. After graduation, Kristina toured with children's theatre companies such as Let's Pretend Entertainment, based out of Puyallup Washington, and the Missoula Children's Theatre, based out of Missoula Montana. Continuing to influence the lives of young adults here in the valley, Kristina has taught with the East Valley Children's Theatre, Theater Works, Art and Sol, CYT, and Childsplay. Over the past year she has also served as the drama teacher for both the Mesa Arts Academy, a K-8th grade charter school, and Create Academy.

**Jonathan Mincks** began his Wolf Trap training in fall 2000. He has been performing professionally for over 30 years on stage, screen, in schools and at corporate venues. Jonathan is an accomplished actor, stuntman, magician, writer, director and producer with literally thousands of shows performed. He is an active member of the Screen Actors Guild since 1989.

**Jeffrey Sadow** has been teaching music and performing arts in the valley for over 30 years. With a background in music, Jeffrey combines elements of creative movement, puppetry, storytelling and creative drama into his program. Jeffrey has recently completed 25 years of teaching music at Desert View Learning Center and the Unitarian Universalist Early Education Cooperative preschool in Paradise Valley, as well as 20 years of co-directing UU Kids Kamp, a summer camp devoted to the arts for children. Jeffrey has been playing the flute for 40-plus years and is quite fond of playing jazz.

**Mark Vanek** provides artist residencies, master classes, workshops and performances throughout Arizona. Mark's skill in a variety of performance styles including jazz-tap makes him a popular teacher in the schools as well as an energetic and accessible performer. Mark has appeared in collaborative events with Zum Zum Zum and Zarco Guerrero. He danced with Desert Dance Theater from 1981 to 1985 and appeared as a guest artist with numerous Arizona performing groups. Mark toured Mexico in 1990 with his company MarDi Dance Company and continues to perform in local Dia de los Muertos festivals.