

On Stage

Africa AIDS Response



Balafonatics have been popping up all over for almost 20 years! Members have studied with master musicians in Africa, Latin America and the U.S. The Balafon Marimba Ensemble will be performing along with the NW Afrikan American Ballet, Master drummer Obbo Addy and his jazz-fusion group, Kukrudu in the AFRICA AIDS RESPONSE occurring on May 1, 2000.

CONTRIBUTED STORY
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

On May 1, 2000, the community of Portland will gather for a night of African performance and dance to benefit our Sister City of Mutare, Zimbabwe. The Crystal Ballroom will host African AIDS Response, a benefit to raise over \$20,000 to support grassroots AIDS efforts in Africa. Showcasing the NW Afrikan American Ballet, Master Drummer Obo Addy and Kukrudu, and Balafon Marimba Ensemble, the benefit hopes to raise money as well as awareness of the epidemic and the efforts of the African people to slow the disease and manage its

consequences. Focus on the African epidemic has intensified over the past year. Everyone is aware of the devastation that is occurring throughout the continent. We hear weekly reports of rising death tolls, decreased life expectancy, failing economies due to a ravaged work force and, of course, scores of children orphaned by the epidemic. On July 8, 2000 the International AIDS Conference will convene in Durban, South Africa and likely heighten the focus on the African Epidemic. The conference, historically

centered on scientific discoveries that have led to the development of powerful drug combinations and the rescue in the developed world, will ironically find itself hosted in a nation deprived of these advances. Portland, Oregon will be represented at the International Conference by several health care providers and community members. Sensing an opportunity to do more while there, Maria Kosmetatos, a local HIV nurse practitioner, decided to seek out volunteer opportunities in Zimbabwe.

(Please see 'Aids' page 8)

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