



# Shades

SINGING MUSIC OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA  
SINCE 1988, YALE UNIVERSITY

## Introduction

Shades is a non-profit co-educational collegiate cappella group founded to celebrate music of the African diaspora. The group's mission is to "offer a unique, musically excellent, and spiritually enriching performance experience to audiences at Yale University and beyond." Titilayo Ngwenya and a small group of other Yale freshman established the group in 1988 at a pre-orientation program for freshmen of color then known as the Puerto Rican Orientation Program (PROP), now known as Cultural Connections.



Shades has come a long way since its early years, when the group would gather its limited resources to perform a humble, yet beloved Valentine's Day Concert at a small convenience store on Old Campus. In the few years since its inception, Shades has become one of Yale's premiere cappella groups, presenting four highly-attended jams per year in some of the biggest concert halls and performance venues on campus. Shades has established a reputation for excellence outside of Yale as well, touring extensively both domestically and internationally to places like Puerto Rico, Boston, Houston, Jamaica, California and Japan. One of the group's most notable tours was in August of 2003, when Shades was invited to Phokeng, South Africa to sing for the enthronement ceremony of Kgosi Leruo Molotlegi, King of the Royal Bafokeng Nation. The group's stay culminated in a performance at a soccer stadium with an audience of over 20,000, including former President Nelson Mandela and the royal family of Botswana.

For inquiries including the group's yearly repertoire, availability and price schedule, please e-mail [shades@yale.edu](mailto:shades@yale.edu). Any tour-related inquiries may be directed to the group's tour managers via [shadestour2@panlists.yale.edu](mailto:shadestour2@panlists.yale.edu). Sample tracks from Shades' four albums, including *Sankofa* (2005), are available online at [www.yale.edu/shades](http://www.yale.edu/shades).



*Mission* Drawing upon the diverse backgrounds of its members and the oral traditions of blacks in America, Shades strives to portray the depth and complexity of the black experience with a focus on R&B, gospel, jazz, pop, and traditional music. In recent years, the group has taken on more educational and service projects by including educational workshops in many of its school performances. Additionally, by underwriting Shades, many generous organizations have enabled the group to perform at venues that cannot otherwise afford an entertainment budget.



Some of the organizations for which Shades has recently performed as part of its social responsibility campaign include: Julian Acosta High School, a public school of the arts in Puerto Rico; New Haven's Leeway house, a local hospice for AIDS patients; Casa La Providencia, a battered women's shelter in Puerto Rico; The BELL Foundation, an organization in New England providing underprivileged youth with mentoring programs to help them excel academically; The Boston Arts Academy, a public conservatory in Boston for musically gifted, underprivileged students; The Ronald McDonald House and San Jorge Children's Hospital in Puerto Rico; and Yokohama Christ Church Congregation, an Anglican Episcopal Congregation in Yokohama, Japan, in the process of rebuilding its church after a devastating fire in 2004.

*This Year* In 2008-2009, the group plans to continue the pursuit of its mission by expanding its African repertoire and maintaining a sense of social responsibility. Shades' tours will predominantly focus on public service objectives. The group is always eager to connect with organizations interested in supporting Shades' mission and future objectives both domestically and around the world.

*Winter* **DALLAS, TEXAS**  
Shades' winter tour to Dallas is schedule to fall between January 3-January 10, 2009. Highlights for this tour include educational workshops at several of Dallas' public and private schools, as well as performances at a few area churches. All proceeds from this tour will go towards the group's larger spring tour. Please feel free to contact Shades' tour managers at [shadestour2@panlists.yale.edu](mailto:shadestour2@panlists.yale.edu) with any questions about this tour.

*Spring* **ENGLAND & IRELAND**  
Going to Ireland and England in March 2009 is an opportunity the members of Shades are eager to take advantage of. Shades is excited for the chance to spread our music and mission to people who may not have been exposed to anything like it before in their lifetime. It will also be an incredible learning experience especially for our members who have never been to Europe. The tour is sure to be both meaningful and memorable. Please feel free to contact Shades' tour managers at [shadestour2@panlists.yale.edu](mailto:shadestour2@panlists.yale.edu) with any questions about this tour.

## Pricing

Shades can accommodate a variety of venues and audiences of all ages. Please contact Shades' business manager to inquire about adjusting these standard options to fit your specific venue, budget or time frame.

## Additional Info

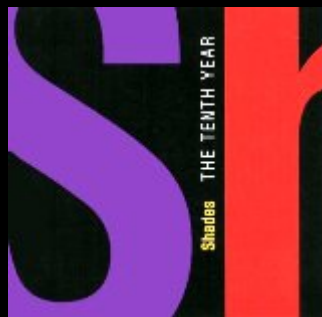
Upon request, the group's members can introduce themselves following its first song. The group also does its best to honor repertoire requests made prior to the performance.

**EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS:** Shades provides a wide variety of workshops and can often tailor these workshops to the specific needs of the audience. In the past, Shades has taught lessons on the history of African diasporic music, provided interactive vocal performance technique workshops, and even given talks on college life, multiculturalism, and the impact of the arts on student life. These workshops have been particularly popular with elementary and secondary schools because they can be molded to serve as an expansion of current classroom topics (e.g. African history, African-American history, A cappella singing). Please contact Shades' business manager to inquire about designing a master class to suit your audience.

**TRANSPORTATION:** Except while on tour, Shades is normally unavailable outside of the Greater New Haven area for performances less than 45 minutes in length. Depending on the location of the venue, the group may ask that transportation be arranged or that an allowance for this be included in the performance price, whichever is more convenient.

**SOUND RECOMMENDATIONS:** Shades does not require sound equipment for every venue. However, for the usual auditorium setting, 1-2 solo and 3-4 background microphones are recommended. For some venues, a sound system is almost necessary, but for others it is unwarranted, so Shades allows this issue to be handled at the customer's discretion.

**ALBUMS SALES:** Shades recently finished its newest album, *Sankofa*, in 2005. Some of the album's most poignant pieces include: "Deep River," a traditional Negro spiritual; "One by One," from Disney's famous musical *The Lion King*; "More Than a Paycheck," a tribute to blue-collar families around the world; "Shut De Do," a traditional Caribbean folk song arranged by Shades' founding members; "Elijah Rock," a time-honored gospel piece; and "Amen/We Shall Overcome," a medley of two songs from the American Civil Rights movement, also arranged by Shades' founding members. The group currently sells three of its five other albums after performances: *Perspective* (2001), *Tenth Year* (1998), and *Sisters & Brothers* (1995). Albums can also be purchased on the group's website, or by contacting [shades@yale.edu](mailto:shades@yale.edu).



## How Can I Help?

Shades is incorporated in the State of Connecticut and can receive tax-deductible donations through its umbrella organization, the Afro-American Cultural Center at Yale University.