

# Visiting Artists

## Art & Music Engage Students' Imagination

Exposure to the arts is an integral part of the curriculum in Saint George's Lower School. Visiting artists and field trip experiences help students learn to appreciate fine music and visual artwork, engage their imaginations, and explore the world around them.

"We hope to ignite each student's passion for the arts as something to be enjoyed throughout their lives," says Kathy Johnson, Assistant Head of School for Elementary Education.

This fall, the second and fourth-grade students visited both the Washington State University Art Museum and the Northwest Animal Museum in Pullman. The fourth and fifth graders also attended a Spokane Symphony Concert. Some experiences were for the entire Lower School—kindergarten through fifth grade—such as the following accounts of recent visits by renowned cellist Zuill Bailey and Kenyan batik artist Sironka.



Experiencing live music, particularly in an intimate school setting, is a totally different experience from listening to the radio, an iPod, or watching performances on TV. It offers a full sensory experience that can move and inspire in very powerful ways.

This was most evident on October 3rd when the Lower School was privileged to host Zuill Bailey, the world renowned cellist and artistic director of the Spokane Bach Festival. Mr. Bailey masterfully performed several works including Bach's Cello Suite No. 1 in G major and Brahms' Lullaby. Students witnessed a high level of artistry and had the opportunity to ask Mr. Bailey questions, to learn about his cello (which was built when Bach was 10 years old), and to hear about the work that goes into being a solo performer.

This raised the bar for the Lower School students and heightened their own level of musical performance. They were inspired to work hard and are excited to experience more.

— Judy Hafso, LS Music Teacher

On October 22nd, the Lower School students had the unique opportunity to spend the day with Sironka, a Kenyan visual artist specializing in batik.

Sironka, who now resides in Spokane, started the day at an all-school assembly where he shared his Masaai culture through story and role-playing. Dressed in his native costume, the students sat riveted to each word as he described the Masaai wedding custom through interactive storytelling. Masaai beliefs and values were clearly evident as Sironka emphasized the similarity between their value system and Saint George's core values. Sironka told the students that it is important to nourish each other with kind words each and every day!

At the conclusion of the morning assembly, each grade level had the opportunity to work on a collaborative batik with Sironka. In a hands-on painting activity, Sironka explained the Batik process. Students traced their hands and painted hearts and a Masaai wedding necklace on fabric using hot wax and dyes. Character traits and values were reinforced and discussed throughout the activity as Sironka shared even more Masaai proverbs and sayings.

During lunch the students were able to watch a video about African animals. Sironka dined with the students and answered their individual questions about his culture, dress, and art. Clearly, the students were interested and intrigued!

At the closing assembly, a finished batik was revealed to a round of cheers. It was evident that the students had a better awareness of the Masaai culture and appreciated a new-found method of making art. Our thanks to Sironka for sharing his art and culture from his corner of the world!

— Linda Smith, LS Art Teacher



**Above: Cellist Zuill Bailey playing, fourth graders adding to the batik, Sironka with the finished piece  
Across: Sironka guides students as they paint**

**On the Web**  
See more pictures of Sironka and his artwork at [www.sgs.org/news-and-photos](http://www.sgs.org/news-and-photos)



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