Assane Konte, a national of Senegal, West Africa, is the Co-Founder and Artistic Director, Lead Choreographer, and Costume Designer for KanKouran West African Dance Company. He began his dance training at age 12, and studied with many prominent traditional dancers and musicians throughout West Africa. His career as a professional dancer began at age 15 with the “Ballet Africaine de Diebel Guee” of Dakar, Senegal. In 1978, following a tour in Cote d'Ivoire, Mr. Konte came to the United States to pursue a career as an independent performer and worked with numerous dance companies as a musical arranger and choreographer. Mr. Konte soon realized that he needed to develop his own dance company in order to accomplish his ultimate goal of introducing traditional African dance and drumming to wider audiences in the U.S. Thus, in 1983, along with his childhood friend and Master Drummer, Abdou Kounta, Mr. Konte founded the KanKouran West African Dance Company. Since that time, his lifelong dedication to preserving and sharing Africa's rich culture through dance and music has made him a goodwill ambassador, promoting cross-cultural appreciation and understanding in the many performance venues in which he and the company appear.

Through his careful and meticulous choreography, Mr. Konte has elevated U.S. based African dance to the highest professional level. Although Mr. Konte choreographs primarily for his own company, his ingenious creativity and expertise is always in demand at home and abroad. Consequently, he conducts annual programs in Poland, Hawaii, Japan, St. Croix, and appears as a guest artists at dance conferences throughout the U.S. Mr. Konte has held faculty positions in the dance departments of several prestigious universities in the Washington, D.C. area, including American University, Georgetown University, George Mason University, and he presently serves on the faculty at Howard University. Although many dancers and drummers have come and gone, to this day KanKouran continues under the leadership of its co-founder/Artistic Director, Assane Konte. The Company's success is perhaps best judged by its longevity and by the large number of company and community members who are involved in diverse academic, professional, and entrepreneurial pursuits, and who credit KanKouran with instilling within them the discipline, pride, and commitment to self and community which have made their life pursuits meaningful as well as successful.

Over the years, KanKouran has established itself as a premier center for the study and performance of traditional West African dancing and drumming. It is home to three performing companies: the Senior, Junior, and Children's groups. Weekly classes for adults and children have been a key component of furthering the Company's mission and establishing an appreciation for African performing arts in the United States. KanKouran’s annual African dance and drum conferences are among the largest, longest-running gatherings of student- through master-level African dancers and drummers. The Company has also worked extensively to bring African dance and drum to children of all ages via various in-school and extra-curricular programs.