



June 3, 2020

Inspired by the Voices of our Ancestors



Three Oshuns & Kulu Mele board members: Crystal Galling, Kia Holfield Wimmer and Fasina Wilkie.

Dear Kulu Mele Community,

I hope you and your families are well. It is with a heavy heart that we write this message. In light of recent tragic events involving the murders of unarmed black persons including (but not limited to) George Floyd, Ahmaud Aubrey and Breonna Taylor, we want to express that Kulu Mele African Dance & Drum Ensemble was established to celebrate the culture of people who are often disenfranchised, abused, neglected and silenced. Our company name means "Voices of our Ancestors" and we seek to be a beacon of light for our culture and community. Our hearts ache for the families of those who have lost their loved ones. We value those of our community who stand against injustice, who care and advocate for and demand that all persons be respected and treated as equals. We stand on the side of change and hope. May you and your family be safe and protected during these difficult times.

As we continue social distancing due to COVID-19, we want to let you know that Kulu Mele is coming out with videos from this period of isolation. We're sharing work and reflecting on culture. We may be searching for Ogun the warrior, with hopes that he take his metal ax and clear us a path to freedom: free to breathe, create, love and live. Perhaps we will be searching for Oshun's sweet waters of the world. She could help us overcome with love instead of harshness. Either way, we will dance! Dance is spiritually healing. Stay with us as Kulu Mele goes virtual in June to share traditional wisdom, everyday practice, and community-held history that are relevant and useful tools for this moment.

We appreciate you! Thank you for reading this newsletter and thank you for supporting our [KM+50 campaign](#) with participation and contributions. We are 1/3 of the way to our goal of \$10,000 to support new ways of being present and together in transition. Your [donation](#) helps us carry the torch for culture, develop new work, and look forward in perilous times. We thank everyone who took advantage of our free virtual Afro-Cuban dance classes and Omo Kulu Mele children's classes in May. I hope your spirits were lifted. Stay tuned for the next virtual educational experiences!

Peace, safety and resilience.
Ashe.

Fasina Wilkie