

# AFRICAN HERITAGE ON THE ROAD

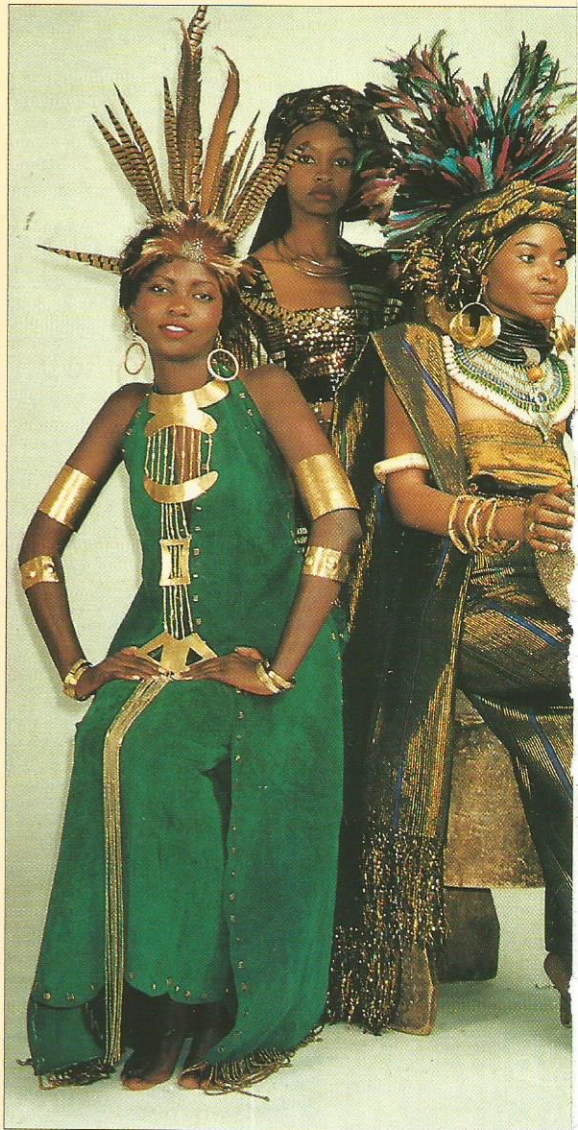
**T**he Hotel Inter-Continental Leipzig is buzzing. As one appreciative guest puts it: "Kenya has given us a wonderful surprise. It has been some time, if ever, since we have seen any show of this quality and beauty." Yet another vibrant African Heritage Festival performance is drawing to a close. The audience, perhaps more used to the negative images of Africa so often portrayed by the media, has been almost overwhelmed by the array of delicious food, the joyous music and dance, the superb fashions, fabrics and artefacts presented during an evening of celebration of things African.

During May and June this year, the African Heritage Festival toured nine major cities in Germany and Austria in probably the most ambitious and most successful attempt to promote Africa as a tourist venue yet seen in Europe. With the support of the Kenya Tourist Office and the relevant Embassies, and with sponsorship from Inter-Continental and Forum Hotels and Lufthansa, the models of African Heritage, the singers and dancers of Jabali Afrika and the chefs from the Hotel Inter-Continental Nairobi took their extravaganza on the road

Accompanying them in a caravan of buses and lorries were 3,000kg of costumes, textiles, exotic trees and plants, scenic backdrops, lighting, catwalks, banners, musical instruments, art and artefacts. Special supplies of food and drink were constantly being flown in for the chefs to prepare the freshest of buffets for each performance.

Although the tour is now over - and Jabali Afrika went on alone to conquer America - the full African Heritage Festival will regroup for the celebrations of the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations to be held at the world headquarters for Habitat, Nairobi. The following eye witness account of the Festival on tour, however, gives a good idea of the impact it had on an unsuspecting Europe.

"This is the first time I've been in Germany when it wasn't grey and raining. We have brought you the sunshine and colour of Kenya." Standing in front of a huge mural of Mount Kenya, Jennifer Opondo, the spokesperson for the Kenyan Tourist Office in Bonn, entices visitors to the Hotel Inter-Continental Leipzig to enter into the spirit of the African Heritage Festival. She is surrounded by other beautiful depictions of game parks and beaches with swaying palm trees, set off by an exotic collection of real Kenyan plants.



HENRIK

Above: (l to r) Agnes Alando in a green suede dress based on a Turkana design, vocalist Lois Mutua and Catherine Karl in an Okene cloth dress with accessories gleaned from Kenya, Tanzania, Niger and Mali.

Top right: The troupe takes a break at an old border point between East and West Germany. Right: Mickey Ragos, Mr Kenya, leads his warriors into the rousing finale.

Far right: Kenya Tourist Office spokesperson, Jennifer Opondo, introduces the company to a highly appreciative audience.

Below: Jabali Afrika take to the stage.

Bottom right: (l to r) Agnes Alando in beaded Cameroon tabbard, Margaret Macharia in Ghanaian Adinkira cloth with Maasai collars, Jones Olouch as a Maasai warrior, Lois Mutua in Adinkira cloth and Nigerian headdress, Catherine Karl in Ghanaian Kente cloth and necklace from Côte d'Ivoire

