



“...we call it lifework, not homework.”

Earlier in 2013, musician, composer, educator and poet Hannibal Lokumbe was in residence at the Contemporary Arts Center in New Orleans through NPN’s Performance Residency and Community Fund. He recently sat down with NPN staffer Will Bowling to talk about the Music Liberation Orchestra and his work with people in prisons. The Community Fund is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, MetLife, and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

→ CONTINUES ON PAGE 02



NPN Supports Community Fund Projects

Six NPN Partners in five cities (Philadelphia, Minneapolis, Chicago, Boston and Portland, ME) received support totaling nearly \$25,000 to extend the presence of an artist in their communities.

→ CONTINUES ON PAGE 03

Five International Companies Tour to 20 U.S. Cities under NPN Banner

Companies from Chile, Argentina, Mexico, Brazil and Japan will perform in venues and festivals across the USA this fall and spring 2014. Funding for the Performing Americas Program and the Asia Exchange of NPN’s International Program is provided by the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Center for Global Partnerships (a division of the Japan Foundation), the U.S./Japan Cultural Trade Network, and by the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission. Catch them while you can.

→ CONTINUES ON PAGE 04

Welcome New Board!

At its September board meeting, NPN welcomed three new directors to its board of 17. Joining for three-year terms are:

Daveda Russell, founder of Nyawela Consulting, a public relations firm in Seattle

Samuel Valdez, a playwright, director and performer from San Diego and Mexico

John B. White, general counsel for Sader Power, a New Orleans company that makes solar power more affordable

The Music Liberation Orchestra: you don't even need to play an instrument

A conversation between Hannibal Lokumbe and Will Bowling

← CONTINUED FROM PAGE 01

For 50 years, Hannibal Lokumbe has enjoyed a singular career as musician, composer, orchestrator, educator, and poet. By the age of 14 he was already performing with American roots music icons like Otis Redding and Lightnin' Hopkins. Since that time, Lokumbe has played and recorded with countless jazz legends including Gil Evans and McCoy Tyner and composed classical works for the Kronos Quartet as well as major orchestras in Philadelphia, Cleveland, Houston, and other cities. Lokumbe has lectured extensively at Harvard and Penn, and his groundbreaking opera African Portraits has been staged nearly 200 times since its Carnegie Hall debut in 1990.

Recently, Hannibal has been leading the Music Liberation Orchestra (MLO), an educational program designed to help break the cycle of incarceration among underserved populations in inner cities. MLO has chapters in Texas, Pennsylvania and, most recently, New Orleans. With support from NPN's Performance Residency and Community Fund and the Contemporary Arts Center of New Orleans, Lokumbe and the MLO have been working with a group of incarcerated men at Orleans Parish Prison since February 2013. This August (2013), Hannibal's Community Fund project culminated in a performance at Trinity Episcopal Church in New Orleans. NPN's William Bowling sat down with Hannibal to talk about the project.

Hannibal, could you explain to our readers exactly what the Music Liberation Orchestra is?

MLO is an organization I formed while writing a composition called Can You Hear God Crying? While writing that piece I was moved to go into the prison and jails to remind the people in there that they are still human beings. When I would go into the prisons, I would teach them genealogy and music, two forces that are very powerful in

helping us to understand ourselves as human beings, who are able to be restored. There are four principals to join, and you don't have to be a musician to be a member of the Music Liberation Orchestra, nor do you have to be incarcerated. Anyone can join who 1) renounces violence, 2) acknowledges the presence of the divine, 3) keeps a journal for themselves and their children, and 4) falls in love with forgiveness. Those are the four principles on which the organization is based.

Approximately how long have you been leading the Music Liberation orchestra?

I've been going in and out of prisons for the last 25 years. There are Music Liberation Orchestra chapters in Columbus, Ohio; Philadelphia, a woman's chapter; Minneapolis, MN; Texas; and in New Orleans.

You were recently in New Orleans in February and March 2013, working with the Contemporary Arts Center and a group of inmates in Orleans Parish Prison. Can you talk about what those activities were like?

We sit in a circle, and whatever is on their hearts to speak of, that's where we begin. This is done generally because seldom has this been important to other people. You often hear that no one ever asked them how they felt or what they are thinking. They can't remember, even as children, anyone being considerate of what they thought or how they felt, what their aspirations were. If no one cares about the tree, the tree withers and dies.

You've been coming back and forth and working with them since March?

Yes, I've been working with them on and off for about four months. I've made about three trips prior to the August performance, and they were the first people to know the score and the music, the concept of it, because I shared it with them first: One or Two High

Bones Too Low, my commentary on Hurricane Katrina. In many of our circles, we would talk about how the storm impacted, and continues to impact them and their families. They were all given manuscript paper, and I began teaching them music theory. And they are the greatest students I've ever had. They're remarkable. The questions they ask — they're excellent at doing their homework — we call it lifework, not homework. I would give them one theoretical music question to resolve, and they would have resolved five! I would ask them about the major scale, and then they would start asking questions about pentatonic scales! It was just heaven to be there. The greatest minds I have met have been brothers and sisters who have been locked away.

So you were back here in New Orleans in August doing a performance with the Contemporary Arts Center at Trinity Episcopal Church. I understand the work you did with the Orleans Parish Prison in March and in the following four months, culminated in that performance, and some of the incarcerated men were participants?

Yes. During one circle in the prison, I was asked to listen to a work a young man did, and it was so extraordinary, I commissioned him to write a piece called Circle. As fate would have it, he was released in time to attend the concert, and at the opening of the concert, he read the work and 1600 people jumped to their feet, ecstatic at what they had heard. Brother George Tobias subsequently went on a National Public Radio interview with me: we did several other interviews, and he's been speaking at other prisons. He's a remarkable young man. I've since commissioned him to write another work and we're going to do a one-man show of his work in Philadelphia.

So what are your plans for the MLO in the future?

To have a chapter in every city in the country, because it's very clear that the resolution to the killing of young men of color will come from people like Brother Tobias, who has suffered as those young men will suffer. He easily gets their attention and their trust. The resolution to this social plague, this social dilemma, will not come from any sort of social anthropology; it will come from the brothers in prison who come to realize that they are divine, that they are not criminals. And when they believe that, they change, and they become a force so powerful that they cannot rest without going into the neighborhoods and talking to these young kids. They know they are charged with doing that. That's part of being a member of the Music Liberation Orchestra. You have to go into the community to heal and to teach. Doesn't have to be an immediate family member, but any human being you see in need. You should have seen what happened when Brother Tobias went back into the jail on Monday after the concert. I wish the entire world could have seen that — him seeing all the inmates he knew, the bunk where he used to sleep, and them listening to him. It was astonishing. They could see the commitment he had made. We have a commitment. Every member of the Music Liberation Orchestra has a commitment to the other members — even the ones they haven't met. The ones in Philadelphia, they have a commitment to the ones in Texas and New Orleans, and if one of them calls for help, you cannot deny them help, as long as you know they are following the four principals. That's the greatest challenge facing them. That's why I'm building this network.

Will Bowling is the program associate for NPN/VAN's National Subsidy Programs.



Aliens, Immigrants & Other Evildoers, José Torres-Tama, ArteFuturo Productions, Pictured: José Torres-Tama, Photo by Derek Nelson & Doug Gast

Community Fund Awards Deepen Artists' Presence

Awarded twice yearly, the Community Fund offers NPN Partners an additional subsidy up to \$5,000, to deepen an artist's connection during their time in the Partner's community for a Performance Residency or the development phase of new work through the Creation Fund/Forth Fund.

Columbia College Chicago, Chicago IL — *Viva la Soul Power*

The Center for Community Arts Partnerships will expand a performance residency with The Peoples Cook, a performance art group that unites cross-cultural cooking and interdisciplinary art to promote well-being and healthy nutrition. Robert Karimi will work with EleVarte Community Studio, two Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago Park District.

Intermedia Arts, Minneapolis MN — *Global Taxi Driver*

Leilani Chan will work with locally-based Twin Cities artists for one week prior to the premiere of *Global Taxi Driver* to more deeply engage the local community of taxi riders and drivers by sharing stories and building awareness around important issues of immigration in Minnesota.

Painted Bride Art Center, Philadelphia PA — *The Clothesline Muse*

Also a FY14 Creation Fund/Forth Fund recipient, the Clothesline Muse artists will bring a series of interactive and academic activities to Philadelphia's Simon Gratz High School Master Charter, a school of more than 1200 students with no arts and culture programming.

Pangea World Theater, Minneapolis MN — *ALIENS Taco Truck/Hyphe-NATIONS*

As José Torres-Tama develops *ALIENS: Taco Truck Theater Project* with Pangea World Theater, he will engage participants in Pangea's Hyphe-NATIONS project in conversations, workshops and theater-development activities. When he returns to perform the piece, the taco truck will also showcase an evening of work developed by Hyphe-NATIONS participants.

Portland Ovations, Portland ME — *Advance Visit with Dan Froot for "Who's Hungry"*

501 (see three) ARTS' Artistic Director Dan Froot will visit Portland for a multi-day planning visit in advance of his April 2014 presentation and residency of "Who's Hungry," an intimate and provocative piece exploring food insecurity in America, created by Froot and puppetmaster Dan Hurlin.

The Theater Offensive, Boston MA — *Gamification Experiment for Audience*

TTO will collaborate with community allies to produce a community participation retreat. Over two days, community members will engage with 99% Stone artists in experimental gamification techniques, Theater of the Oppressed activities, and community dialogue to develop relevant and effective audience participation activities.

The Community Fund is made possible in part by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts (a federal agency), the MetLife Foundation, Joan Mitchell Foundation, and the Nathan Cummings Foundation.



Joan Mitchell Foundation



MetLife Foundation

Thank You!

NPN is proud to announce continued support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation as the recipient of a two-year grant in the amount of \$200,000 for general operating support.

NPN would also like to thank the City of New Orleans for their support of NPN's professional development programming for New Orleans' artists and cultural workers.



DORIS DUKE
 CHARITABLE FOUNDATION



CITY OF NEW ORLEANS
 Mitchell J. Landrieu, Mayor



Companhia Urbana de Dança from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Photo: Sonia Destri Lie.

South and Central American, Japanese Artists to Tour U.S.

For 2013-2014, NPN's International Program (<http://npnweb.org/whatwedo/international-program/>) is supporting five international companies traveling to 20 different U.S. cities for a total of 23 weeks. Tours supported through the International Program are selected by curators who participate in annual group research travel and network building activities with NPN's international partners. This season, groups from Santiago de Chile, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro and Tokyo will perform in venues and festivals across the country, making a valuable contribution to the arts experiences of U.S. audiences while engaging workshops and artist-talks with diverse communities nationwide.

FALL 2013 and SPRING 2014 Tours

Lola Arias / *El año que yo nací* (Santiago, Chile) [<http://www.lolaarias.com.ar/>]

- Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, Portland OR, September 9-15, 2013
- On the Boards, Seattle WA, September 16-22, 2013
- REDCAT/RADAR L.A. Festival, Los Angeles CA, September 23-30, 2013
- The Public Theater/Under the Radar Festival, New York NY, January 5-13, 2014
- Philly Live Arts, Philadelphia PA, January 14-19, 2014
- Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago IL, January 20-26, 2013
- Walker Art Center, Minneapolis MN, January 30-31, February 1, 2014

Timbre 4 / *Tercer Cuerpo* (Buenos Aires, Argentina) [<http://timbre4.com/>]

- REDCAT/RADAR L.A. Festival, Los Angeles CA, September 23-30, 2013
- Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago IL, September 30, October 7, 2013

Faifai (Tokyo, Japan) [<http://www.faifai.tv/>]

- Legion Arts, Cedar Rapids IA, November 10-17, 2013
- REDCAT/Roy & Edna Disney, CalArts Theater, November 18-26, 2013
- DiverseWorks, Houston TX, December 1-7, 2013
- Contemporary Art Center, New Orleans LA, December 8-16, 2013

Companhia Urbana de Dança (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) [<http://www.soniadestri.com/>]

- Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus OH, February 26-28, 2014
- 651 Arts / The Joyce Theater, New York NY, March 1-8, 2014
- Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco CA, March 9-16, 2014
- Myrna Loy Center, Helena MT, March 17-23, 2014
- Walker Art Center, Minneapolis MN, March 24-30, 2014
- Dance Place, Washington DC, March 31-April 6, 2014
- Carpetbag Theatre, Knoxville TN, April 7-13, 2014

Lagartijas Tiradas al Sol / *El Rumor del Incendio* (Mexico City, Mexico)

- [<http://lagartijastiradasalsol.blogspot.com.br/p/el-rumor.html>]
- Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, Burlington VT, March 31-April 6, 2014
 - MECA, Houston TX, April 7-13, 2014
 - Fusebox Festival, Austin TX, April 14-20, 2014

Southwest Airlines, Official Airline of National Performance Network

