

REPORT DATE: May 2019

LOCATION: Asheville, NC

CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM: Guatemala, Haiti, & Tanzania

CULTURAL EXCHANGE DATES: May 4 – 13, 2019

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"We are telling our stories through the music of ONEmic studios."

-Edward Ndolesi, Tanzania ONEmic Studio Engineer

Overview of the LEAF International Cultural Exchanges:

Co-founded with the support of fellow partner, **David LaMotte**, **LEAF International Guatemala** is an exemplary youth ensemble of Guatemala musical tradition and history. Led by Teaching Artists and students from the music program in El Tejar, Guatemala, the **Barnardsville Elementary** residency brought a taste of the rich and expansive traditional instrumentation that included the marimba, violin, guitar, percussion and keyboard. Paired with the customary dances, storytelling and clothing, Barnardsville students truly experienced Guatemalan culture, giving them a sense of global citizenship.

Studio engineers & youth from **LEAF International Haiti** and **Tanzania ONEmic studios** came to Asheville to participate in a masterclass at **Echo Mountain Studios**. The group learned & embraced valuable studio production skills that they took back home to share with their ONEmic communities and incorporate into the production of their own music. It was the perfect opportunity to help jumpstart the group's careers in production as each of them have shown years of dedication to the craft.

Together, the groups hosted **6 cultural exchanges**, **4 festival performances**, and taught more than **250 youth!**

“Ashley is only 11 years old. We are astonished at how brilliantly she represents her country.”

-Barnardsville Elementary school



Cultural Exchange Week at a Glance:

May 6-8th:

- The week started with a cultural exchange at Beloved Asheville. **Beloved Asheville** is an intentional community that lives in voluntary poverty in solidarity with the people BeLoved organizes with. They believe deeply in the power of people working together to make the community better through our creativity, passion, and gifts. More than **50** participants came out in support of this exchange. **LEAF International Haiti** and **Guatemala** created music of solidarity for the group which consisted of many youth from several Latin American countries. The exchanged ended with the power of one question: *Why are you happy about your culture?*
- LEAF Partner, the **Christine Avery Center** welcomed their 7th LEAF cultural exchange with **Guatemala, Haiti**, and Schools & Street teaching artist **Ryulee** (student of master teaching artist Otto Vasquez and Nu Paradigm Founder). **Haiti** played 3 traditional rhythms 1) in honor of the war, 2) the beat that symbolizes breaking the chains of oppression, and 3) the beat of the party or celebration. **Guatemala** brought out their Marimbas (*the national instrument of Guatemala*) and Mandolins to give the youth a feel for the traditional music complemented by modern day notes. **Ryulee** shared the basic fundamentals of break dance & even laid down some power dance moves!
- The iconic annual **Burton Street cultural exchange** brought out all the music feels and dynamic connections. The lineup did not disappoint: Guatemala (*songs from the Andes*), Haiti (*traditional Haitian rhythms*), Poranguí (*how to use our bodies as instruments*), Otto (*American street dance styles such as Lindy hop and break*), Jarlath Henderson (*Folk music traditions*), Gina Chavez (*bilingual Latin folk-pop*), Sammy Miller and the Congregation (*playing jazz tunes & feel good music*), & Dirtwire (*music production*). Due to visa fiascos, Tanzania landed on this day and travelled directly to the cultural exchange – full of energy, full of excitement, and full of love.

“We have a duty to share our culture, and LEAF helped us do that at Festival.”

-Hesron Kija, LEAF International ONEmic Tanzania student



May 9-13th:

- In addition to the above cultural exchanges, Guatemala taught a 5 day residency at **Barnardsville Elementary school**, while the **ONEmic** groups laid down lyrics that celebrated their cultures at **Echo Mountain Recording Studio**.
- LEAF International **Haiti** and **Tanzania** immersed themselves deep into the world of music production. The crew was intensively studying and recording in a master class, led by Dirtwire & Beats Antique's, David Satori. The studio collaboration was full of energy as *Poranguí*, *Nex millen*, *Derrick Lee Johnson* of Yo Mama's Big Fat Booty Band, and *Mark* of Dirtwire joined the crews for a day of music inspiration.
- The festival weekend was full of experiences that included 4 performances, special interviews, and an abundance of connections.



Big LEAF Love & Gratitude to all the LEAF International Staff, host families, partners, teachers and students who showed up in support of fostering global citizenship.