

Njacko Backo & Valery Woloshyn present: An Evening for the Children of Bazou

Who: Njacko Backo & Kalimba Kalimba, Diana Braithwaite & Chris Whiteley, Adam Solomon, Muhtadi, Amadou Kienou, Amara Kanté, Jacques Yams, Marni Levitt, Toumkak, Steafan Hannigan & Saskia Tomkins

When: Friday, May 7, 2010, 8:30 pm

Where: Gladstone Hotel Ballroom, 1214 Queen St. W Toronto

Cover: \$10 suggested donation, pay what you can

YouTube Video of school & students: www.youtube.com/watch?v=HuXsWJmcf8g

In January 2009, Njacko Backo and Valery Woloshyn travelled to Bazou, Cameroon, to celebrate the lives of Njacko's late parents, Tchoumi Christine and Nana Mathieu. While in Cameroon, Njacko and Val visited École Saint Albert Le Grand, the school that Njacko attended as a child, to deliver some school supplies that were donated by friends and family in Canada. During the visit, the couple was inspired to do more to help improve the education of the youngest members of the community. At the time, the school was missing a roof on about 30% of the buildings which meant that their classes were crowded into the parts of the school with the roof still intact. The latrines behind the school were falling apart, and the buildings in general were not in good condition.

Late in 2009, the school and the community worked together to replace the missing sections of roof on their own. This was an important first step to protect the mud bricks of the building from further weather damage, and demonstrated the commitment of the community to the school. However these newly covered rooms are still not ready for the students. Our first project will be to repair these rooms so that the students can return to these parts of the school. Following that, we will work with the school to prioritize the next projects to be completed over the next five years. Future potential projects include: repaired or new latrines; providing water supply and hand washing stations; drinking water system; rebuilding the school as the original construction has started to fall apart.

100% of the donations collected at the door will be going to support the construction of room repairs and future projects. We have a line-up of wonderful artists who have generously contributed their time for this cause. Their bios and websites are provided below.

We sincerely thank the Gladstone Hotel for their support.

Njacko Backo & Kalimba Kalimba (www.NjackoBacko.com)

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Njacko Backo & Kalimba Kalimba have been making people dance and have fun since 1989. They draw from the rich rhythmic roots of Cameroon (Ben Skin, Bikutsi, Makossa, Manganbeu) & branch out to other popular African genres (Sabar, Kavacha, Soukous, Rhumba) to create a unique, groovy blend of Afro Pop.

Diana Braithwaite & Chris Whiteley (www.braithwaiteandwhiteley.com/)

Although they met years ago, and had worked together on the Canadian blues scene, it wasn't until 2004 that Chris Whiteley and Diana Braithwaite decided to compose, record and tour together. Their first CD collaboration MORNING SUN, garnered rave reviews, extensive air play, and led to multiple Canadian MAPLE BLUES AWARD nominations, including Album of the year, and Acoustic Act of the year.

Adam Solomon (www.adamsolomon.ca)

This multitalented musician is a 2005 Juno Award Winner and a double winner at TAMA (Toronto African Music Awards) for Best Release and Best New Performers in 1997. Adam was born in Mombasa, Kenya, and began performing at an early age, playing kivoti (flute) and kayaamba (shaker) at village celebrations and festivals. Adam sings in six languages, including Swahili, English, and Arabic.

Muhtadi (www.muhtadidrumfest.com)

Muhtadi has been performing professionally for over 30 years, both nationally and internationally, as well as devoting much time to community arts programs in schools and community centres. Trinidad-born, he immigrated to Canada in 1974. In 2000, he founded the Muhtadi International Drumming Festival and has been artistic director from its inception.

Amadou Kienou (www.amadoukienou.com)

Born in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, Amadou Kienou is the 7th son of a family of praise singers. At young age, Amadou showed particular interest in the djembe. After much practice he has mastered his instruments and is now referred to as "the drum master of Burkina Faso". Amadou's performances are spectacular; he can play both the djembe and the tama simultaneously. This technique is a marvel to watch!

Amara Kanté (www.myspace.com/amarakante)

Amara Kanté is a Malinke master of the djembe from the Ivory Coast. At age four, he began to study in the traditional manner with a master drummer and has since travelled the world with his troupe of 10 musicians. Amara Kanté runs a percussion school in Marseilles, France, where he makes his home.

Jacques Yams (www.jahyams.com)

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Born in the Bafang, Cameroon, Jacques Yams grew up in a family where music was a tradition. His father was an instrument maker (eg. tambour, balafon) and Griot. Jacques has released two albums in Canada, the most recent is called "Je ne te Quitterai Jamais".

Marni Levitt (www.marnilevitt.com)

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Marni Levitt's unique style of music incorporates powerful vocal techniques with percussive guitar, and a very engaging stage presence. Her songwriting draws from diverse influences including hip-hop/RnB, jazz, folk and rock.

Toumkak (www.myspace.com/toumkakdrummers)

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Toumkak is a high energy percussion group led by master drummer Njacko Backo of Cameroon. They explore and combine the rhythms of the djembe, toumkak, bass drum, shakers, and bells, as well as the kalimba and ngon.

Steafan Hannigan & Saskia Tomkins (www.steafan.com)

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Steafan owns a library that contains hundreds of musical instruments and rumour has it he can play them all. Uilleann Pipe champion and virtuoso bodhran player, he is one of the most in demand session players. Saskia is an All Britain champion in Irish music, classically trained with a folk background and a jazz degree, and a brilliant player of violin, viola, cello and nykelharpe.

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