



## TCR Projects 1

Supported by the Commonwealth Foundation



# COMMONWEALTH YOUTH RESOUNDS!

*Project created by Joseph Walugembe, Tim Palmer and Alison Cox*



*hosted by the  
National Theatre of Kampala  
Tuesday March 20<sup>th</sup> from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.*

# PROJECT LEADERS

Samuel Bakkabulindi

Tim Palmer

Nigel Osborne



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Learning  
Ugandan  
folk songs  
and  
rhythms



*S t r e t c h i n g !*



# YOUNG MUSICIANS PARTICIPATING

Students from the Kampala Music School  
Instrumentalists from 'The Commonwealth Resounds!'  
Traditional musicians associated with the National Theatre  
Ugandan band members from Mbale



*exercising the brain!*

Tim Palmer from the London Sinfonietta, the composer Nigel Osborne and their Ugandan colleagues ran a fascinating one-day workshop for a large number of talented young musicians from different cultural traditions.



*'What is it - how do you play it?'*

All young musicians played instruments to an advanced level. Some were readers of music and some were not. The projects included a diverse mixture of instruments using different tuning systems and playing techniques. Confidence and ensemble skills were developed by the workshop leaders through lively games and warmups leading to improvisation in small groups.



Exercises proved to be as fascinating for those observing as for those taking part. Onlookers were frequently invited to participate with everyone else in exercises involving rhythmic work, singing and chanting. There was much learning and sharing of musical techniques.



Five additional leaders were identified from the group and each of these identified a small mixed group to work with. They all went to different spaces in the National Theatre to develop ideas, learn more about combining different instruments and creating pieces of music from their improvisation.



There were vastly different levels of ability in these small groups, but everyone pulled together to make things work. The groups leaders managed, with great skill and initiative to include everybody in the final performance



Regular breaks and lunchtimes enabled to young musicians to socialise and share skills. Due to the open friendliness of the young Ugandan musicians, the ice was broken quickly. Many lasting friendships were formed during this project, and there was much to discuss.



The expertise and patience demonstrated by professional musicians (traditional and other) enhanced considerably the quality of learning by inexperienced young people in their groups.



# THE PERFORMANCES

At the end of the day, there were a series of extremely interesting and thought-provoking workshop performance given by all groups in the main theatre, attended by an audience of friends and local schoolchildren.



The National Theatre was a lovely venue for a project of this kind, and outside in the grounds there was a wide range of colourful stalls and kiosks from which to purchase traditional crafts and products - and continuous local performances by Ugandan musicians on a makeshift stage under the trees. This enabled the TCR participants to relax and experience other cultural performances and exhibitions during their free time, which was an ideal balance to the work they were doing as part of the project.

'Commonwealth Youth Resounds!' was fulfilling and rewarding in many different ways, and the young musicians enjoyed it enormously. There has been excellent feedback from everyone involved.

*The extract below is from a letter by Danyal Dhondy, one of the young musicians participating*

*"Tuesday's project at the National Theatre was undoubtedly one of the highlights of the week. Meeting the Ugandan musicians served as a good introduction to the local instruments and music. Led expertly by the London Sinfonietta musicians, the morning's improvisation workshop loosened everybody's inhibitions, getting people involved and keen to participate. Many of the British students were taken aback by the rhythmical facility and coordination of the Ugandan musicians - most of us struggled to reproduce the complex clapped rhythms that were second nature to the locals.*

*In the afternoon, I was lucky to lead one of the groups, producing a three-minute piece that was performed in the concert later in the day. Our specification was to create a piece using birdsong. We started with a Ugandan vocalisation of an owl sound (more realistic than the British 'too-wit too-woo'), built up to traditional Ugandan song about a cuckoo, and incorporated bird noises on viola, flute bassoon and voices. It was great that everybody in the group contributed their own material and ideas, and we ended with a piece that was very eclectic and good fun for all. The other pieces in the concert were equally varied and all were good fun to listen to. Friendships were formed that lasted throughout the week and beyond, and the day will live long in the memory."*



*Danyal Dhondy (above right) rehearsing with Yogesh Dattani in a tabla workshop during 'The Commonwealth Resounds!'*



Special thanks to Joseph Walugembe and his team at the National Theatre of Kampala for collaborating with us in this unique enterprise.

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Documentation by Alison Cox  
Photographs by Martin Wess



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