

## **LOULANGUISTS**

**Safeguard and revitalise the oral heritage of traditional musicians**



### **ORGANIZATION OF A FESTIVAL AROUND THE PRESERVATION OF THE HERITAGE OF TRADITIONAL MUSICIANS, DANCERS AND ARTISANS**

The musician and ethnologist Thomas Lusango (born in Bukavu in 1980) has been active for many years in the Great Lakes region in order to promote culture there, to offer perspectives through music to street children and poor families,... and to preserve the musical traditions of its region.

It is in this context that he wishes to organise, in Bukavu, a 2-day event in November, giving back to musicians of the oral tradition a word that modern society does not leave them any longer, before their stories disappear in the background. never, and in order to interest the new generations in perpetuating them.

The idea will be to offer the stage to these musicians for two days, but also to highlight the traditional dance troupes through walking shows in the

audience, as well as exhibition stands during the festival to display traditional art. We wish to set up a photography exhibition in parallel with the event, for example at the French Institute in Bukavu.

The festival will also help to preserve the music of the Loulanguists through recordings made by a sound engineer accustomed to the Kivu region, Ludovic Sirtaine. He goes there regularly to give trainings, supervise the Amani festival team, ...

He will go to Kivu to make additional recordings to those already initiated by Thomas (in 2019 Janosch Perler from the Swiss non-profit organization Neno had been in Bukavu for a first part of audiovisual recording of works by the Loulanguists) and he will assist in this task, in addition to supervising the technicians present at the festival and training them.

It is also planned to film the various activities in order to add material to a documentary on the Loulanguists in progress.

## **Goals**

- Safeguard musical traditions and oral traditions typical of the Kivu region
- Collect and preserve the epics of ancient kingdoms and peoples
- Valuing and promoting the values linked to this traditional music among the local population
- Develop interest in creative collaborations between traditional musicians and young musicians, eg. rappers
- Promote the empowerment of young filmmakers and musicians and technicians through workshops

## **Context**

Traditional musicians are in a way the libraries of the Congolese people and preserve their custom and wisdom.

Like the griots of West Africa, they sing about myths about the origin of ethnicities and tales about the history of villages. They are at the same time the troubadours of the king and the people and sing the annals of the royal court such as the tales of everyday life. They accompany ancestral rites and ceremonies with their songs as well as festivals and dances.

The pieces of music are composed of spoken sequences and instrumental parts using traditional instruments such as the balafon, the traditional harp, the likembe, the xylophone, the traditional guitar or the flute.

Called a "Loulanguist" in the Democratic Republic of Congo, this type of musician is a guardian of traditions, a social cement which can play the role of mediator in the event of conflict between tribes. Having no prohibitions, he is at the same time admired and feared by others.

However, the rupture of the social fabric during the long phases of wars as well as the modernisation of the Congolese traditions makes these traditions disappear quickly. The Congolese people risk losing their memory.

## **Organization of the event**

The Loulanguists being a library for Africa and eastern DR Congo in particular, we seek to preserve and archive this wealth and give room to the Loulanguists who are the protectors and guardians of this cultural heritage.

It turns out that in this part of the DR Congo that is the east, the repeated wars and the rural exodus have strongly contributed to the disappearance of the Loulanguists and the transmission of their knowledge to new generations without anyone coming to take over from their crucial work for the preservation of the stories and music of the region, as well as for the transmission of its knowledge, which can lead to understanding between peoples through the stories of the links that unite them, among other things .

With the arrival of modernity and technological development, the community of Loulanguists and its survival is in danger in the Great Lakes

region and eastern Congo: they are no longer solicited for important events, do not have the possibility of adapting, suffer from war, poverty, ... and the local languages in which they are expressed are gradually being discarded.

We therefore want to help them tell their stories but also transcribe them and translate them on media accessible to all. In addition to allowing them to occur we want to produce a disc embellished with written resources that will allow this knowledge to continue to exist and to spread as well. The content will also be digitally archived and made accessible to as many people as possible in DR Congo and neighboring regions, on demand.

We are therefore looking for funding to develop the two axes of our project:

A 2-day festival that honors Loulanguists and tradition in a multidisciplinary way.

The continuation of the work of archiving the memory of the Loulanguists (audio recordings, documentaries, ...).

We will now detail the organisation and the budget of each of these 2 axes.

First axis of the project:

Organize a trip, in partnership with the AfriSCENE association based in Belgium, of the sound engineer and trainer Ludovic Sirtaine who has already worked 4 times in Kivu, for the Amani festival in Goma but also to give training in Bukavu. Ludovic Sirtaine will visit Kivu for a period of 3 weeks.

He will be in charge of the recording of the Loulanguists as well as the mixing of these recordings in post-production, and will also be in charge of filming images for documentary purposes as well as carrying out interviews, transcriptions of stories and words, ... with the help of Thomas Lusango. He will also be responsible for training local technicians in sound recording and mixing as well as in the sound system of the festival.

Janosch Perler will accompany him to continue work on the documentary.

## **Budget**

### **1. Trip**

- Transport / Housing / Food / Visas:
  - Ludovic Sirtaine: 2500 euros (3 weeks trip planed)
  - Janosch Perler: 1600 euros (2 weeks trip planed)
  
- Salaries:
  - Ludovic Sirtaine: 4500 euros
  - Janosch Perler: 3000 euros
  
- Gear rental
  - Ludovic Sirtaine: 1000 euros
  
- Budget for the recording of the musicians  
(5 musicians - transport / food / salaries): 1250 euros
  
- **Subtotal: 14.000 euros**

### **2. Festival**

Renting of a site for the festival during build-up, festival, and build-down: 1500\$

Sound, stage and security: 3500\$

Artists transportation: 3000\$

Artists housing: 2000\$

Artists salaries: 2000\$

Promotion: 1500\$

State taxes: 500\$

Water and food for artists and volunteers on the festival: 500\$

Infrastructure to house the work of local craftsmen: 500\$

**subtotal: 15000\$**

### **3. Post-production**

#### **3.1 Album**

- Album mixing and mastering Ludovic Sirtaine: 4500 euros
- Disc / book production - 300 copies as a first batch (making of the book content - translations, graphic designer, printing and pressing): 15000 euros
- Website hosting for the digital content and maintenance: 500 euros / year
  
- **Subtotal: 20.000 euros**

#### **3.2 Documentary**

- Post-Production on the documentary (medium length, 30 - 40 minutes) Salary for Janosch Perler: 4000 euros
- Colorgrading (flat rate) external person: 1000 euros
- Sound-design (flat rate) external person: 2000 euros
  
- **Subtotal: 7'000 euros**

**The priority is to find 25.000 euros for recordings, trainings and the festival.**

**The post-production can benefit from other, future fundings.**

**We don't expect to have the whole budget out of only one funder and are looking for different partners.**

**LINE-UP:**

Artists from Goma / North-Kivu:

**Kasutsu HUNDA** and his team of 2 percussionists / singers

**Sidoni BAMPORI NEZA** and a percussionist

**Olivier Waba Havu** and a percussionist

Artists from Bukavu / South-Kivu

**Vumi**

**Chebeyi** and a percussionist

**Kazembe Viannet** and a percussionist

Dance company invited:

Groupe Étoile  
Groupe Espoir

Theater company invited

Umoja culture  
Tambour de paix

Jesters:

Nyasa maman

Djasa djasa

Percussion bands invited:

Bantou percussions  
Tambour du kivu

Organisations in charge:

**Clamue** ("Clarity of artists and musicians from the East") is an association that supports artists in eastern DRC and promotes access to culture for all.

Thomas Lusango, the founder and coordinator of Clamue will be responsible for the implementation of the project. Thomas is an artist and music teacher, graduated in ethno-musicology. He is also the initiator of Ndaró art Culture, a cultural space for young artists in Bukavu and Kidogós, an association that supports local development, among other things, through the promotion of culture. In 2010, Thomas was the main organiser of the "Blues du Kivu" festival, a festival focused on traditional music from the DRC.

AfriSCENE: Ludovic Sirtaine is co-founder of the non-profit organisation AfriSCENE based in Belgium, an association supporting training in technical entertainment and audiovisual professions in Africa. More information on [www.afriscene.org](http://www.afriscene.org)

Neno is a Swiss-based NGO that supports civil society initiatives in the Great Lakes region. It is a non-profit, politically independent and faith-neutral association. For more information: [www.neno-association.ch](http://www.neno-association.ch)

Janosch Perler is responsible for cultural projects and recorded a number of songs by Loulanguists from South and North Kivu in 2018, together with Thomas Lusango.