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Issue 3

Ixtlan Artists Newsletter

June 2008

In This Issue:

- News
- Review
- Ideas and Programs
- Featured Artist
- Currently Booking

Ixtlan Artists Group

Virtuoso Performers – A Commitment to Education and Diversity

For more than twenty years The Ixtlan Artists Group has represented virtuoso performers from Europe and the Americas who have a commitment to education and cultural diversity. Founded in 1986 under the name "Joan Sherman Artist Management," the agency's original mission of providing excellent folk artists has expanded to traditional world music artists who provide concert and educational experiences that open doorways to universal cultural understanding.

Each artist Ixtlan represents is a premiere talent in their genre, and they take audiences beyond daily experience into the arena of performance virtuosity

News

Ixtlan Artists' Newly Released Recordings



With Grammy nominations just around the corner, several of Ixtlan's artists are releasing new CDs. There will be six new recordings available from Ixtlan's roster of artists in 2008.

Kevin Locke will release two CDs. Last year, South Dakota PBS commissioned Kevin to write the soundtrack for a one-hour documentary, *Oceti Sakowin: The People of the Seven Council Fires*. It's the fourth time Kevin's music has appeared on film soundtracks. The resulting CD, *Seven Fires*, will be released this fall and includes new tracks not in the documentary. *Earth Gifts*, to be released in August, is a Native flute tour-de-force that has been in production for two years. It explores man's connection to nature, interpreted by Kevin's many flutes, and is produced by Grammy Award-Winner, Tom Wasinger.

Peter Ostroushko, a composer whose range runs from string concertos for orchestra to romping ditties about Borscht, is again expanding his sound. A departure from his beloved Ukrainian-infused heartland music, his new CD is a special project for his daughter, Anna, a circus aerialist in the Minneapolis-based Circus Juventas. Peter's compositions will be played live during the show's summer engagements.

In 2002, Ostroushko teamed up with Norman Blake for the Red House recording, *Meeting On Southern Soil*. This year, another Ixtlan Artist, Boys of the Lough, will collaborate with the bluegrass master. Blake is famous for his flat-picking guitar style and known for soundtracks such as *Walk the Line*, and *O' Brother, Where Art Thou?* He fuses his Appalachian sound with the Boys' Celtic traditions. Ixtlan plans to tour Blake and the Boys next spring.

Tommy Sands' new CD, *Let the Circle Be Wide*, features his first full collaboration with his children and fellow musicians, Moya and Fionan Sands. With original compositions alongside hundreds-of-years-old gems, some tracks boast the sparkling Irish sound Tommy is famous for. Others are edgier protest songs inspired by Tommy's peace tours and travels to Cuba, Afghanistan, Israel, Palestine, and other points on the globe where his "use of song to explore our common heritage" promotes acceptance and agreement to work together.

For more information and samples of the newly released music, check the Ixtlan Artists' July newsletter. For more info on the artists, please visit www.ixtlanartists.com

REVIEW

Preserving the Maps to Cultural Treasures

rich in cultural traditions. Our artists speak directly, not only to performance, but to making an impact, on and off the stage.

Through both stage performance and educational outreach, Ixtlan endeavors to provide a venue where performance is used as a bridge to cultural understanding, artistic awareness, educational involvement, and peaceful coexistence of shared ideas.

Call Ixtlan Toll Free: 800-961-9601

www.ixtlanartists.com

Our Roster



AcustiCon



Boys of the Lough



Brave Old World



Inca Son



Harmonia



Shafaatullah Khan



INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE INSTITUTE



How much value does a language hold for a culture? If we could represent the loss of that value as a physical thing, it might be equal to losing the sculpted rocks of Easter Island or allowing the Statue of Liberty to wither and crack.

As it is, the international community is missing out on treasures like this from the loss of languages each year. Organizations like the [Indigenous Language Institute](http://www.indigenous-language.org) are the only force working to prevent the deterioration and extinction of hundreds of "endangered" languages. Established in 1992, the Institute has utilized programming and technology to preserve the world's indigenous languages, and they've recently enlisted [Kevin Locke's](#) help.

"Language is the most complex thing human beings create," says Kevin. "In terms of culture, anytime a language dies out, it's comparable to a repository of information being destroyed."

In Kevin's home state of South Dakota, there is a battle not only to keep the Lakota language, but also to eradicate previous attempts to silence it altogether. "Native language has been actively repressed for years," says Locke. Repression has been so effective, statisticians believe that of 180 Native American languages spoken, only 10 will survive this generation.

In the face of such consequences, governing bodies that once attempted to stamp out the language are taking steps to preserve it. In May 2007, the United Nations General Assembly recognized that, "genuine multilingualism promotes unity in diversity and international understanding." The UN proclaims 2008 the International Year of Languages.

With support from the UN, the Indigenous Language Institute continues to implement programs and curriculum that preserve all non-dominant world languages. These programs require funding, so in addition to being one of 5 board members, Locke has performed fundraising concerts to infuse the Institute with the revenue it needs to continue its work.

"This movement is the only chance of turning the tide. We're standardizing the orthography and creating materials to develop and increase the use of the language. It's being done in the classroom in South Dakota. Forty schools teach it," says Kevin. "It's a positive thing."

Kevin's work with the Indigenous Language Institute can be part of a workshop/lecture within a university educational residency.

For information and updates on the Indigenous Language Institute, visit www.indigenous-language.org.

Ideas and Programs Operation Jazz Band



Ella Fitzgerald, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, George Benson, David Sanborn: ready to educate.

Ixtlan Artist [Babatunde Lea](#) brings Jazz into the classroom to enhance metacognition and self-esteem. The vehicle for this education is called, "Operation: Jazz Band."

"Operation Jazz Band brings into focus the historical view of an American art form, which hasn't been explored as such by many people," says Lea, a Jazz artist himself. "There was no jazz before America, and delineating chronology is very entwined in American history."

The program is an all-in-one enrichment for schools that have had music and physical education cut from the budget, two classes that help to develop the brain, motor skills, and an integration of mind, body and spirit.

"Jazz is improvisation. The ability to think, to think right in the moment, and to develop critical thinking and cognition simultaneously. It's an exercise to dig inside yourself and come up with something. That's part of the genius of jazz..." and the program.

It was first developed over eight years ago by Babtunde Lea and Jessica Felix, the director of the Healdsburg Jazz

Guy Klucevsek & Alan Bern



Kusum Gboo



Babatunde Lea



Llan de Cubel



Kevin Locke



KL Native Dance Ensemble



Peter Ostroushko & the Heartland Band



Sally Rogers



Tommy & Moya Fionán Sands

Festival. Input from educator Dr. Virginia Lea has helped to create the smooth-running program that will now tour schools throughout the United States. Although the program has been implemented in many grade levels since its inception, it targets fifth grade classes in several schools of the same district. Over one week, students participate in hour-long classes that explain different instruments in a Jazz band. Each session presents a different instrument and a different teacher.

Babatunde teaches percussion on day one, connecting the African roots of drumming to popular styles, and covering different instruments of the African Diaspora. Students also learn complex African call and response chants that are later performed with the Jazz band at the end-of-the-week concert.

The next day is piano and bass, followed by horns/trumpet/sax/trombone, Jazz vocals (where students learn to scat with the music), and on day five, a group concert.

“Students are always very open to the music and the knowledge and really delve deep into jazz,” says Babatunde. “By the end of the sessions they are jazz lovers.”

Babatunde’s program will be touring through the Northeast in the fall, and other parts of the US upon request.

For more information on Babatunde’s program and the Educultural Foundation, please visit: www.educulturalfoundation.org.

Featured Artist
Harmonia



Harmonia, a six-member musical group based in Ohio, presents the traditional folk music of Eastern Europe, ranging from the Danube to the Carpathians. Harmonia’s personnel and repertoire reflect the cultures of the region: Hungarian, Slovak, Ukrainian, Romanian, and Croatian. Performing on authentic folk instruments, and styled after turn of the century East-European Gypsy bands, their music is drawn from both urban cigányzene and rural folk sources. As a whole, the group offers vocals and mastery of 150 East European flutes, upright bass, violin, and a 125-string hammered dulcimer.

Music with this much history can be enriched by explanation of the setting of the music and culture. Harmonia’s members often accompany performances with brief explanations into the poignant background of their music.

From Bartok, Brahms and Liszt to Gypsy lullabies, Harmonia has a diverse repertoire that continues to grow and enrich their performance and school programs.

For more information on Harmonia, [click here](#).



Currently Booking...

Boys of the Lough

The *Celtic Christmas Tour* runs from Thanksgiving weekend to December 21, 2008. The Spring Tour runs from February 25 to March 25, 2009. Call now for remaining dates on these two tours. Ixtlan will soon begin booking Boys of the Lough tours in Summer & Fall of 2009, and Spring of 2010.

Peter Ostroushko

Christmas in the Heartland is being booked now. Picked up on over 50 NPR radio stations nationally within a year of its debut, this holiday show combines family appeal, brilliant musicianship, and a familiar atmosphere of holiday cheer audiences love. Bookings for Peter's DUO concerts occur year-round, please call for dates in your area. Peter Ostroushko and the Heartland Band, available for larger concert halls, tours at select times throughout the year, please call for details.

Kevin Locke Native Dance Ensemble

Visually compelling and musically powerful, *The Drum is the Thunder, the Flute is the Wind* is a sensational journey in Native American symbolism and aesthetics. Embracing Native American arts through six authentic ritual dances, storytelling and a unique presentation of musical skill, this program has openings in October/November 2008, and January/April 2009.

Tommy Sands

Enchanting. Irresistible. Charming. Three words out of many that describe Ireland's legendary County Down performer. Tommy tours with accomplished musicians 26-year-old Moya Sands (violin, bodhran, vocals) and 27-year-old Fionán Sands (mandolin, banjo) for the Fall 2008 *Let the Circle Be Wide*, CD release tour from September 12 to November 2, 2008.

Shafaatullah Khan, Harmonia, Babatunde Lea, Inca Son, Sally Rogers, Thirza Defoe, AcoustiCon, Brave Old World, Kevin Locke

These artists tour year-round. Ask about available dates in your area.

For more information please contact **Ixtlan Artists Group** at 412-521-4201 or click here:

www.ixtlanartists.com

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