

## October 2009 Culture and Cooperation Project

"Culture and Cooperation is a non-profit organization created in 2001 and the aim is to have some programs of cooperation in the field of instrument making and repairing in several countries, something like ten different countries from East to South and also to produce some music concerts and programs.

"We work mainly in Eastern European Countries or outside Europe in the Balkans in the Caucasian area, Armenia mainly, in Montenegro for the Balkans, and in southern Mediterranean, in Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and in the Middle East, a program that we have made in Palestine, Jordan, Israel...and in South America in Brazil."

" The activities consist of instrument making and repairing, cooperation in that field, mainly to make a link between the level of the musicians, which is very good very often, but the instruments are in very bad shape... so we need to... you cannot do music, perform music, if you do not have good instruments, and you cannot have good instruments if you have no one to maintain them ... so the idea is to bring back professional repairing of instruments by repairing ourselves, by bringing some European professionals in the field, but also by educating and building workshops with materials and everything that it needs.

"We work mainly for big orchestras, because we work for the main interest, general interest, and the public interest, so we work for public orchestras or for the orchestras of music schools. We work mainly for them, so it's collective practice, that's it in the countries but also we work in countries where we have affinities and where we have partners ,the partners are usually directors of orchestras... or someone...we cannot do this sort of programs if we do not have a strong partner in the country...

"What we do is mainly for sustained development. We do not work for just short term things so that's why we combine really cooperation and education. That's why we host some apprentice in Europe too, for long terms fellowship and long term education programs because the aim is to recreate and give birth to a really new, dynamic musical life in some countries where we work.

"Sometimes we have very specific encounters, and once for instance in Montenegro, we found a Guarnerius which is astonishing, because normally with that sort of instrument, violin, a it is a violin, everyone knows where they are, and it is a prestigious violin maker for the 18<sup>th</sup> century. And we discovered this in Montenegro and it was... we were there with a British violin repairer, a restorer, and he was totally crazy seeing this instrument because it was a miracle for him; he was specialized in Guarnerius in London in Cambridge. So that is the sort of really a small kind of a miracle that we could live in that kind of programs.

"Sometimes also the meetings are very human of course it is not just matter of instruments, but also of human beings... Like in brazil like we found, or in Armenia, or in Montenegro, we found these young guys that suddenly discover that they want to

become a violin repairer and a piano tuner and they really have a gift so we bring them and we make them happy with that because they can really fulfil their dream.”

“When we do these programs usually we want to show that it worked. And the orchestra sounds much better with the instruments repaired than before so we used to have some concerts at the first phase of the program, and sometimes we would also bring some orchestras we work with in Europe. We have made a tour of the national chamber orchestra of Armenia in France in 2007.

And we have also the concept of special music programs we built bringing together different traditions. That leads us to build and to create a trio orient express, Europe orient express, which is a specific trio where we have the quannoun, an Instrument of the Middle East, piano and percussions. And we built from this specific repertoire combining music from the Eastern tradition and music from the western tradition, jazz and improvised music.

“For the trio, the trio exists now for two years, we’ve made several concerts in Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, and some other countries. And sometimes it is quite exceptional, like for instance in Algeria, where there is almost nothing in terms of concerts from abroad, so when we’ve done this concert together with the bank BNP Paribas Al Djazair, it was very astonishing experience, because we had this audience, which was a huge audience for that sort of concert, something like 500 people it was so enthusiastic because this music really brings from both traditions is so illustrative of intercultural dialogue, it was really great

“We work in countries where there is this gap between the level of the musicians and the shape of the instruments, that’s where we work... we wouldn’t work in a country just to work in that country if we do not have a strong partner...who is also willing to work in that fields.

We are subsidized by BNP Paribas foundation since 2004 and it was, once again, that was a real meeting, a real encounter between what we wanted to develop and the aim of the foundation especially, with Martine Tridde, which is the general director of the foundation, because there was a real connection in what we do in bringing people together in from different countries, and what the foundation wanted to have also.

The partnership with the foundation allowed us to develop ourselves in longer period of time not only to have this project; this month we will do this and that but by this we could think in a longer period, we could plan what we are doing next year and the year after and that helping us to be more adult. So the Foundation brought us from childhood to adult age, let’s say.

“We are working with around 10 different instrument makers in the winds and keyboards and string, coming from France of course but also from Belgium, UK and local, sometimes in the countries also. Where there are... there are also some partnerships with local instrument makers with whom we’re working

In this project what is important for me as an individual is to bring different knowledge I used to have with the instrument makers and in different type countries and to make the link between and encounters between that specific craft, which is so specific and so unknown, usually and the importance of that craft, the instrument making and repairing, and the importance of musical life in some countries. So it is good to feel yourself as a bridge between people as bridge between projects and countries.

When I created this organization I really were very close to Philippe Bodart, whose is this workshop here, and I wanted to make this small interview in this workshop, because Philippe died one year ago and he was a real part of the organization, it was very important for me to do that.

Intervention of Philippe Bachman – Founder of Culture and Cooperation