



PRESS RELEASE

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AT LEAST ONE HAITIAN PERFORMER IN EVERY FESTIVAL!

HAITI MUSIC COLLECTIVE RENEWS CALLS TO ALL MUSIC FESTIVALS AROUND THE WORLD TO SUPPORT HAITIAN ARTISTS

"As we are about to mark the first anniversary of the terrible earthquake that struck Haiti on 12 January 2010, we all have the duty, not only to remember the suffering of the Haitian people, but also to do whatever we can to support recovery and reconstruction." This was the message coming from the Haiti Music Forum that took place in Castries, Saint Lucia, in May 2010 when musicians and other people involved in the music sector met to discuss ways to strengthen collaboration and to build solidarity in the aftermath of that disaster. This event was organised by Bluemangó and Labowi Promotions, organisers of the Jazz in the South Festival.

The Forum brought together people representing a range of interests in the sector, including the Saint Lucia School of Music, the Eastern Caribbean Collective Organisation for Music Rights (ECCO), the Folk Research Centre, the Cultural Development Foundation and the *Alliance Française*. In addition to participants from Haiti and Saint Lucia, festival organisers and cultural organisations from Guadeloupe, Martinique and Trinidad and Tobago were represented, and the meeting also greatly benefited from the contribution of performer Dobet Gnahoré from Ivory Coast, whose performances were one of the highlights of the 2010 Saint Lucia Jazz Festival.

The Forum noted the need to recognise Haiti as a cultural giant that has contributed immensely to Caribbean identity and civilisation, and the need to build solidarity among musicians in the Caribbean, and especially between Haitian artists and musicians from other parts of the region. Musicians are among those who lost lives, homes, hopes, relatives, equipment and sources of income. Like any other sector of society, they need to rebuild, and this is a long and painful process. One of the best ways for any community or sector to express and concretise solidarity is to support its counterpart in Haiti and to focus on concrete and realistic actions.

It is in this context that the Haiti Music Collective renews the call to all music festivals in the Caribbean and around the world to support the recovery of Haitian music and musicians by including at least one Haitian performer or group in their line-up. This is a pledge that every Festival could and should make for 2011.

For its part, Jazz in the South, which has worked with Haitian artists virtually every year since 1997, will in its 2011 edition include several Haitian performers, and is also exploring the possibility of including a unique and original collaboration between musicians from the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Jazz in the South 2011 will run from 30 April to 3 May, and organisers are delighted to announce that this edition is placed under the patronage of pan maestro Andy Narell.