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'Jazz for Peace' in Kigali



Rick DellaRatta ----at it in the concert.

BY PENINNAH GATHONI

Last weekend saw the unveiling of a different genre of music in Kigali-jazz during the Amahoro week. Jazz is new in Kigali but the turn out showed that there is great potential for it.

Rick DellaRatta and his group Jazz for Peace held two concerts in Petit Stadium and at Serena hotel.

The group was specifically invited to perform in Kigali to promote peace, as it is the group's main purpose of existence. According to one of the organisers Misbah Sheikh, the group extensive work in peace promotion was relevant to the aims of the 'Peace Week'.

"We felt the need to invite DellaRatta and his group because their work in promoting peace through music, is well known in the world- they perform to promote what we aim to achieve in the 'Peace Week'," Said Misbah.

Jazz for peace team, arrived in the country last Thursday, eager to perform for the first time in Africa. According to the group's founder DellaRatta the group performance in Rwanda was a celebration of what Rwanda has already achieved, and an acknowledgement of the continuing work.

"This is a special occasion for us and for Rwanda. People of this country have worked a lot to rebuild and make the country an example to many others. We have a lot to celebrate, and I am glad to play accompanying music," said DellaRatta.

In 2002 September Rick DellaRatta was invited to lead a band consisting of Israeli, Middle Eastern, European, Asian and American Jazz musicians in a concert inside the UN for an international audience. This saw the birth of a now renowned band - Jazz for peace.

DellaRatta pointed out that Jazz for peace is aimed at uniting people across the world. He emphasised that the group's aim is spreading peace worldwide through "Jazz for Peace World Tour".

"Jazz for Peace is aimed at reaching out to individuals and organizations across the world, promoting peace. We believe that if we embrace qualities such as creativity, artistry, humanity, we will all have a better chance of avoiding behaviour that leads to destruction," said DellaRatta. Through music the groups aim at transcending barriers that bring out differences amongst people using Jazz.

DellaRatta says that the group joins forces with multi-cultural musicians to entertain and spread the message of peace.

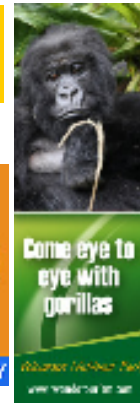
"Music can help us find a common ground and to communicate things that unite us. Jazz is a Universal language where we can gather people regardless of colour, tribe and religion. That's what we do- we play music and hope that unity will be found in shared beliefs and values that we communicate in our performances," DellaRatta remarked.

According to DellaRatta the benefits from concerts and all the work of the group are channelled to outstanding organisations and charities across the world.

"Through our Instrument Donation Program (IDP), we provide musical instruments to under privileged children all over the world. We donate to outstanding non - governmental organisations that continue to work the betterment of our world," DellaRatta said.

DellaRatta and his group have committed their lives, to a cause that is bigger than many of us, but with their contribution we make a step closer to a desired dream - world peace. Perhaps if we all did our share to walk towards a similar goal, we could at least be a step closer to world peace.

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