Lakou Mizik

Steeve Valcourt – Lead Guitar & Vocals
Jona Attis – Lead Vocals
Nadine Remy – Lead Vocals
Sanba Zao – Lead Vocals & Traditional Drums
Luckson Colobry – Congas
Peterson “Ti Piti” Joseph – Drum Kit & Rara Horns
James Carrier – Percussion & Rara Horns
Lamare Junior – Bass
Belony Beniste – Accordion

Lakou Mizik will be performing songs from their album:

*Wa Di Yo*

Voted Top 10 World Music Album of 2016 by *The Boston Globe*

Selection will be announced from the stage.

Lakou Mizik is presented by the Williams College Department of Music with the generous support of the W. Ford Schumann ’50 Performing Arts Endowment.

Wednesday, April 19, 2017
8:00 p.m.
Chapin Hall
Williamstown, Massachusetts

See music.williams.edu for full details and additional happenings as well as to sign up for the weekly e-newsletters.

**Upcoming Events:**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fri Apr 21</td>
<td>7:15pm</td>
<td>Pre-Concert Talk with Ronald Feldman, conductor of the Berkshire Symphony</td>
<td>Brooks-Rogers Recital Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri Apr 21</td>
<td>8pm</td>
<td>Berkshire Symphony Student Soloist Gala</td>
<td>Chapin Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri Apr 21</td>
<td>8pm</td>
<td>Kusika/Zambezi Marimba Band Spring concert</td>
<td>MainStage, ’62 Center</td>
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<td>Sat Apr 22</td>
<td>4pm</td>
<td>Williams Gospel Choir</td>
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<td>Sat Apr 22</td>
<td>6:30pm</td>
<td>Kurt Pfrommer ’18, tenor - Student Performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat Apr 22</td>
<td>8pm</td>
<td>Kusika/Zambezi Marimba Band Spring concert</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon Apr 24</td>
<td>7pm</td>
<td>Christine Pash ’18, soprano - Student Performance</td>
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Please turn off cell phones.
No photography or recording is permitted.
Lakou Mizik Story
Lakou Mizik is a multigenerational collective of Haitian musicians formed in the aftermath of the devastating 2010 earthquake. The group includes both seasoned veterans, unique artists, and a message of pride, strength and hope for their countrymen and the world.

Music is at the core of Haiti’s sense of identity, and musicians have always played an important role in society, both in documenting the country’s history and helping to shape its path forward. Today, a young generation of artists is keeping this tradition alive, narrating the world they live in through music that is made in their neighborhoods, villages and post-earthquake camps. Lakou Mizik brings together these musical traditions in celebration of the cultural continuity while using Haiti’s deep well of creative strength to shine a positive light on this tragically misrepresented country.

For the idea the band was hatched in 2010 on a hot November night in Port-au-Prince. Haiti was still reeling from the earthquake, a cholera epidemic was raging and a political crisis flared up with the streets with enough tire burning fury to close the international airport. Stevee Valcourt, a guitarist and singer whose father is one of the country’s iconmic musicians, singer Jonas Attis and American producer Zach Niles met in Valcourt’s musical family, and formed Lakou Mizik to keep the Hood of music alive. Davis Niles, who ten years previously was part of the documentary film and management team that introduced Sierra Leone’s Refugee All Stars to the world, had traveled to Haiti to explore ways in which music could help play a role in recovery and empowering social change. According to Niles, “I always wanted to use music and story of musicians to create a deeper connection to the country than either the one-note negative press or the falsified hope-and-inspiration NGO stories.” It is the Lakou Mizik that would change the way people looked at Haiti, opening up, creating their own musical A-Team, a powerhouse collective of singers, rara horn players, drummers, guitarists and even an accordionist. Over the years, some of the band members have moved from one part of the world to the other, but they all come back to Haiti to record and tour. The band has since released three albums and has been playing at the likes of Glastonbury, Womad, WOMEX, and the Kennedy Center. Their music is a reflection of the rich cultural and musical traditions that are so unique to Haiti.

In Haitian Kreyol the word lalou carries multiple meanings. It can mean the backyard, a gathering place where people come to sing and dance, to debate or share a meal. It also means “home” or “where you are from,” which in Haiti is a place chosen by the ancestral spirits of all the others that were born there. Each branch of the Voodoo religion has its own holy place, called a lalou, where practitioners may come together in the shadow of spirits for rites of teenage. In Haiti, the place sits right next to the upscale Pétionville area of Port-au-Prince. Friends since grade school, their parents initially forbade Ti Piti and James Lamarre Junior from spending time together, but their brother-like bond was unstoppable. Their close relationship makes it possible for them to weave intricate and a local rara band. They boarded an overcrowded ferry called the Neptune that shattered passengers from Jeremie along the coast to the capital city of Port-au-Prince. When bad weather caused the ship to capsize, the voyage turned into one of the greatest maritime disasters of recent times with the loss of as many as 1500 lives — including Jonas’ grandmother. Jonas spent the first 15 years of his life in the United States, but he had only one goal: to make music. His passion for music was evident from an early age, and he began playing drums at age 5 and has quietly become one of the most sought after producers in Haiti.

Carlos Santana and George Benson to Haitian protest singer John Steve Brunache. His love for Haiti runs deep and while so many Haitians are looking for way out of the country, Steeve has tasted life in America and now wants only to be in his homeland. Steeve had some fame as a guitarist and singer whose father is one of the country’s iconic musicians, singer Lamarre Junior, who formed the legendary group Lakou Mizik. Their songs blend American and Caribbean influences, and their music is a reflection of the rich cultural and musical traditions that are so unique to Haiti.

In 2010, Nadine started collaborating with Steeve and Jonas on the Lakou Mizik project. At first Nadine’s Christian background made it difficult for her to sing in the vodou tradition, she was concerned what her family and peers would think. But with the encouragement of the other Lakou musicians and the eventual support of her family, Nadine has grown into one of the most powerful rara singers in the country. Whereas once she was afraid of the mystical voodoo singer Sanba Zoa, they are now like father and daughter.

Sanba Zoa (Lousiana Lesly Marcel), a legend on the scene for her voice and talent, reflects the African, French, Caribbean and U.S. influences that collide in Haiti. The spirit-stirring vodoo call-and-response vocals are supported by the French cafe lift of the accordion. Intricate bass lines and interlocking guitar riffs mesh mesmerizingly with the joyous polyrhythmic bucking of rara horns. These powerful layers are topped by sing-along melodies with inspiring, socially conscious lyrics. The result is a soulful stew of deep danceable grooves that feels strangely familiar yet intensely new... and 100% Haitian.

Nadine’s talent, started giving her lessons and eventually invited her to sing back up for him. During the 2010 earthquake Nadine’s house was tragically misrepresented country. Try's history and helping to shape its path forward. Today, a young generation of artists is keeping this tradition alive, narrating the world they live in through music that is made in their neighborhoods, villages and post-earthquake camps. Lakou Mizik brings together these musical traditions in celebration of the cultural continuity while using Haiti’s deep well of creative strength to shine a positive light on this tragically misrepresented country.

Two veteran music producers joined the group to help create their debut album: Chris Velan, a Montreal singer-songwriter and producer responsible for the national hit “Haiti Chante” by the legendary Boulo Valcourt and Zao, and Iestyn Polson, a Montagnard singer-songwriter and producer who formed ‘Sierra Leone’s Refugee All Stars’ with a young generation of artists is keeping this tradition alive, narrating the world they live in through music that is made in their neighborhoods, villages and post-earthquake camps. Lakou Mizik brings together these musical traditions in celebration of the cultural continuity while using Haiti’s deep well of creative strength to shine a positive light on this tragically misrepresented country.

Lamarre Junior is the Lakou Mizik bassist. He grew up playing in church and continues to lead church bands throughout Port-au-Prince. But his passion is for injecting voudou and church music – his faith is something personal: he is proud to be playing his country’s cultural music.

Beleny Beniste arrived recently into Lakou Mizik after the sudden death of original accordion player Zach Juste. Beniste plays with the country’s best-known rara band, the new brings a deep wealth of knowledge of Haiti’s cultural music. Beniste represents a growing number of Haitian accordion players who are keeping the voudou tradition alive in Haiti.