



Niskayuna Friends of Music

**Report to the
Community Foundation
for the Capital Region's Niskayuna Community Foundation**

Ha!Man 2006 Music Enrichment Activities

November 20, 2007



Introduction

The project conceived by the Friends of Music (FOM) (see Appendix 1 for background on FOM) in collaboration with the faculty of the Niskayuna School District Music Department, with support from the Niskayuna Community Foundation, focused on strengthening community and helping youth to harness the power of music to enhance their lives, the lives of others and their environment. The project was designed to provide a three-day visit in November 2006 by South African classical musician Francois le Roux, better known as the Ha!Man. Le Roux was to serve as an “artist in residence” and offer a series of workshops and performances for elementary, middle and high school students as well as the music faculty, culminating with a public performance for students, families and the community, wherein he would join students as a special guest artist.

The primary purposes of the visit were to provide students and staff with:

- A multifaceted musical experience promoting spontaneity, creativity, and cultural connections
- Differing perspectives on classical and ethnic contemporary music
- Direct access to South African music history and culture

The activities were intended to stretch the imagination of students, to encourage interaction and participation, and to integrate standard and creative musical elements. The aim was to draw upon le Roux’s “rhythmic spontaneous understanding of the world” to inspire students and faculty members’ creativity and to enable students to see new possibilities through their study of and appreciation for music.

As noted in the grant application, le Roux is a child prodigy who improvised on the piano beginning at the age of four. His primary instrument is the cello and is also gifted in playing the piano, keyboard and other instruments. He relies on a range of mediums to express his creativity, including dancing and spontaneous song making. His music is informed by his strong feelings for Africa and reflects the continent’s musical styles and sounds. He performs worldwide in Africa, Europe, Asia and North America.

The proposed project was viewed as being consistent with FOM’s mission to advance the District’s music program for Niskayuna Central School students by promoting continued excellence in music programs and advocacy for quality music programming. It was anticipated that the program would offer students an exceptional opportunity to view music from a new perspective informed by the culture and experiences of a gifted musician. The desire was to join with the Niskayuna Community Foundation in yielding rich benefits for our children, our community, and the communities their lives will ultimately touch.

Areas of Need Addressed through Grant Support

Educational leader Bart McGettrick of the University of Glasgow has described essential elements of education and learning—“attainment, achievement, and the flourishing of humanity.”¹ Education, he notes,

¹ McGettrick B. (2005). The context for educating children. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Available online at http://www.thegrid.org.uk/leadership/programmes/conferences/documents/bart_mcgettrick.ppt#357,7,Slide 7

should promote the development of individuals who are caring and compassionate, appreciate beauty and wonder and use their talents to serve others. According to McGettrick, we are living in a society that is “not just about learning and about doing, but that is also about being and becoming.”

The arts are critical in helping us to develop new ideas and in creating values. New modes of expression through the arts, McGettick argues, are crucial in liberating our minds and fostering our dreams of what could be. Moreover, Christopher Hasty of Harvard University, who has been exploring the link between cognition and musical creativity, expresses views that complement and elaborate on those described by McGettrick. According to Hasty, experiencing music allows us to create “intense, richly imagined rhythmic events, and encourages a “rhythmic spontaneous understanding of the world”² and creativity.

It is upon such ideas that FOM made its proposal to the Niskayuna Community Foundation to enhance efforts within the School District to foster student creativity through music and to contribute substantively to the development of youth whose strengths and talents are nurtured through activities that promote spontaneity, inventiveness, and appreciation of cultural values. The project as proposed took advantage of a natural opportunity to tap into the talents and expertise of le Roux, who was to be in the United States on a two-month tour and was scheduled to be in the Capital District to visit family at the end of his national tour. His calendar allowed him to be available in November 2006 to provide workshops and performances to our entire school community, one to which he has had a strong connection.

As such the project was consistent with FOM’s mission to advance the District’s music program for Niskayuna Central School students by promoting continued excellence in music programs and advocacy for quality music programming. It was designed to offer students an exceptional opportunity to view music from new perspectives informed by the culture and experiences of a gifted musician. We believed an investment in this project by the Niskayuna Community Foundation would yield rich benefits for our children, our community, and the communities their lives would ultimately touch.

Project Implementation

Target of Programming

The population served by le Roux’s performances and workshops was every elementary school student among the Birchwood, Craig, Glenclyff, Hillside and Rosendale schools (1,865); 835 students in the Iroquois and Van Antwerp middle schools, Concert and Symphony orchestras, the Wind, Symphonic and Concert bands, the Jazz Ensemble, and the four Choral ensembles; and 440 students in music classes and the High School Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Winds and Chamber Strings, the Symphonic and Concert bands, the Jazz Ensemble and Stage Band, and the five Choral groups. In total, the Ha!Man reached approximately 3,140 Niskayuna students. Moreover, the workshops and performances were attended by classroom teachers in each of the schools, extending the reach of this program to educators, as well as parents, family members, and

² Potier B. (2003, March 13. Hasty connects intellect, spontaneity. Harvard University Gazette. Available online at <http://www.hno.harvard.edu/gazette/2003/03.13/03-hasty.html>.

community members who had the opportunity to attend the evening performance. The evening performance had an estimated attendance of 700.

Demographic data from the 2000 Census data describe Niskayuna as a community with a population of 20,295, 52 percent of which are female. Of persons designating one race (20,065), the majority (91 percent) indicate they are White. Of the remaining number, 6 percent is Asian, nearly 2 percent Black / African American, and approximately .05 percent American Indian / Alaskan, Hawaiian / Pacific Islander and Other. Nearly 2 percent of residents are of Hispanic / Latino heritage and 1 percent indicates that they are of two or more races.

Of the households in Niskayuna, three-quarters are family households. Children under the age of 18 make up 31 percent of Niskayuna's population, where the average family size is 3 persons. Among residents, 9 of 10 hold high school degrees and slightly more than one-half have a bachelor's degree or higher. In 8 of 10 homes, English is the primary language spoken. One out of 5 children in Niskayuna is living with a disability. The median household income is \$70,800 and 2 percent of families in Niskayuna live in poverty.

Project Description

Dates were set for an artist-in-residence period from November 13–15, 2006. The District Director of Music, Mr. Neubert, along with his faculty, President of FOM, Diane Smith, and FOM Board members were responsible for providing leadership and coordinating the visit.

Development of the specific content and scheduling of the musical workshops and presentations was managed by Mr. Neubert, who worked with his faculty and le Roux to ensure that program objectives were met and to make certain le Roux's time was used efficiently and effectively. Planning focused on using the medium of music, in conjunction with other art forms like poetry, to offer enjoyable and practical methods for discovering and developing spontaneous creativity and expressing such creativity in meaningful ways, as through the performance and interpretation of music. The intent was to capitalize on le Roux's talents for building skills in improvisation as an art form and instrumental control, while relying upon demonstrations, collaboration, interactive exercises and discussion. The format was based on an understanding that each performance and workshop would unfold according to the setting and atmosphere. Learning activities typically covered would include:

- Playing solo cello, with voice and whistling, and the flute-like wind instrument, the ocarina
- Playing cello with original electronic backings, drawing from an extensive library ("Coming Home," "Waltz for a Fractured World," "Afrihappy," "Global Warming," "die Dreuning" – on the feelings of being an Afrikaner, "America" – recorded September 14, 2001, "My Africa," "First Love" and many more)
- Performing extracts from the HA!Man's soundtracks, for example Skepping 7 (with bird and animal sounds), the Twelve Princesses (for children), Hamlet, "Gumbo," "Jackson Pollock," "Moving Chicago"
- Dancing with music (for instance on "Sarie Marais" – folk song as arranged for violin and orchestra)
- Inviting audience members to spontaneously play music, create music and dance with the HA!man

- Performing Beautiful Land, created for the South African Woman of the year ceremony 2002
- Improvising on a series of notes given by the audience
- Performing original compositions such as "Her Time Has Come" (song of dedication to Africa, which was performed in the Royal Albert Hall) and Lekke, Lekke Cape Town" (song for the Mother City)
- Imparting knowledge of South African culture, values and daily life

The overall plan included having le Roux visit each of the five elementary schools where students participated in assembly programs. The remaining time was split accordingly between the middle and high schools. Middle school programming also included assembly programs. At the high school, le Roux worked with students in the classroom setting. Finally, le Roux joined students and faculty on his last evening in residence for the November 15 middle school Orchestra that featured performances by the 6th Grade Concert Orchestra and the 7th and 8th Grade String Orchestra. This concert included a performance by le Roux and four members of the music faculty of his original composition, "Strings Passion; a spontaneous inspiration; and a combined performance of le Roux's work, "Her Time Has Come" (A Song of Africa), with the Middle School Orchestra and High School Choir.

Specifically, the schedule of interactive performances and workshops offered by Ha!Man follows:

	<i>Monday – November 13</i>	<i>Tuesday – November 14</i>	<i>Wednesday – November 15</i>
8:15–8:55 AM	Hillside Performance	Glenclyff Performance	
9:40–10:20 AM		Rosendale Performance	
10:40–11:20 AM	High School Workshop Chamber Strings, Bel Canto		High School Workshop Jazz Ensemble, others
12:00–1:20 PM		High School Workshop Theory students, Ladies First, others	
1:00–1:40 PM	Craig Performance		Birchwood Performance
1:30–2:45 PM		High School Workshop Symphonic Orchestra, Band, others	
2:50–3:30 PM	Van Antwerp Performance		Iroquois Performance
7:00 PM		FOM Reception	Gala Concert

This was a very ambitious undertaking for Ha!Man, with four energetic performances and workshops each day. Based on the three goals outlined for the program, Ha!Man provided highly interactive performances and workshops, tailored to the specific needs of each audience, wherein each he fashioned a rich tapestry of learning colored by improvisation, spontaneity and musical creativity and woven together with his deep respect for and knowledge of the values, culture, and music of South Africa. (Please see Appendix 2 for copies of press coverage of the events, photos, and materials used to advertise the gala concert on November 15.)

Project Evaluation

To evaluate the effectiveness of le Roux's residency, we planned to conduct a sampling of student responses to the presentations and workshops. Surveys were developed for elementary, middle and high school students to solicit direct written feedback, in their own words, regarding their impressions, what they found most valuable, the knowledge they gained, and how what they learned may influence them in the future. For elementary students, who would be expected to have a large variation in developing literacy skills, we ask faculty to participate in gathering data in those instances where children required assistance in responding to the questions.

A content analysis of the qualitative data was conducted with respect to the objectives we established for the program. The objectives included:

- (1) Students would experience a multifaceted musical experience that promoted spontaneity, creativity, and cultural connections.
- (2) Students would have the opportunity to view classical and ethnic contemporary music in ways that promoted communication, connection with others, and meaningful expression.
- (3) Students would gain knowledge of South African music history and culture.

A description of the methodology employed, results, and conclusions follows:

Methodology

To be respectful of the academic demands on classroom time, we elected to conduct a random survey of students following each performance by Ha!Man. Teachers were each asked to select a minimum of 10 students per class and to assign the survey randomly (e.g., count off every third student and have those students complete the survey). For students in the lower grades (e.g., kindergarten, first grade), we asked teachers to elicit responses to the questions from the students and to record them on one form.

Surveys were distributed to every classroom teacher in all grades of our five elementary schools and two middle schools and to music instructors at the high school. Surveys at the middle and upper grade levels were modified slightly to capture background information on the student's participation in the Music Program. This was important at the high school level, in particular, where Ha!Man worked with individual classes rather than giving performances as was the case with grades K through 8.

The content of the survey was developed to capture essential information related to the goals of the program. It included a short series of open-ended responses, to enable students to jot down ideas efficiently, while capturing feedback on how well the performances and workshops achieved the desired outcomes. An overview of survey questions is provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Overview of Survey Questions		
<i>Elementary</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>High School</i>
What grade are you in?	What grade are you in?	What grade are you in?
N / A	Are you in a band, choir, or orchestra? If so, please write down which groups(s)	In which workshop did you participate? (Please indicate the name of the ensemble / class.)
Before today, had you ever been to a performance by a musician from South Africa?	Before today, had you ever been to a performance by a musician from South Africa?	Before your workshop, had you ever participated in a workshop by a visiting artist?
What did you like about this performance?	What did you like about this performance?	What did you like about this workshop?
What did you learn from this performance?	What did you learn from this performance?	What did you learn from this workshop?
How did you feel during the performance?	How did you feel during the performance?	How did you feel during the workshop?
How do you think this show might affect you as you grow up?	How do you think this show might affect you as you grow up?	What effect do you think the workshop might have on you as you grow into adulthood?
If you were to recommend this show to others, what would you tell them?	If you were to recommend this show to others, what would you tell them?	If you were to recommend this workshop to others, what would you tell them?

A content analysis was conducted of the open-ended, short-answer responses offered by students who responded to the survey. From an examination of the responses, the themes emerging under each question were captured and responses that clustered under each theme were tallied numerically. Data are presented in the Results section below.

Survey Results

Completed surveys were received from 502 students across all grade levels. Two-hundred eighty-one were elementary students, representing a little more than one-half (56%) of survey respondents; nearly 9 out of 10 students responding were either in grades 3, 4 or 5. This trend was not unexpected, as students at these grade levels are more proficient in reading and writing than at the lower grade levels. The higher levels of participation at these grade levels may reflect the desire by teachers to use the survey as a natural opportunity for students to use and practice reading and writing skills.

Middle school respondents to the survey made up the next largest group, 39%. In the middle school, the performances reached all students via assembly programs. Respondents indicated that they participated in one of the three bands (51), in choir (36), orchestra (14), and jazz band (1). The number of students who said they did not play in any musical ensemble was 117.

The program reached nearly every high school student. These students responded to the survey at a rate of 5 percent. The lower participation rate among this group may reflect the nature of the high-school

environment, where the time to move from one class to another is limited and tardiness is not tolerated. Students, therefore, may have elected to complete the survey at another time, which did not present itself again.

Of the high school students responding to the survey, 14 participated in Symphony Band, 12 Symphony Orchestra, 4 Jazz Ensemble, 2 Chamber Strings and 1 Choir. Seventeen students said they had never participated in a workshop with a visiting artist, nearly twice the number who had (n = 9).

Summary of Findings

Findings of the content analysis are presented by the five open-ended questions to which students responded.

1. WHAT DID YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT THIS PERFORMANCE / WORKSHOP?

Overwhelmingly, students indicated they of they liked best the Ha!Man's ability to play the cello and to make music with it and the other instruments he played. Student remarks ranged from "I never saw a professional cello player," to "I liked the cool cello," and middle schoolers agreed, one saying, "He did great things with the cello." A high school student noted appreciation for how little Ha!Man spoke and the time he spent making music.

The upbeat, interactive and high-energy nature of the performances and workshops resonated among all grade levels. An elementary school student empathetically and poignantly expressed, "He took any volunteer. It took a lot of courage to let somebody play his cello." Being energetic, engaging and involving all students in the performances and workshops was also prized among middle school and high school students.

Spontaneity and improvisation, through dancing, singing and sound making were given nearly equal weight by students, along with humor, creativity, expressiveness, and inspiration. One elementary student described his experience as "the coolest music I've ever heard with a man's mouth." A high school student remarked, "Liked listening to different styles and making up stuff."

An elementary student observed the simultaneous joy and seriousness with which the Ha!Man approached the performance and several students in the elementary and middle school levels described feeling the sadness of songs, the expression of songs through the cello, piano and keyboard, with one feeling pleasure at seeing how the Ha!Man "closed his eyes and played the cello." The Ha!Man's ability to create music and not stick to written music also inspired students.

Being exposed to originality in expression was certainly valued, with an elementary student saying of the performance, "I liked the way it was unlike other things," and another describing a feeling of being right in South Africa during the performance.

The variations of musical rhythms fascinated several students, from the elementary student who said, "I liked the jumpy music," to another who liked "the beat box." Another felt the excitement about the music from those sitting all around.

Students enjoyed the Song of Africa, spiritual lyrics, and music from Hamlet in addition to the spontaneous compositions. A high school student expressed appreciation for how well the Ha!Man connected the music to society and to life.

About the performance overall, one student asked, “What’s not to like?” which appeared to be a common feeling among most every students completing the survey. A high school student summed up the experience of Ha!Man’s unique style for many, saying, “He was super different than anyone I’ve seen before.” Of note is that high school students in his workshops valued the Ha!Man’s respect for them and his ability to relate to them and their individual talents.

In summary, major themes to emerge from an analysis of this question, including a count of times mentioned, are as follows:

Table 3: What I Liked Best about the Performance / Workshop

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Number of Survey Responses by Level</i>			
	Elementary	Middle	High School	Total
Music making with cello and other instruments	87	36	2	125
Upbeat, high-energy / getting everyone involved / inviting kids to perform / exciting	53	53	6	112
Spontaneity / dancing / singing / improvisation / sounds	14	24	5	43
Humor / fun / hilarious	21	17	1	39
Creativity / originality / expressiveness	9	22	2	33
Inspiring / feel the rhythm and music	15	17		32
Everything	11	8	1	20
Compositions / lyrics	11	6	2	19
Different, but enjoyable	1		1	7
Respect for and ability to engage and relate to students			4	4

2. WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THIS PERFORMANCE / WORKSHOP?

For the most part, students learned the most about the African continent, particularly South Africa, its people, and challenges confronting it. A number of students made references to Africa’s long record of human past, saying “Africa is the mother of the world” and “Africa was the first continent to have people.” Students delighted in their new knowledge of the landmark Table Mountain in Cape Town as well as having the opportunity to learn a few words in Afrikaans. They also wrote about suffering that is taking place in Africa and their appreciation for aspects of African culture they were exposed to through the program. A middle grade student seemed to capture a feeling that comes across in the surveys, “Africa is different from what most people think.”

The areas to rank in importance after gaining new knowledge of Africa clustered pretty evenly around music, including (1) general observations students shared about music as a result of participating in Ha!Man performances and workshops, (2) a recognition that music takes different shapes and forms, (3) more of an understanding of the cello as an instrument, and (4) exposure to and regard for music emanating from South Africa.

Interestingly, students noted differences in music from other parts of the world, yet similarities. Common elements described were how “cool” music is, the “energy” that comes from it, the “few limits” it has, and the “power” it carries. High school students pointed out how music can be interpreted politically when it deals with issues such as global warming. They also noted the importance of taking “a break from the music you are used to playing” and to “try something new,” and as one added eloquently, “I learned there needs to be a balance between the ying of classical music and the yang of improvisation.”

With respect to the different shape and forms music takes, elementary students were intrigued by the notion that “not just any old sound is music,” and the beautiful tunes that are possible through the regulation of sound. “Hard and soft music stand for different feelings,” another elementary student observed.

A number of students indicated that they learned more about the cello as an instrument, from “the bow is sticky,” to a realization that to “play a cello does not mean that you have to play classical music.” Elementary and middle school students also wrote about their new exposure to the music and dance of South Africa, indicating pleasure with the song of Cape Town and a recognition of ways the music and dance are similar to that experienced in America. One elementary student summed up by saying, “I learned what South Africa sounds like.”

While number of students said they really did not learn anything new, several said they learned “a lot” from the performances and workshops. Others remarked on how being silly, letting go and improvising opened new doors for them. They noted that having fun with music does not mean that you are not serious and that improvising is integral to musical expression. Comments ranged from, “You can be wild and serious,” “You can be more free and still in control,” and “I learned to appreciate the free flow method for letting go.”

Of note is the general lessons about life learned by students participating in performances and workshops, from having a fuller appreciation for individual expression to the importance of not letting fears get in the way of trying new things. The Ha!Man’s unique style was relished by one elementary student who said, “Don’t care about what other people think.” Several high school students agreed, “Be who you want to be,” and simply, “Be yourself.” Related to this, respect for being creative was also deepened. “Be creative and don’t be afraid to show it,” one student advised. Elementary students in particular were touched by the notion that they could create music, with one student writing, “Some people can make up a masterpiece in their heads,” to another realizing that even “kindergartners can be musicians.” Another important lesson students wrote about was their heightened sensitivity to the cultures of others.

Music as an inspiring force defined the remaining lessons from Ha!Man. “The best things come from your heart,” said one middle school student of music’s ability to express our innermost feelings. Several noted the essential nature of music to everyday life, saying, “Music is oil for the body” and “Without music we would

not be happy.” Others pointed out the value of putting your heart and soul into music, practicing it, and knowing that this will help them follow their “dreams.”

Highlights of themes include the following:

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Number of Survey Responses by Level</i>			
	Elementary	Middle	High School	Total
More about Africa and its people	24	30		54
Music in general	22	11	7	40
Types of music and ways to make it	23	11	6	39
More about the cello and about playing it	22	13		35
Music / dance from South Africa	13	17		30
Nothing new learned / A lot	9 / 3	12 / 1		21 / 4
General lessons learned	10	10		21
Music let's us be silly, serious and expressive	8	9	3	20
We each have the ability to create music	10	5	4	19
Music that “comes from the heart” expresses innermost feelings	14		2	16
Value of music to life	9	6		15
How well you can play if you practice / appreciation of excellence	5	6	1	12
Music inspires movement	7		1	8

3. HOW DID YOU FEEL DURING THE PERFORMANCE / WORKSHOP?

The predominant emotions expressed were positive, with the majority of students responding to the survey saying they felt happiness and excitement. While indicating that they were entertained and intrigued by the performances / workshops, some students did express feeling “weird” and “overwhelmed” at times, and as one child put it, “confused in a good way.” A few students said they felt scared and uncomfortable, particularly when invited to dance and participate in other ways. One high school student indicated feeling nervousness “at first because I thought he didn’t know what he was doing.”

Many students at all levels described the transforming nature of their experiences with a number of words: mesmerized, at peace with the universe, inspiring, a sense of actually being in Africa, and joyful. Others were tickled by the laughter and humor at the heart of the performances and elementary and middle school students felt the music and wanted to and did express it through movement and dance. One student in particular described how the music elicited feelings of sadness and memories of “my dead grandmas.” Finally, a small handful of students conveyed a sense of boredom with the performances, likely reflecting individual interpretations of what each of us likes and dislikes in the arts.

In summary, major themes included:

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Number of Survey Responses by Level</i>			
	Elementary	Middle	High School	Total
Happy / good / great / enjoyable / amazed / cool / wonderful	121	51	4	186
Excited / crazy / free / alive / energetic / lively / wild / exhilarated / upbeat / ecstatic / spirited	38	33	2	53
Entertained / glad I came / interested / intrigued / impressed / felt involved	11	11	5	27
Weird / shocked / surprised / overwhelmed	8	18		26
Different / confused in a good way / strange	4	18	2	24
Scared / awkward when dancing / nervous / uncomfortable	3	17	2	22
Like I was dreaming / mesmerized / calmed / relaxed / in my own world / at peace	15	3	3	21
Inspired / joyful / transformed / motivating / like I was in Africa	10	3	5	18
Silly / funny / like laughing / amused / hilarious / giggly / made me smile	6	9	1	16
Like I wanted to dance / be active / did dance	6	7		13
Bored / annoyed / sick / do not know	9			9
Different emotions based on the music (e.g., sad, happy)	8			8

4. HOW DO YOU THINK THIS PERFORMANCE / WORKSHOP MIGHT AFFECT YOU AS YOU GROW UP / GROW INTO ADULTHOOD?

The primary way in which children and youth answering the survey said the performances and workshops would affect their growth was in the area of pursuing music studies. A number seemed interested in learning to play a cello or other string instruments and some responded that they might even like to teach music. Another large area in which students saw the possibility for growth is in learning more about Africa and other countries, visiting the continent of Africa and other countries, and desiring to gain more of an understanding of African culture.

A willingness to expand music appreciation, to be open to different musical styles, and a desire to broaden musical horizons were opportunities students saw in their future. One elementary student endearingly said, “When I’m old, I’ll want to have fun dancing,” and a middle school student noted that playing happy music is something to cherish.

The notion of respect and honor for people and their differences is something many young students felt they would take with them as a result of the workshops and performances. A number of students indicated thankfulness for the quality of their lives and sensitivity for the struggles many African people endure. They

indicated a desire to help African people in need and to make their lives better. Others saw that they would be more caring and aware of the needs of others as a result of participating in Ha!Man’s performance.

Students also took away more than knowledge of Africa, its music and its people. They also saw Ha!Man as a person of integrity who would serve as a role model. They said he inspired them to respect themselves and others, to do their best, to have jobs they loved, to be creative and to follow their dreams.

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Number of Survey Responses by Level</i>			
	Elementary	Middle	High School	Total
To continue music studies / to pay attention to my interest in music / to play an instrument / May pursue musical career / Want to learn to play the cello or other string instruments / Makes me want to teach music	76	13	2	91
Desire to learn more about Africa and other countries / Desire to visit Africa and other countries / Desire to know more about African culture or other cultures	38	34		62
To be more spontaneous / free / more willing to express feelings through music / feel comfortable in expressing individuality	20	13	6	39
Be a better listener of my own music and the music of others / Appreciate the whole song beyond the individual notes / Appreciate listening to music and enjoying it	20	9	2	31
Will help to broaden my musical horizon / continue to show me other perspectives	16	11	2	29
Helps me to be respectful of Africa and appreciative of what it Africans have been through / to donate to causes in Africa / find out how to help South Africa / be thankful for what I have	19	8		27
Remember Ha!Man as an example of someone who has found his voice / who inspires you to be your best	9	4	3	16
To create my own music / be more creative musically	3		2	5
May inspire me to try something different / stand up for myself / follow my heart / follow my dreams / have a job I really love		4		4
To be a more caring and compassionate person	1	2		3

5. IF YOU WERE TO RECOMMEND THIS PERFORMANCE / WORKSHOP TO OTHERS, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL THEM?

Resoundingly, students said to go see Ha!Man perform or take part in one of his workshops. The word most often used to describe the performances and workshops was “awesome.” “Go and learn about how music will change the world,” an elementary student urged, which was echoed by a middle school student who wrote, “It will make your day.” Students also warned that the performances were wild, energetic and exhilarating, with one describing how the music “gets your heart popping and body energized.”

Respect for the Ha!Man’s talents and musicianship, within the context of what students often cited as an unconventional presentation, came through loudly on the surveys. “This is a once in a lifetime chance to hear a musician use his mouth to make music,” remarked an elementary student. Get ready to see a “wicked good dancer, singer and cellist,” another student said. A number of children also explained feeling “weird” in a “cool way” during the performances because they were not accustomed to the unique style of the Ha!Man. “It might sound weird,” once student commented “but you’ll appreciate it.” A middle school student added, “The man and his music are like no other.”

Nearly equal numbers of students were enthusiastic about the laughter and silliness, enjoyed participating themselves or having the chance to or watch their friends and classmates create music with Ha!Man, dance or play the cello, and expressed admiration for the Ha!Man’s ability to share information about the people and culture of South Africa. A very small number of students said they would not recommend the performances, a few indicating that they were scared or bored. A high school student suggested that students be prepared for possibly not liking the music.

Table 7: What I Would Tell Others about the Ha!Man Performance / Workshop

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Number of Survey Responses by Level</i>			
	Elementary	Middle	High School	Total
Awesome / amazing / fun / exciting / great / interesting / go see him / entertaining / recommend it / cool	102	70	8	180
He plays very well / great cello player / good singer / good with instruments / skilled / talented / sings about Africa / you’ll love his music	39	18	2	59
Unique / weird but cool / show like no other / creative / very different / not just traditional music	17	25	2	44
Wild / fast paced / energetic / crazy at times / exhilarating / spontaneous	16	12		28
Will not stop laughing / really funny / hilarious	17	10		27
Interactive	10	8	3	21
Great teacher	9	1		10
Improvisational and inspiring	4	1	3	8
Educational	4	2		6
Would not recommend it / scary / boring	3	5	1	9

Discussion / Conclusions

Anecdotally, Ha!Man’s residency was an unqualified success. Following the gala middle school concert, for example, parents, family and community members lauded the students and Ha!Man for their performance, particularly the finale in which the choir and orchestra joined le Roux in honoring his homeland. Audience members appreciated the opportunity to sing along and respond to this powerful piece. People smiled and the energy in the crowd was palpable. One faculty member also wrote to Friends of Music after the residency to

say, “Thank you for bringing Francois le Roux to Niskayuna. It was an amazing experience. I’m not sure who was inspired more, me or my students. I have heard such positive feedback from all of my students.”

The survey results strongly confirm that the three days of activities in which le Roux engaged Niskayuna students met our expectations. The data support what we saw from the moment le Roux stepped foot into the Niskayuna schools. His innovative, expressive and improvisational style was quickly apparent and embraced by students. His workshops and performances with Niskayuna's students were each unique, drawing upon his cello, piano, percussive skills, voice and original musical compositions inspired by his South African roots.

Le Roux's visit was designed to encourage students to view classical and ethnic contemporary music in ways that promoted spontaneity, creativity, cultural connections and meaningful expression. In addition from the feedback gained through the survey, this was evident from le Roux’s very first elementary school performance, where students were invited onstage and encouraged to express themselves spontaneously. The result was an infectious sense of joy and connectedness, evidenced by students linking arm in arm and swaying rhythmically as le Roux's cello richly sang "Her Time Has Come." During his three days in Niskayuna, le Roux did not stop for a moment! He energetically moved from school to school, musically and culturally engaging most every student in the district.

As evidenced by the data, students across all grade levels were exposed to a rich musical experience that promoted their abilities to be spontaneous and creative. The medium of music and the knowledge imparted by le Roux of South Africa clearly strengthened students’ cultural awareness and sensitivity. Students were provided with many occasions to witness and experience traditional, contemporary and classical and newly created music from new perspectives. They had the opportunity to see the power of music in conveying thoughts, ideas and feelings and to see how music connects to who we are and what we stand for. Students also delighted in learning about South Africa, its people and aspects of its culture.

The finding that a very few students were not enthusiastic about or “scared” by the performances may simply reflect their taste in music or a sense of discomfort with spontaneous expression. It was not unusual, for instance, to see students on their “best behavior” in le Roux’s assembly programs. Students seemed reluctant to come forward to participate until they were encouraged by adults around them. Most every student, however, appeared to adapt quickly to the unconventional musical style of le Roux and engage willingly in letting go, enjoying the moment, and gaining a new appreciation of the expansive way in which music connects and nurtures us. Please see Appendix 3 for copies of some pictures from the Ha!Man’s visit.

Closing Remarks

Community support for the program extended well beyond the Niskayuna Community Foundation, with a number of local businesses and music and arts organizations joining the Foundation in its support by contributing gifts in kind, which were used to sell raffle tickets. Monies that were raised through the raffle and donations of food and beverages enabled FOM to cover nearly cover all costs associated with Ha!Man’s residency and activities, including refreshments and a reception for students, family members, faculty, and

community members who attended the public concert the evening of November 15. (Please see Appendix 2 for samples of publicity used to advertise the event and press coverage received.)

The generous contributors, their contributions, and the people who were patrons of the raffle included:

- Schenectady Light Opera Company: 2 tickets to *Oliver*
Mary Lynn Olbrych
- Schenectady Symphony Orchestra: 2 tickets to January 14, 2007 performance
Emily Steele
- Schenectady Symphony Orchestra: 2 tickets to April 29, 2007 performance
Murphy Family
- Schenectady VanCurler Music: \$25 gift certificate
Golden Family
- Friends of Music: Gift Bag
Cathy Robinson
- Home Style Pizza: \$20 gift certificate
Jerry Campo
- Gershon's Deli & Caterers: \$15 gift certificate
Gary Hoffman
- Scotti's Restaurant & Pizzeria: \$25 gift certificate
Sedzoiil Family
- NYS Theatre Institute: 4 tickets to *It's a Wonderful Life*
Mary Lynn Olbrych
- Francois le Roux: CD's
Mark Hoffman & Frank DePonceau
- Proctor's Theatre: 2 tickets to The King's Singers
Cindy Baglow

In addition, donations of food and beverages were received from the following local markets:

- Hannaford's
- Niskayuna Copop
- Price Chopper

A copy of a letter from the Treasurer of Niskayuna Friends of Music, which accompanies this report as Appendix 4, certifies that Niskayuna Community Foundation funding of \$1,050 was used to cover the \$1,600 professional fee, which le Roux charged for his three-day residency. (His reduced his professional fee for this engagement from \$1,900 to \$1,600 to accommodate FOM's financial need.)

Report submitted November 13, 2007