

many voices, one movement

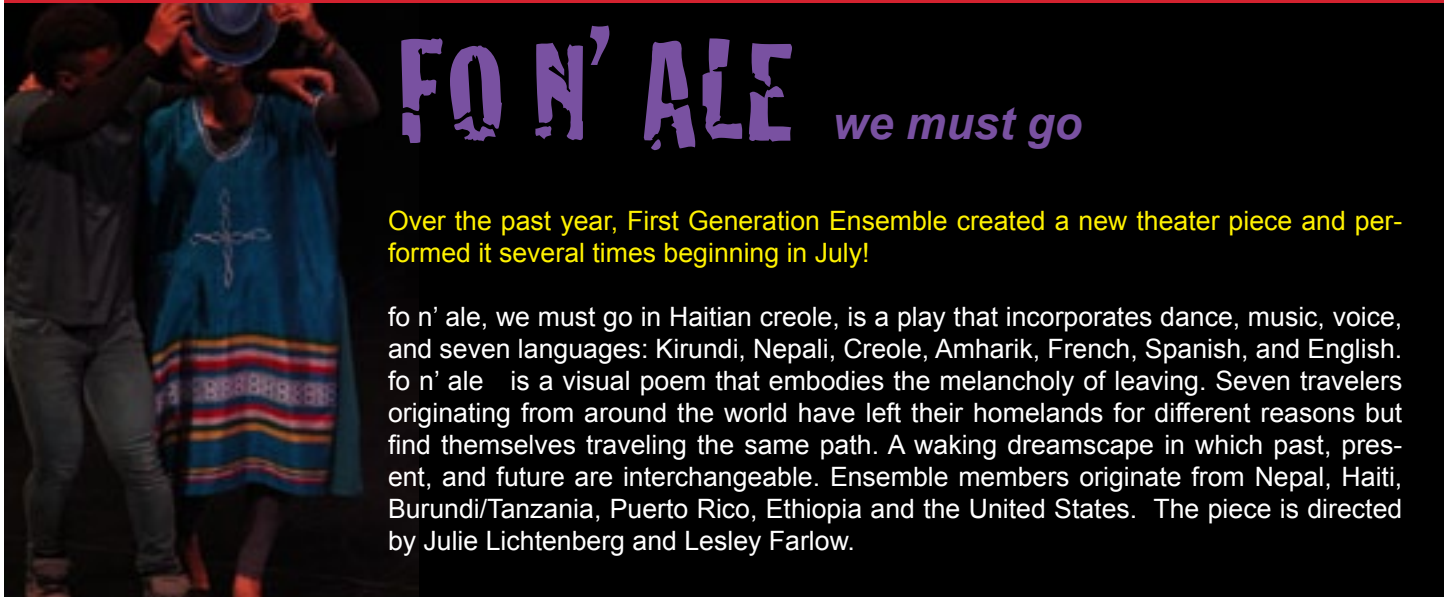


FIRST GENERATION

performing arts and youth leadership

A NEWSLETTER FOR ENSEMBLE, FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF FIRST GENERATION

DEC 2013



Over the past year, First Generation Ensemble created a new theater piece and performed it several times beginning in July!

fo n' ale, we must go in Haitian creole, is a play that incorporates dance, music, voice, and seven languages: Kirundi, Nepali, Creole, Amharik, French, Spanish, and English. fo n' ale is a visual poem that embodies the melancholy of leaving. Seven travelers originating from around the world have left their homelands for different reasons but find themselves traveling the same path. A waking dreamscape in which past, present, and future are interchangeable. Ensemble members originate from Nepal, Haiti, Burundi/Tanzania, Puerto Rico, Ethiopia and the United States. The piece is directed by Julie Lichtenberg and Lesley Farlow.

Audience members speak. . .

"Emotional: riveting, deep, moving. I felt what it must be like to be unknown, misunderstood, or alone. Or, wistful - the grandmother's bed story made me wistful for a simpler time and place, a home within a home, a place of soft warm bodies and laughter and love."

"It's so exciting to see First Generation in action. The cross-cultural blend of words and music, stories of pain and hope, and the young people's honesty, clarity and optimism is truly inspiring. I am interested in how this group connects the work to social justice, to communities in order to create change..."

"Artistically, I enjoyed the flow of the work - from tense moments of fear or anger, to flowing dreams and soft connections. The flow of energy was quite masterful - energy did not drop or become dulled..."



Performing fo n' ale First Gen speaks:

"Performing fo n' ale at KO was a creative journey. Before, when an audience member cried, I couldn't see why at the time. Then at the Hampshire performance, it was like, Wow! I see what theatre can do. I didn't realize how much it touched people's hearts. It was amazing. Also, it felt good to finally understand the roots of why I wrote my pieces in Ripple Effect and fo n' ale in the first place."
- Iyawna

"I liked being at KO. Our two weeks of rehearsal and performances at KO were, oh man, a lot of fun hanging out with everybody, and being ridiculous at times..." - Bush

"We made momos and samosas!" - Veronica "We bonded like sisters..." Iyawna Burnett

"My laugh was my high point. I feel joyful when I laugh. I had a lot of fun. Lows, long-long-long tech rehearsals. When we had to stop so often, it was really annoying. I thought, 'I can't do this no more.' But you know, I can." - Wize

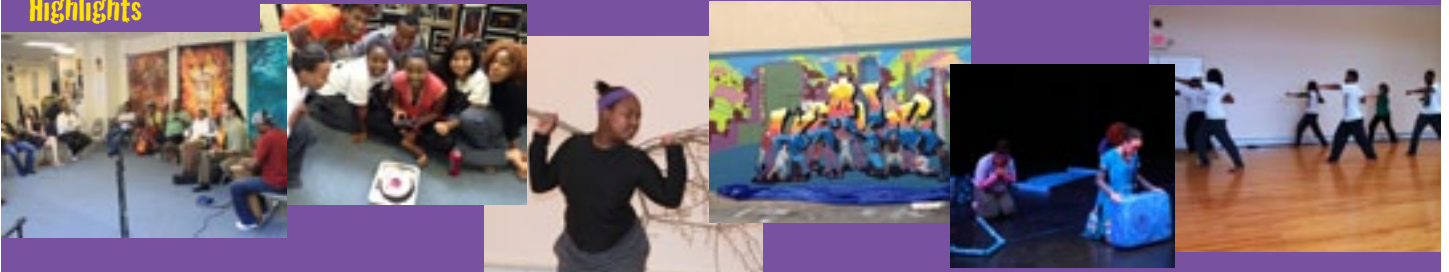
"The low point was that we were tired and had no time to do anything else but First Gen and school. But I enjoyed those days....Sitting together, everyone talking..... It was so cool." - Veronica Israël

We envision a world in which people of all ages and ancestries strive together for personal and social liberation.

THANK YOU! A big thank you to the families of First Generation Ensemble members for your support and understanding of all the long hours we spent in rehearsal! Thank you to all our friends, community supporters and our fantastic Board of Directors for your work in sustaining First Generation. We are immensely grateful for your encouragement, time, participation, and talents.



Highlights



LOOKING BACK 2013 - SOME HIGHLIGHTS

PERFORMED

fo n'ale at the Ko Festival of Performance following an intensive 2-week Rehearsal Residency on Amherst College campus.
fo n'ale at Springfield and Hampshire Colleges
 Excerpts at Springfield Technical Community College
 Excerpts at the Academy of Music, Northampton, MA
 Excerpts at Multi-Cultural Affairs Student Orientation/Springfield College
 Excerpts at Diversity Event at Westfield College
 Excerpts at Upward Bound for 100 High School students
 Excerpts for the Regional Employment Board of Hampden County

FIELD TRIPS

UMASS Fine Arts Center:
 Word Become Flesh (Bamuthi Joseph)
 Kyle Abraham/Pavement / Ladysmithblackmambazo
 Sweet Honey in the Rock / The Idan Raichel Project
 The Witching Hour: Judy Dworwin Performance Project, Hartford, CT
 Mountain climbing, apple picking, and Harvest Festival in Vermont
 Rising Waters – Jelupa Productions at Springfield College
 The Sunset Limited, New Century Theater at Smith College

VISITING ARTISTS

Janet Aalfs, Kyle Abraham, Toby Bercovici, Paul Dennis, Lesley Farlow, Donna Mejia, Solveig Melleme, Elsa Menendez, Charles Neville, JO Sallins, Carla Wojczuk

Benefit Concert 2013

was a tremendous and energizing success! Thank you organizers Kristin Neville and Janet Hodos for all your work and dedication! Thank you Evelyn Harris, Charles Neville, Jo Sallins, Avery Sharpe, Youssoupha Sidibe, Tony Vacca, and Bideew Bou Bess for your music and your generosity! And, a heartfelt thanks, as well, goes out to Debora Ferreira and Tyson Rose for hosting the evening.

CLICK HERE FOR VALLEY GIVES



LOOKING FORWARD - We have an action-packed winter and spring coming up, full of artistic and leadership trainings, AND adventures! More to come.

Welcome to New Ensemble Members! Sashay Sanchez, Michael Montalvo, Fynta Sidime, Anna Hleah! And welcome back, Niyo and Evariste!

REVOLUTIONS INTERNATIONAL THEATER FESTIVAL

First Generation Ensemble has been invited to perform our most recent creation, fo n' ale at Revolutions International Theater Festival in Albuquerque New Mexico! First Gen is the only youth ensemble to ever be invited in the thirteen years of this prestigious festival. Seven members will be traveling to the festival in January, performing fo n' ale (we must go) in the state-of-the-art Rodey Theatre at UNM, and teaching a workshop at the University! The Ensemble will have the opportunity to see theater from around the world and network with professional performing artists.

MURAL PROJECT

The Mural Project, working with youth in the Department of Youth Services (DYS), is gearing up to (to) begin our fifth mural in Springfield with a new group of young women! We are so excited to welcome this new group into the Performance Project community! For the second year, the Mural Project will be led by artist, Andrae Green and facilitator, Evelin Aquino. More to come...

"Performance-wise, we started getting a deeper understanding of all the stories and the magic of them, especially the water tap. We kept making connections. Fo n' ale expressed something I've wanted to express for a long time about my own family history."

– Julie Lichtenberg, Director



"Ultimately, I feel that continuing to work with the concept of water, we have been right on the verge of discovery. In terms of learning more about ourselves and about fo n' ale. There is enough water to go around. Just as there is enough love, brilliance, and grace in all of us so that we do not have to limit ourselves, or each other. I don't know how to explain it yet. But we're almost there."

– Julie Lichtenberg, Director

The Performance Project is an arts community of many ages and ancestries dedicated to personal and social liberation. Young people at the heart of our work create compelling visual and performing art that engages the public in dialog about critical social and cultural issues.



This program is supported by the Springfield Cultural Council

