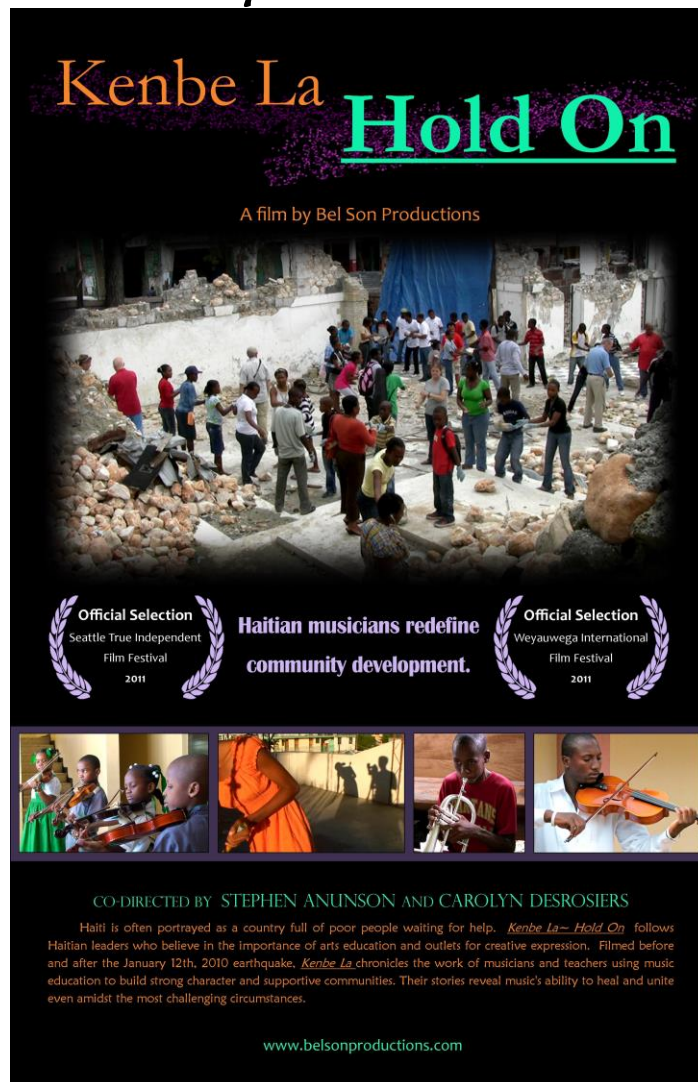


BEL SON PRODUCTIONS

presents



**A Film by Stephen Anunson and Carolyn Desrosiers
(USA, 2011, 82 minutes)**

www.belsonproductions.com

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To download production stills and promotional posters, please go to:
www.belsonproductions.com >Kenbe La~Hold On > Download Press Kit & Media

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SYNOPSIS

Haiti is often portrayed as a country full of poor people waiting for help. *Kenbe La~ Hold On* follows Haitian leaders who believe in the importance of arts education and outlets for creative expression. Filmed before and after the January 12th, 2010 earthquake, *Kenbe La* chronicles the work of musicians and teachers of the Holy Trinity Music School in Port-au-Prince and the Dessaix Baptiste Music School in Jacmel. Their experiences illustrate the ways in which music education builds strong character and supportive communities to help combat the intense needs that exist throughout the country. These stories reveal music's ability to heal and unite even amidst the most challenging circumstances.

ABOUT THE FILM

Filmmakers Stephen Anunson and Carolyn Desrosiers, co-founders of the film production group 'Bel Son Productions', began pre-production of *Kenbe La~Hold On* in July 2009. Their intent was to show a different side of Haiti by telling the story of music education programs. Too often the media focuses on the negative aspects of Haiti and portray Haitians as powerless and constantly in need of help. Although extreme needs do in fact exist in Haiti, Stephen and Carolyn felt it was important to feature strong Haitian leaders who have agency and a vision for the future of Haiti.

In December of 2009 they traveled to Haiti for their first shoot. They focused mostly on the Holy Trinity School of Port-au-Prince, interviewing teachers and students at the school and filming rehearsals, concerts and outreach activities. After about a month of filming, they returned to their home base of Appleton, WI. And only two weeks after that, the Jan. 12th, 2010 earthquake destroyed the Holy Trinity school complex and several members of the program perished. The earthquake devastated the small island nation of Haiti, causing over 300,000 deaths, and leaving 2.5 million people homeless. Concerned for the well-being of their friends, Stephen and Carolyn were faced with the decision of whether or not to continue the film project considering the circumstances. But when the filmmakers got word that despite their horrible loss the musicians from Holy Trinity school were still playing and performing concerts in the streets of the tent camps now home to thousands of displaced people, they knew that now more than ever they had to tell the story of music in Haiti.

In March 2010 Stephen and Carolyn returned to Haiti to document the efforts of musicians post-quake. Their interest broadened as they witnessed students and teachers from the music school taking their leadership to the streets of their home communities, organizing community meetings and taking on social justice issues.

The filmmakers did a third shoot June-August 2010 to further explore music programs in Haiti by documenting the summer music camps. They found that the idea of using music as a tool to develop strong leaders and supportive communities was spreading across Haiti, including the Dessaix-Baptiste Music School in Jacmel, CEMUCHCA in Cap Haitian, the Center for Non-Violence in Cite Soleil, and the Foyer Maurice Sixto School in Carrefour.

Upon their return from their third and final Haiti shoot, Stephen and Carolyn began post-production immediately. They edited several versions of the film before settling on the current 82 minute version in Fall 2011.

They have screened the film across the United States at schools, universities, churches, and community centers. Little by little they are changing people's perceptions about Haiti, and awakening viewers to the richness of Haitian culture, and the importance of music education for all.

ABOUT BEL SON PRODUCTIONS

In Haitian Creole, *Bel Son* means *Beautiful Sound*.

Bel Son Productions was founded in July 2009 and is fiscally sponsored by non-profit Arts Wisconsin. Bel Son's mission is to combine sounds and images as a means of communicating important stories from around the world. With the growth of our twenty-first century global community it is essential to embrace a common humanity, and find new and innovative ways to enrich each other's lives.

As globalization and technology continue to integrate societies across the globe, the distance between people of different backgrounds is becoming more artificial and less physical. With the ease of air travel and internet communications it is relatively simple to reach out to people who are physically far away and for people living in the economically developed world to connect to people living in the underdeveloped world. Yet, constructed ideas about language, race, class and religion—and the stories we tell about them—still keep people from connecting. The unique exchange of ideas and experiences that occur when people connect through music and arts show us that traversing the distance and surpassing cultural boundaries is not only possible, but it can happen in the form of something as simple as a song. Bel Son Productions' goal is to spread this positive message to communities across the globe.

FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Stephen Anunson earned a B.A in Music and Anthropology with an emphasis in Film Studies (*magna cum laude*) from Lawrence University. He was the co-founder and president of the [Lawrence University Film Production Club](#), the Photo Editor for the student newspaper ([The Lawrentian](#)), and performed in multiple student ensembles in the conservatory. After his sophomore year, Stephen went to New York City to intern with Global Village Media, a small documentary production company dedicated to telling powerful stories that engage, inform and unite.

While a student Stephen worked with the LU development office to create a [video series](#) about the various activities on campus. He also worked managing locations, cast, costumes and props for a PBS/American Masters documentary, [John Muir in the New World](#).

Stephen lives in Seattle where he makes videos, performs with the [Puget Sound Symphony Orchestra](#), teaches music and works as the sponsorship coordinator for [T\(OUR\) Magazine](#).

Carolyn Desrosiers (Co-Director) graduated from [Lawrence University](#) in 2011 with a B.M. in cello performance and a B.A in Theater, as well as a minor in film studies. She was a member of the Lawrence Symphony Orchestra, and took first place in the 2009 Wisconsin Cello Society Cello Day Competition. In her last year at Lawrence she was the president of the LU Film Production Club.

A native of Appleton Wisconsin, she is passionate about involving artists in community projects. She is currently the Harmony Program Leader for Music, Arts and Conversation Programs for [Harmony Cafe](#), a non-profit program of Goodwill North Central Wisconsin. Carolyn has also taught film, music, and activism at the Renaissance School for the Arts, a charter school for highschoolers in Appleton, WI. Carolyn is also actively involved with several other non-profit organizations based in Appleton, WI, including: Celebrate Diversity Fox Cities (board co-chair), BLUME Haiti (board member and webmaster), Friends of Appleton Public Library (board member), and Fox Cities Online.

Carolyn's love of music and passion for community involvement came together when she traveled to Haiti in the summer of 2008. Inspired by Lawrence University cello professor Janet Anthony, who has been teaching in Haiti since 1996, Carolyn spent two months teaching at music camps in Leogane and Jacmel, Haiti. The dedication of the students and teachers was remarkable. It was amazing to see that music was making a difference in a place of such hardship. It was a transforming experience, and one she will never forget. Carolyn has since made 8 trips to Haiti.

She hopes that the incredible stories of Haitian musicians and teachers featured in Kenbe La will inspire people to realize their ability to share their talents and strengths with others.

QUOTES

"This is a very good movie portraying how young Haitians, men as well as women, can come together via music to rebuild Haiti. Through the movie we can see how the earthquake shattered many buildings and took many lives away, but the ones who survived still show courage, strength, faith, and determination to face the challenges ahead of them. Hats off to the filmmakers that put focus on the strength of the young Haitians via music!"

-Jacques Pierre, Lecturer in Haitian Creole and Creole studies, Duke University

"Kenbe La-Hold On is an excellent teaching tool that illustrate music's importance in Haitian Society, and the empowerment music education provides for Haiti's youth."

-Mary Procopio, Associate Professor of Music, Mott Community College, Haitian scholar, ethnomusicologist and flutist

"Kenbe la is a poignant demystification of a complex and often misunderstood country. Students and educators need to see this extraordinary documentary. It paints a vivid picture--and records a unusually dynamic soundtrack--of a Haiti quite different from the Haiti most viewers probably think they know. With its focus on the everyday role of music education in Haiti, the film also devotes much needed attention to an underrepresented component of the country's social and musical landscape. The film succeeds marvelously in giving voice to Haitian musicians--to students, teachers, and administrators--who have profound things to say about music as a source of hope for Haiti in the face of tremendous hardship. The University of Chicago screening offered attendees an intimate look into the lives of individual Haitians working hard to preserve their dignity through musical participation. The directors did a fabulous of framing the film and explaining its broader social and political contexts."

-Melvin Butler, Assistant Professor of Music, University of Chicago, Jazz Saxophonist

PAST SCREENINGS

2013

Saturday July 6 7:00 pm Capitol Lakes, Madison, WI

Sunday June 9 7:00 pm- UW Madison School of Music, Madison, WI

Sunday June 9 3:00 pm- Bethel Lutheran Church, Madison, WI

Thursday April 4- Concord Conservatory of Music, Concord, MA

Tuesday Jan. 15 6:30 pm- [American Association of University Women](#) Appleton, WI

Friday Jan. 4 7:00 pm- Future Music Educator's Association Symposium, [Luther College](#), Decorah, Iowa

2012

Sunday Sept. 30 11:30 am- Haiti Symposium, [Lawrence University](#), Appleton, WI

Friday July 20 4:00 pm- Corps de Christ Summer Camp, Leogane, Haiti

Friday April 20 7:00 pm-[Pathways Theater First Congregational United Church of Christ](#) Appleton, WI

Thursday April 12 5:30 pm- [Duke University](#)- Durham, NC

Thursday April 5 4:30 pm- [Macalester College -Saint Paul, MN](#)

Wednesday March 7 4:30 pm - Marquette University for "*Haiti 2012: pays rêvé pays réel*" Dreams and Reality. [Weasler Auditorium, Marquette University](#), Milwaukee, WI.

Thursday March 1 at 5:30- Indiana University of Pennsylvania-Indiana, PA
McVitty Auditorium

Wednesday Feb. 8 5:30pm -7:00pm - [University of Chicago](#), Chicago, IL

2011

Friday Nov. 18 2:00-4:00 pm- [The New School International Education Week](#)- New York, NY

Monday Nov. 14 at 7:00 pm, 2011 7:00-9:00 pm - [Warch Campus Center Cinema](#) - Appleton, WI

Saturday Nov. 12, 2011 12:00 pm- [Weyauwega International Film Festival](#)- Weyauwega, WI

October 26, 2011- 7:45 pm- [Plymouth State University](#)- Plymouth, NH

June 12, 2011 - 4:00 pm - [Jewlbox Theater](#) - Seattle, WA

June 5, 2011 - 7:00 pm - [Central Cinema](#) - Seattle, WA

January 16, 2011 - [Prarie Music Academy](#) - Sun Prarie, WI

January 12, 2011 - [Harmony Cafe](#) - Appleton, WI

2010

November 13, 2010 - [Brown University](#) - Providence, RI (work in progress)

November 9, 2010 - [The College of Lake County](#) - Grayslake, IL (work in progress)

September, 18 - [Warch Campus Center](#) - Appleton, WI (work in progress)

June, 8 - [Harmony Cafe](#) - Appleton, WI (work in progress)

June, 5 - [Phipps Center for the Arts](#) - Hudson, WI (work in progress)

May 11, 2010 - [Warch Campus Center](#) - Appleton, WI (work in progress)

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Directed by

Stephen Anunson (co-director)
Carolyn Desrosiers (co-director)

Produced by

Stephen Anunson (co-producer)
Carolyn Desrosiers (co-producer)
(aka *Bel Son Productions*)

Original Music by

Paul Karner
John Jost

Cinematography by

Stephen Anunson (co-cinematographer)
Carolyn Desrosiers (co-cinematographer)

Film Editing by

Stephen Anunson (co-editor)
Carolyn Desrosiers (co-editor)

Sound Department

Stephen Anunson sound editor
Sarah Davies boom operator