

SHEPPARTON News



WORKSHOP HITS THE RIGHT NOTE

Jonathan Safari, Mark Lomena and Byaruhanga Lopa have been involved in Heard Instinct, a music mentoring program run out of St Paul's African House, since its inception. Johnathan, a mentor, has been teaching Mark and Byaruhanga, who hope to one day become part of the music scene across the Goulburn Valley and release their own songs. For more Megan Fisher pictures, and to read the full story, turn to page 6.

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Budding musicians learn from experts

By Caitlin Cassidy

For the past month, St Paul's African House has come alive every Friday night as the sounds of Afrobeats, gospel and hip hop trickle down the corridors.

Heard Instinct, a contemporary movement of young people from First Nations, Pasifika and African backgrounds, have been running music mentoring workshops at the centre since March.

A partnership between Multicultural Arts Victoria and St Paul's African House, 10 young African people in the Goulburn Valley are taking part alongside the four supervising artists.

St Paul's African House partnerships and programs manager Kate Radevski said the series of workshops helped young people to develop skills in songwriting, collaborating and recording.

"The project will provide a space where young people can discuss ideas, issues



Variety: The group is combining instruments with vocals and dance.

and visions for the future and build their own artistry, confidence, abilities and networks," she said.

Music mentor Ree Peric said the participants — from as young as 12 up to 18 — were expanding their skills across piano, guitar, song, digital instruments and dance.

"The project is based with the African community - it's all about songwriting, creating new music and following a creative direction," she said.

"And we're in the stages



Helping out: Music mentors Ree Peric and Jonathan Safari with Baraka Lopa, Mark and Byarunanga.

now of organising performances and putting our songs together.

"We're on a good flow."

The culmination of the group's work will be a music performance at St Paul's Afri-

can House's 'Taste of African Cultures' event in May.

Music mentor and producer Jonathan Safari — as a young man of 20 himself — said it was rewarding to be part of the program and foster a new

generation of musicians.

"I'm just here helping the kids do what they love, and inspiring them to continue music," he said.

"Some of them were already thinking of doing

music long term and they'd been getting involved for awhile at church — but wanted to keep going.

"Which is why they keep coming — so they can see if they can get somewhere with their talent."

Mr Safari said he hoped the program would encourage Shepparton's young people to stay in the region as they grew older, and continue a rich tradition of music.

"In Shepp, there's not a huge music scene which is why they're getting closer to us — so they can get into the scene and get as much support as they can to keep going," he said.

"We're trying to get the music scene going — not just in Melbourne but in Shepparton as well.

"Going up in their careers, people move to Melbourne but we want to encourage them to stay here."

The eight music mentoring workshops will run until mid-May.