

“THUMB PIANO” MUSIC GROUP SAKAKI MANGO AND THE LIMBA TRAIN SOUND SYSTEM VISITS GAUTENG



Sakaki Mango holding a “Thumb Piano”

During the week of May 21 - 25, the Japanese “thumb piano” music group Sakaki Mango and the Limba Train Sound System visited Gauteng as part of their four nation African tour. When asked about the purpose of their tour, Mr. Sakaki replied, “We have come to Africa to be inspired by other performers and to improve on our own performance.” Such is their respect for African culture which is the root of their kind of music. The performances in Gauteng were co-organised by the Embassy of Japan in Pretoria, the Japan Foundation and African Synergy.

The leader of the group, Sakaki Mango, hails from Kagoshima Prefecture in southern Japan. He first came into contact with the African “thumb piano” at a festival in his hometown as a young boy. This prompted him to pursue his studies of Africa and African culture which included studying Swahili at Osaka University of Foreign Studies. Later he began research on the music of Tanzania. During this time, he travelled to Africa to receive direct training from the late Hukwe Ubi Zawose (the then leader of the Tanzanian National Theatre) on the limba.



School visit to Khensani Primary School in Shoshanguve

The group started their tour in Mozambique, where they performed at a music festival in Maputo. They then came to South Africa and did school visits and workshops in townships in Johannesburg and Pretoria.



Performance at Moyo - Fountains

In Johannesburg, they visited the Orlando Children’s Home in Soweto and the Japanese school in Emmerentia. In Pretoria, they were greeted with much enthusiasm at Boikgantsho Primary School in Mamelodi and Khensani Primary School in Shoshanguve. On Friday May 25th, they concluded their South African visit with a performance at the popular African eatery Moyo in Fountains Valley. They then moved on to Swaziland where they partook in the “Bushfire Music Festival” with their final stop being in Zimbabwe.