

Hi Robert,

I've now had a few weeks to process everything. Here are a few thoughts.

What are the needs now?

1. Organizing and labeling parts, tools etc. AND keeping them organized!
2. Cello racks and violin hangers
3. A list of proper tools required for each student. Acquiring these tools.
4. Proper sharpening techniques.
5. Training, Training, and more training!

Did you see anything of the instruments sent by Belgian LsF?

I saw only a few. They were very nice. Some had been set up and all were put in the store room below the shop.

Did you find the tools that I left there last summer?

There were quite a few tools, more than I expected. Two sets of reamers, and shapers for all instruments. High quality crack clamps for violin, even better than mine. I'm not sure which tools were brought by you, or Phil. I found the block plane you mentioned, but I brought the wrong blade. there was another block plane, and I brought a few more used ones. Not great, but usable. It would take me too long to inventory everything I brought down, but it was a lot. I loved the French repair manual. That was brilliant. I even learned a few things from that.

Some further thoughts and observations.

My first impression was that it was not as bad as I expected. Yours, Anna's, and Phil's description of the Atelier and what to expect help prepare me for what I was going into. Phil's input was particularly helpful since he had just come back the month before.

It was definitely disorganized. Most of the organizing we did on Tuesday was done with the men's initiative. Here are some thoughts on the organization. Violin racks hanging from the ceiling would be nice. another pegboard for tools. I brought small parts organizers which are perfect for bow parts, nuts saddles etc. but we didn't have time to actually organize the parts. Cello racks are essential. the cellos are just stacked willy nilly. They seem to be well supplied with parts, tools and strings. This may be because Philip Injeian had just visited. A comprehensive inventory of tools and parts would be a huge help. It would also be very time consuming. Most of this would fall on Ruby and Lundy.

Of course, there is not enough room. I don't think we can do much about that, but there are only two men working in the EMST shop. It was cozy with seven of us in that little space.

I'm not sure how much work these men actually do when they go home. Most of them don't even have the most basic tools. The schools they work for don't have huge programs, and I think they may only do violin work occasionally.

Creole was fairly easy to pick up. Most of the men had some English. I wish I spoke Creole better. I hit a wall after a few days and went into language coma. I couldn't speak anything.

There is a need for a sharpening system, perhaps a Tormek, or at least a bench grinder. They need to know how to properly sharpen tools. I spent a good part of Wednesday teaching some very basic sharpening. I was surprised they didn't have any flat chisels. I brought a few, but not nearly enough for everyone.

I'm concerned about follow up. Will the tools disappear? Will they keep things sharp and organized. Will they use the skills they've learned?

I knew I would not have enough time to accomplish much. I expected to be frustrated because there is so much to do. I was mostly interested in getting as many facts together and seeing the situation first hand. So I am not upset that I couldn't accomplish more.

I was surprised to learn that the music schools we discussed are not affiliated. I was under the impression EMST, Cemuchca Institut de Musique, the school in Aux Cayes, and Ecole De Musique Dessaix-Baptiste were all run by St Trinite. I didn't find out otherwise until I had a very long discussion with Janet on Thursday. This all of a sudden made the situation more complicated. Instead of dealing with one umbrella organization we have four separate music schools. This raised the questions: To whom do I give the violins? How shall I split up the tools? Who owns these tools and violins? I went with your suggestion. Any multiples of parts and tools were split up amongst the different schools. I made sure that the EMST Atelier in Petionville had first priority. Many of the instruments and bows I brought down were at Janet Anthony's request. These were private donations brought by me and my friends. These instruments Janet took, and the rest we left at EMST and various orphanages affiliated with my friends who traveled with me. Until this time I was not fully aware of Per David's kindness and grace in opening his school. They went out of there way to make us comfortable. They supplied us with a large white "Obama bus" for transport. Brought in bunk beds, and prepared wonderful lunches. He didn't need to do this, but opened up the school for all the repairmen.

What do you think is the best way forward for us as LsF UK in Haiti?

smaller class size. Greater teacher to pupil ratio. Teams of makers teaching each school equipped with basic tools and supplies for instrument repair.

A larger space for group instruction. Perhaps Jacmel (Janet's suggestion).

One or two talented Haitians to train in another country.

Janet mentioned there is an open invitation for free tuition at the Chicago Violin Making School as long as they can come up with living expenses. Not easy for a Haitian.

Perhaps a long term visit (1-3 months) investing in two or three talented repair men.

Attending Students

Alland Lamour

from Jacmel

Hylaris Garfield aka Tchupi phone 38682050

from cap Haitian

Joseph Roosevelt aka Ruby phone 6253723 ruinestar@yahoo.fr

from Port au Prince

Cleveland Williams aka Lundy

from Port au prince

Pierre Michelet phone 39299696 Pmichelet13@yahoo.fr

Lives at EMST

Cassius Reginald phone 34843598 casseusreginald@yahoo.fr

From Aux Cayes

Most of these men are friends on facebook

Overall my experience was positive. I absolutely loved the country and it's people despite the obvious problems. I felt we all got along well, and everyone had a good attitude. They were attentive, but also a bit bored at times from not having the tools to do the work. When bored they found something to work on and went at it without hesitation. I really enjoyed everyones company and only wish I had more time to get to know them better.

I would very much like to continue working in Haiti. Please include me in any future plans. I feel very honored to have had this opportunity and want to thank LSF for all your prep work and support. I received much more than I brought.