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THE BEST FROM THE FESTS AND TOURS TODAY COMPILED BY Aeve Baldwin

## 25TH CELEBRATION OF THE LAKE EDEN ARTS FESTIVAL October 19-21, 2007 ★

Camp Rockmont, Black Mountain, NC WORDS BY Jenny Roth PHOTOGRAPHY BY Brad Hodge

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**T**he Lake Eden Arts Festival (LEAF), set amidst the Blue Ridge Mountains, aims to connect cultures and form community through music and arts. But LEAF is more than just a festival: It is a bond that links music, the arts and education into one package.

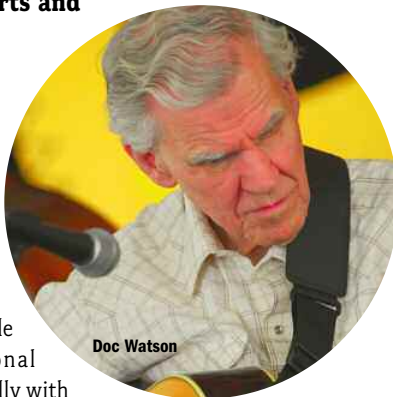
The eclectic assortment of sounds found at the festival had traveled widely, bringing music from across the globe to just one stage. The music ranged from the African beats of **The Mizero Children's Troupe of Rwanda** to the fusion of punk, reggae and ska that **Fishbone** spat, to Japanese drumming from the **Kiyoshi Nagata Ensemble**, the world-conscious hip-hop of **Michael Franti** (who performed a solo-acoustic set) and stories told by bluegrass legend **Doc Watson**.

Beyond music, spiritual advisors read astrology, **The Hunab Kru Breakdancers** challenged their own physical limits, **Mizilca** trained future belly dancers and **The Jabali African Acrobats of Kenya** took to the stage. Healing arts, Thai massage, henna tattoos, poetry slams and dance workshops were some of the many arts celebrated. Others soared through the trees on a zip line, kayaked, canoed or swam in the lake, flew on a trapeze, sat down to a challenging game of chess or partook in sweaty yoga practices.

The LEAF in Schools and Streets program sends performing artists into local schools

and communities as mentors to children in hands-on workshops and activities with the goal of empowering youth through celebratory arts, while LEAF International matches kids globally with instruments and mentors. LEAF children performed alongside their mentors, belly dancing, African drumming, break-dancing and performing poetry.

The Mizero Children's Troupe of Rwanda consists of 12 children who represent the one million children orphaned in the 1994 Rwandan genocide. These children show incredible resilience, and it was magic to watch them perform onstage. Knowing they were being recognized brought smiles to their faces; tears streamed down the cheeks of many who held

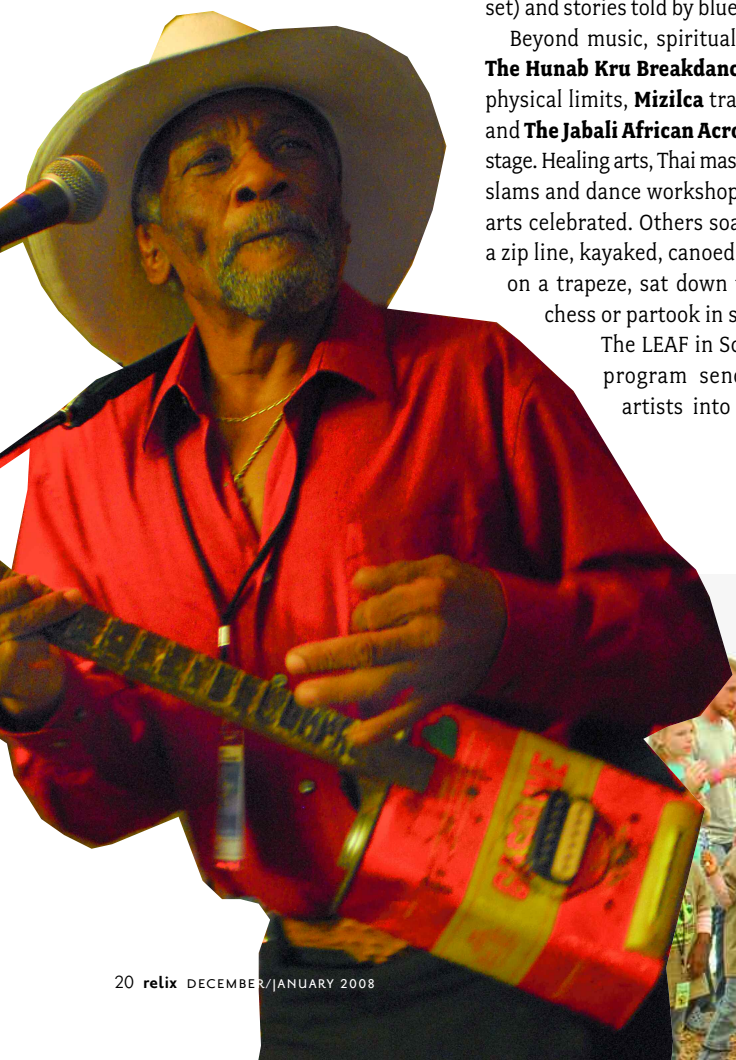


Doc Watson



Kid's Stage impromptu performance

IMHOTEP African Drums with the LEAF in Schools and Streets Program



Mac Arnold and Plate Full o' Blues



Mizero Children



Michael Franti



Family of boaters



Green Bean String Band

hands with the children as they danced with the crowd.

The Mizero Children's Troupe has embarked on its first U.S. and Canadian tour, launched at LEAF. They will be performing for the next two months across the country, raising awareness and funds for Rwandan orphans. Visit [www.mizerochildren.org](http://www.mizerochildren.org) to find out more on these amazing children.

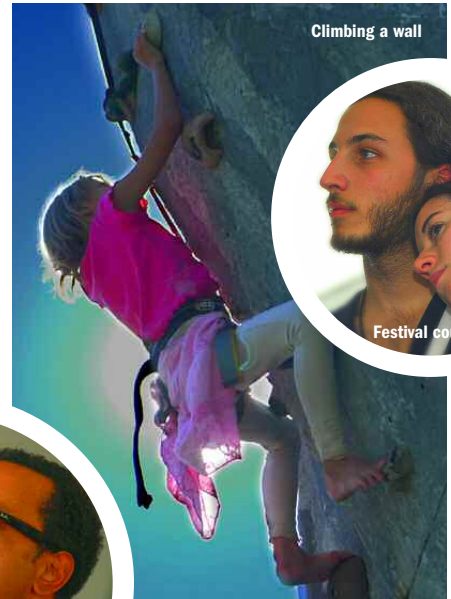
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**“LEAF brings light to the scene and gives darkness back to the night.”** — Jeff Charles, comparing LEAF to other festivals

**“The Children of Rwanda were side by side with LEAF spectators watching Japanese drumming. We are bringing worlds together!”** — Jennifer Pickering, LEAF International

**“This is our little secret. Can't you see why?”** — Elizabeth Packer, LEAFer

**“We don't want to leave here!” “We don't want to either!”**  
— One of the Jabali African Acrobats of Kenya to the audience and its ensuing response



Climbing a wall



Festival couple



Pickin' on the Brookside Dance Hall lawn



Jabali African Acrobats



John Boutte



The Lake Eden Zip Line



Mizero Children