

## **Kasàlà poetry or the art of celebrating a person's life**

Attending a recital of kasàlà poetry is a magical experience. At least this is what was confirmed by those present at the recital, given by the Cercle des poètes (Circle of Poets) from the Montérégie area of Quebec, on Sunday, January 22, at Maison Jésus-Marie.

Accompanied by Pascal Bonneau who, while in Ghana, studied the djembé, a type of African drum, several members of the Cercle des poètes (Circle of Poets) from the Montérégie, presented their compositions which true to the African oral art form of kasàlà were very personal works.



### **Celebrating a person's life**

The kasàlà stems from the principle of valuing oneself or another. "In this African art, the proclamation of one's own kasàlà brings inner strength to the hearts of others. The use of "I" in this practice is acceptable because it is an "I" which is greater than the person. It is the expression of our belonging to something greater than any of us and yet common to all of us." \*

Twenty years ago, Jean Kabuta, originally from the Congo became the first person to teach the kasàlà abroad. Together with his animators Jean used this art form to give people a sense of self-esteem.

They recognized how these poetic and musical rituals affected the subconscious and transformed people.

In their research, the members of the Cercle des poètes (Circle of Poets) from the Montérégie discovered the various benefits of the kasàlà, not just the experience of ritual and beauty, but the Kasàlà's liberating and transforming capacity to open oneself to a wider world, while giving to all their legitimate place in this world.

They also came to appreciate the main types of Kasàlà:

- Kasàlà focusing on of self
- Kasàlà focusing on others
- Kasàlà focusing on self-derision, etc.

Beyond the poetic texts which are always very personal, there is the musical aspect. And so, the artist Pascal Bonneau masterfully accompanied the poets on his "djembé", an African drum with beautiful sound. He also provided an on-going commentary deeply appreciated by the audience. Cercle des poètes de la Montérégie (Circle of Poets from the Montérégie)



We are reminded that the Cercle des poètes de la Montérégie (Circle of Poets from the Montérégie) was established in 1989 by René Boulianne and Michelle Michaux and consists of a maximum of 30 members. While concerned with its development and its influence, this organization aims to "contribute to enriching our heritage using language as a primary resource."

In this global perspective, members of the Circle are constantly pushing the boundaries by exploring forms of expression from different cultures. After this experience with the kasàlà (a Congolese word), the poets of the Circle will set out, in 2017, to discover the Amerindian culture.

The poetry recital on January 22nd was part of the program of activities organized at Maison Jésus-Marie by the committee headed by Sisters Maryse Moisan and Gisèle Lalande.

[Photos of the event – Photo credits – Sister Gisèle Lalande](#)

[\\*Reference: You can read and enjoy a kasàlà poem, in French.](#)

<http://www.snjm.qc.ca/cms/article-2-1415-kasala-poetry-or-the-art-of-celebrating-a-person-s-life.html>