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Tucson has a broad community of musicians, cultural enthusiasts, and students interested in the rich musical heritage of Pernambuco, yet the opportunities to learn from teachers native to the region are very rare. As an independent community liaison, I spent the last season contacting leaders of local culture groups who wished to share a learning experience from Mestre Nininho. We felt very fortunate to host Mestre Nininho in Tucson as part of his cultural exchange tour in the United States this year.

The Tucson community was fortunate to hold 3 workshops with Nininho and his student Derek Wright from September 29<sup>th</sup> to October 1<sup>st</sup> 2012. Nininho conducted two workshops exclusively on *maracatu* and its rich history. Attendees included members of the capoeira, Afro-inspired dance, and University world music communities. All ages were welcome, however the Monday night workshop, was dedicated to middle and high school music students who offered their own concert in honor of Nininho at their neighborhood community center. This was their gesture of gratitude and invitation for a master's critique after their first opportunity to learn from such an enthusiastic Mestre.

Nininho's knowledge of *maracatu* and ability to share this with a diverse audience of people was an inspiration. All who took his workshops left with a good idea of the depth and richness in *maracatu* as a style of music, along with a clear desire for more opportunity to deepen this understanding.

The communities who stand to benefit from future interactions with Nininho in and around the Tucson area are many. We harbor scattered pockets of Brazilian cultural enthusiasts ranging from capoeiristas, dance teachers, music students, samba dancers, and small Maracatu bands. Nininho and Derek's visit provided us with an invaluable and unified learning experience.

All who participated are eager to repeat and expand this cultural exchange in the coming years.

Salud,

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