

The World Sends Us Garbage. We Send Back Music. - Landfill Harmonic

Source: treehugger.com

Published: April 4, 2013



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When resourcefulness, creativity, passion, and inspiration meet, there is always the possibility that amazing things can happen, even in the most unlikely of spots. In a place where poverty and despair and struggle and massive amounts of waste are a daily occurrence, one teacher is transforming lives with a unique and inspiring program.

In Cateura, Paraguay, residents essentially live on top of a landfill, and many of them make their living by sorting through the trash in order to find items to sell or refurbish. Poverty keeps kids at risk there for its handmaidens of crime, gangs, drugs, and violence, and hope is not an easy thing to come by.

But when a passionate teacher in the Cateura begins music classes, and quickly ends up with more students than instruments for them to play, an incredible chain of events is put into motion, with trash being turned into instruments, and kids from the slums being turned into an orchestra.



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Favio Chávez is the music teacher behind "La Orquesta de Instrumentos Reciclados de Cateura", which grew out of a recycling program he was working on at Cateura. When he met Nicolás "Cola" Gómez, a garbage picker and luthier, they began creating instruments out of the trash in the landfull, turning oil drums into cellos, pipes into flutes, and packing crates into guitars.

With the help and support of the community, Favio and Cola ended up putting together an entire orchestra of kids playing instruments made from recycled and repurposed materials found in the landfill, and the Recycled Orchestra program has brought hope and inspiration to many.

This heartfelt story has the potential to bring about a much bigger social transformation, with its twin threads of recycling and education being capable of being woven into many other communities. Thanks to the work of Alejandra Amarilla Nash and Juliana Penaranda-Loftus, the journey of Favio and Cola and the children of the Recycled Orchestra is being turned into both a full length documentary and a social movement.

watch video [landfill harmonica](#)

"Our film shows how trash and recycled materials can be transformed into beautiful sounding musical instruments, but more importantly, it brings witness to the transformation of precious human beings." - Landfill Harmonic



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Like many great ventures, Landfill Harmonic is in need of some help to achieve its goals, and that's where you come in. Right now, [the project is live on Kickstarter](#), with the initial aim being

to fund the rest of the filming, and [a stretch goal](#) to send the Recycled Orchestra on a worldwide tour of music and inspiration.

The campaign has only been running for a couple of days, but has already raised over \$50,000 toward its initial goal of \$175,000. Chip in if you'd like to see this amazing program increase its reach worldwide.

You can also help by donating an instrument:

"We have set up an instruments bank in Phoenix, AZ. We would gladly receive your instrument here and given the opportunity, send it to the Orchestra. Also, we would like to let you know that since this project has touched so many people in different parts of the world, the orchestra is looking forward to institute similar programs in other communities around the globe. Therefore, your instruments could end up in the hands of a child in Haiti, or Kenya."

When I first saw the trailer for this film, I was blown away by how much had been accomplished in these lives with access to so few resources, and I think it speaks volumes about the human spirit and the incredible effects of a great teacher. [Please join me in supporting Landfill Harmonic.](#)
