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**Giving Season Newsletter
(2025)**

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Report on the Summer 2025 Cigogo Festival

In late July of 2025, Chamwino Ikulu (village) hosted its 16th annual Cigogo Festival. Over 10,000 people, both villagers and visitors, attended the festival. There were a thousand artists in all, each one belonging to one or another of the 50 traditional Wagogo music and dance groups.

While nine groups originated from Chamwino, another 45 groups arrived from outside the Dodoma region, Tanzania's capitol city, and another five groups came from outside of Dodoma.

These groups performed their creativity and innovation in music-making, dancing, and the visual arts, much to the delight of their audiences. Many participatory events were also scheduled, with the invitation to audience members to join in on the singing, dancing, and merry-making.



Upcoming Summer 2026 Cigogo Festival: July 24-26, 2026

No sooner had the 2025 Cigogo Festival concluded its joyful celebration than the staff and board of Chamwino Arts Center started preparations for the 17th annual festival.

Next year's festival is set for three days, **July 24-26, 2026**, with the aim of featuring not only Wagogo local music and dance but also a diversity of Tanzanian traditional performing groups.

As in the past, the 2026 festival will offer not only adults but also children and youth many opportunities to share their songs, dances, and instrumental music for large and appreciative audiences. The 2026 festival will also feature exhibitions, film screenings, workshops, and tourism activities in the nearby capitol city of Dodoma.

All are welcome to the festival.



Steering the Course for Chamwino Arts Center

Naamala Samson is “leading the pack” and doing “wonder-work” as the new Managing Director for Chamwino Arts Center. His education includes a master’s degree in Theatre Arts and a Bachelor of Fine and Performing Arts from the University of Dar Es Salaam.

With his strategic management experience with BRAC (formerly *Building Resources Across Communities*) Tanzania Finance Limited, Naamala is putting his experience to work as he moves the Chamwino Arts Center forward.

He has already found strong sponsors, both local and international, for the 2025 Cigogo Music Festival, and has a clear proposal for more to come in the 2026 festival. Both staff and board of Chamwino Arts Center appreciate the added energy and ideas of Naamala Samson.



A Glimpse of Tanzania

Chamwino is the Tanzanian village of the Chamwino Arts Center, and the site of the Cigogo Festival. Located in Sub-Saharan East Africa, the eastern border of Tanzania is the Indian Ocean.

The United Republic of Tanzania is home to a population of 120 ethnic-cultural, linguistic, and religious groups. English is spoken in the cities of Dar es Salaam and Dodoma, and is taught in schools, while Swahili remains the official national language.

Christianity is widespread in Tanzania. Additionally, Muslims are also prominent (and Arabic is widely spoken, too) in coastal areas and on the large island of Zanzibar.

Tanzania draws many tourists to enjoy Mount Kilimanjaro, the beaches, lakes, and waterfalls. The diversity of animals living in Tanzania's Serengeti National Park and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area is nearly unparalleled, including wildebeest, cheetah, giraffe, lion, leopard, hippopotamus, elephant, and zebra.

Tanzania is well worth the long journey from North America: It is a beautiful adventure, with friendly people, and the promise of experiencing some of the finest music and dance anywhere on the planet.



Wagogo Musical Instruments that Shake

The Cigogo Music Festival draws many singers, dancers and instrumentalists to Chamwino. Among the Wagogo instruments played are a variety of shakers (also known as Kayamba). These include flat box shakers made from reeds, or from metal sheets (often cans that have been flattened) crimped together and filled with pebbles or seeds. There are also round shakers on sticks, made from cans, also filled with pebbles or seeds.





Be a Friend of Chamwino Arts Center

Do consider becoming a “Friend of Chamwino ArtsCenter”

Monthly donations (for example, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$100) are welcome by the people of Chamwino, Tanzania, in support of their annual Cigogo Music Festival and various projects through the year.

Your Donation of \$10 monthly amounts to \$120 annually and pays for these things:

- 12 visits by Gogo musicians to schools
- 9 recording sessions of Gogo folk tales by elder Gogo storytellers

- Seminars for village musicians on arts management for their sustainable development
- Transportation by CAC staff to village rehearsals, and village musicians to the festival
- One cow for a Gogo festival meal (to feed 40 villagers for 3 days)
- Books and magazines for Chamwino's village secondary school library

Visit the Chamwino Connect website www.chamwinoconnect.org and consider signing up for a monthly donation for the sustainability of Gogo culture through music, the arts, and education. From the people of Chamwino, Tanzania, and the Chamwino Connect board, thank you for your generosity!





We are committed to preserving
the spirit and culture of Tanzania.
Part of that work includes
fundraising. Please join us.

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