



RED CEDAR
CHAMBER
MUSIC

April 17 (Wednesday) 7 p.m.
Central City Public Library, Central City

April 18 (Thursday) 7 p.m.
Oaknoll, Iowa City

April 19 (Friday) 1:30 p.m.
Village Place, Marion

April 19 (Friday) 7 p.m.
Ainsworth Opera House, Ainsworth

April 20 (Saturday) 7 p.m.
Marengo Library, Marengo

April 23 (Tuesday) 7:30 p.m.
Kirkwood Community College,
Ballantyne Auditorium, Cedar Rapids

April 24 (Wednesday) 7 p.m.
Lowe Park, Marion

April 25 (Tuesday) 2 p.m.
Highland Ridge, Williamsburg

April 25 (Tuesday) 7 p.m.
Williamsburg Library, Williamsburg

April 26 (Friday) 2:30 p.m.
Meth-Wick Community, Cedar Rapids

April 27 (Saturday) 7 p.m.
St. Paul's United Methodist Church,
Cedar Rapids

April 28 (Sunday) 3 p.m.
Congregational United Church of Christ,
Iowa City

2024

IOWA ARTS COUNCIL
IOWA DEPARTMENT of CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Voyagers

The Wedding of William and Mairi Scottish Trad. (arr. Thorp)
The Derry Air Irish Traditional (arr. Thorp)
Kemp's Jig English Traditional (arr. Thorp)

Hush Harbor (2023) *
Trad. Gullah/Geechee Spirituals arr. Lauren McCall
(b. 1986)

Grecian Suite (2023) * Jimmy Kachulis
1. Karsilamas (b. 1951)
2. Turning Zembekiko
3. Mandilatos

Echoes of America (2023) * Victoria Malawey
(b. 1977)

Dà Xi (2023) * Roydon Tse
(b. 1991)

Tango Nostalgia (2021) Hirono Borter
(b. 1987)

Zèjèl (2023) * Wajdi Abou Diab
(b. 1991)

* *World premiere*

*Artist Sponsorship is generously provided by
ImOn Communications and Juanita Dennert*



Composers' notes:

Hush Harbor

Hush Harbor is a duet for violin and cello that incorporates the Gullah spirituals *Ef Ye Want to See Jesus* and *How Did You Feel?* The first song is associated with the seekin' experience. This is a religious rite of passage for Gullah teenagers that is an amalgamation of ancestral West African initiation rites and the teachings about a significant wilderness journey in the Christian faith. The second song is included because it signifies a coming out of the wilderness. Both songs originated in the Saint Helena Island Gullah communities in South Carolina, and the second song came to be used to signify freedom from slavery, and it found importance during the civil rights movement.

I felt it was essential to include these two songs together because it connects to the storytelling traditions within my culture and because these songs together show the journey many of us make through difficult times to being able to get out of them. The title of this arrangement is *Hush Harbor* because it signifies a secret place where African Americans during the slave trade could gather, express their grief in wilderness journeys, share hope with each other, and safely practice a combination of their African religious traditions with Christianity. – L.M.

Grecian Suite

The Grecian Suite is based on a selection of melodic ideas and rhythms from the wealth of traditional Greek songs and dances. The irregular, odd meters are either danced in circle, with a leader doing more intricate steps, or by a solo dancer, who then selects the next dancer to respond to their challenge. The scales, that may be new to many in the audience, are referred to as “roads” – an apt description of a journey through the many, and varied, emotions depicted.

Karsilamas is one of the most common “belly-dance” rhythms of the Mediterranean basin and the Middle East. Although it's often danced by a solo dancer, at a large communal celebration it's also danced by the entire community.

Turning Zembekiko is a “Leaping” dance from Northern Greece created by the Zembeks native to that region. The solo dancer usually improvises intricate, almost ballet-like movements while the other dancers, kneel and clap the rhythm, while waiting their turn to show off. The middle section changes to the hypnotic Tsamiko rhythm, a circle dance that also affords the leader a chance to show off their skill for the others.

Mandilatos is a fast circle dance from central Greece. It's usually danced in a circle in the village square. The leader at the head of the circle often improvises more intricate steps, challenging the circle to keep the basic movements going. – J.K.

Echoes of America

This duet combines and weaves motives from seven different tunes that—to me—represent American folk music. By juxtaposing and superimposing motives from these familiar tunes, I aim to create new extramusical meanings, reflecting the complexities of what it might mean to be a product of persistent settler colonialism in the United States, what it means to be patriotic, and what it means to be part of systemic oppression and white supremacy. I write from my perspective and upbringing as a white, queer, Midwestern American, conditioned as female—a subject position that at once benefits from these systems of power while also being oppressed by them. There is a part of me that is patriotic in that I believe in what “we the people” purport to believe—in freedom of speech and expression, freedom of religion, freedom to assemble, and the right to pursue happiness. Yet our American history is a troubled one, rife with the forced exile and murder of indigenous people, an economy built on human trafficking and enslavement, state sanctioned violence against persons of color, and the continued oppression of exploited human beings and their descendants. My intention for this piece is to express the tensions between these purported American values and the terrible truths of our history.

To this end, musically, a persistent emphasis on the pitch D4 is perhaps suggestive of the incessant undercurrent of our complex and troubled history, while explicit and more oblique references to fragmented motives from the following songs appear and disappear from the piece's relentless surface:

“Yellow Rose of Texas” (1858)

“When Johnny Comes Marching Home” (1863)

“Red River Valley” (1890)

“America, the Beautiful” (1893)

“God Bless America” (1918)

Woody Guthrie, “This Land Is Your Land” (1945)

I learned all of these songs as a young person in elementary school so their associations run deep within me. The Civil War songs (“Yellow Rose of Texas” and “When Johnny Comes Marching Home”) recall a particularly troubled

(Echoes of America, cont.)

time in our country's history. Combining material from those with motives from songs I was taught to represent patriotism ("America, the Beautiful" and "God Bless America") and motives from what I later learned to be a protest song ("This Land is Your Land") seems to me rife with expressive potential to create new meaning, one that might get at the ineffable complexity of what it might mean to be an American. In addition, there is an added layer of personal meaning to me, making a nod to nostalgia for childhood—learning these songs in my early formative years at school and singing these songs around a player piano in my home as a child. – V.M.

Dà Xi

"Dà Xi" (大戲), translated as "large scale spectacle" is the Chinese term for Cantonese opera. My piece explores the rich tropes and traditions found in art form through the lens of contemporary chamber music. Growing up in Hong Kong, I remember fondly many Cantonese opera performances in local theatres featuring loud singing, percussive drumming, and colorful costumes. My piece is a playful reimagination of some tropes found in Cantonese 大戲 framed in two sections. It opens with a dramatic introduction in the de drama facto Cantonese style where repeated instrumental gestures speed up and build in momentum, ending with a gong or percussive hit. The second section (B) is a fast scherzo exploring the heterophonic texture found in the instrumental music of Cantonese opera – one characterized by multiple variations of the same melodic line intertwined with one another – in a busy dialogue between the instruments. The word 大戲, akin to another Chinese term 遊戲 meaning "games," sets the tone for the final section, where both instruments engage in playful imitation. Even with a limited pitch palette (traditional tunes revolve exclusively around pentatonic scales), richness in the art form is achieved through variations in texture, melodic portamenti, and rhythmic propulsion. I hope my piece can give listeners a glimpse into this tradition which is sadly on the decline during a time of cultural and political change. – R.T.

Zèjèl

Inspired by the Lebanese Zèjèl (زَجَل) which is a semi-improvised, semi-sung, or declaimed form of poetry in the colloquial Lebanese Arabic dialect. Zèjèl has close ties in prosody, delivery, form, and spirit with various semi-sung colloquial poetry traditions. Famous for the verbal duel, it uses a "Dèf" (similar to a tambourine) and a chanting chorus of men (Rèddèdi (رَدَّادِي)) who repeat key verses or refrains recited by the poets. The poets (Zèjjèl (زَجَّال) or šè' ér (شاعر)) express themselves either individually or collectively on a variety of themes including life, love, nostalgia, death, politics, and daily events. The poets declaim verses, often in the form of challenges, which are then repeated by the singers and audience. These verbal exchanges evoke the beauty of Lebanon, the importance of tolerance, dialogue between communities and religions, and the right to difference. This piece reflects the prosodies of the poems used in Zèjèl and its different types while introducing many Arabic traditional music elements such as Mèqèmet (مقامات), Zènni (زينة), and Mèwwèl (موال). It also goes deep into the structure of the "Mhèmès Mèqloub" (مخمّس مقلوب), which have a complex structure of repeated and inverted phrases, in addition to symbolizing the challenges between the poets by dialogues between the two instruments, and recalls some variations on the melodies used when poets recite their poems or when the chorus repeats the refrains. – W.A.D.



Carey Bostian, cellist, is the Artistic Director of Red Cedar Chamber Music. As an educator and performer, he sees himself as a storyteller, and presents music—new and old—in an innovative cultural and historical context whenever possible. Having premiered and commissioned hundreds of new works, he is committed to promoting the music of living composers. Carey holds a DMA in cello performance and an MFA in orchestral conducting from the University of Iowa. For two decades, Carey was Principal Cellist of Orchestra Iowa, leaving the position in 2015 to become Artistic Director of RCCM. He has been conductor of the Iowa City Community String Orchestra since 1998, and teaches cello privately. He also serves on the conducting faculty at the Preucil School of Music. Carey alternates between a 1922 Giuseppe Pedrazzini and a Giovita Rodiani cello made before 1622.



Miera Kim, violinist, is the Executive Director of Red Cedar Chamber Music. An Iowa native, she began her violin studies with Doris Preucil at the Preucil School of Music at age seven. Miera was a longtime titled player in both Orchestra Iowa and the Quad Cities Symphony and is in high demand as a teacher, clinician, and chamber musician across the region. She has also served as a grant panelist for the Iowa Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts. Miera studied with Allen Ohmes at the University of Iowa and Jascha Brodsky at the Curtis Institute of Music. She plays a 1735 Nicolò Gagliano violin.



Hirono Borter is a Japanese composer and violinist, based in the U.S. With her husband, Philip, she performs as violinist in Duo-B, a violin/cello ensemble dedicated to promoting and expanding the string duo repertory. Hirono frequently composes and arranges music influenced from a variety of eras and genres. The ensemble's most recent project included the release of an album of original arrangements of tangos by Astor Piazzolla, which eventually led to concert tours in Italy, Japan, and across the U.S.



Wajdi Abou Diab, an artistic visionary hailing from Lebanon, draws inspiration from his dual cultural background in Arabic Levantine and Western classical music. born in Lebanon in 1991 and graduated from the Lebanese National Higher Conservatory of Music (LNHCM) with diplomas in Piano and Music Composition. In addition, Wajdi is an alumnus of EAMA (Paris – France 2023), Re.Music academy (Moscow – Russia 2023), Plucomp (French Compte – France 2023), Puccini International Opera course (Luca – Italy 2021), YES Academy (Lebanon 2019-2021), and he is currently pursuing his Master's degree in Musicology of tradition from Antonin University under the supervision of Professor Nidaa Bou Mrad.



Jimmy Kachulis is an internationally recognized, award-winning composer, songwriter, educator, scholar, and performer. His composition career has run the gamut from Concert Music blending World Music and European forms, to Jazz, R&B, and Emmy Award-winning TV shows. He has also performed and recorded with legendary Jazz, World Music, R&B, and Early Music artists. Professor Kachulis has authored educational material for the world renowned Berklee College of Music, Berklee Online, Berklee Press, as well as Tufts University, The Boston Conservatory, and Emerson College. In his Ethnomusicological research, he has discovered previously unknown polyphonic, harmonic, melodic, rhythmic and structural aspects of traditional African music. In addition, he has studied many of the World's musics in depth.



Victoria Malawey is a composer, singer-songwriter, and scholar based in the Twin Cities. Her music has been performed at venues throughout the world. Driven by the belief that art makes the world a better place and fortifies community, Malawey strives to create music that soothes and heals, provides catharsis from pain, and articulates the ineffable aspects of the human condition. Recent commissions include pieces for MPLS (imPulse), the Thirsty Ears Audio Tour, the Sound of Silent Film, the William Ferris Chorale, Open House Chicago, the Black Cedar Trio, and the ARK Trio. More at victoriamalawey.com.



Lauren McCall is a composer and educator from Atlanta, Georgia. She studies music technology at the Georgia Institute of Technology and is an alumni of the Vermont College of Fine Arts, where she studied music composition. Lauren is an active music educator developing curriculum for the websites EarSketch and TunePad through her graduate research assistantship at Georgia Tech. Lauren has had compositions performed around North America and in Europe. This includes her piece for piano, *Shake the Earth*, her arrangement of the spiritual *I'm Troubled*, and her graphic score composition *The Fish Wife*. Along with composing, Lauren also enjoys playing classical music and jazz on the clarinet and piano, spending time with family and friends, and traveling.



Named one of CBC Music's Top "30 under 30" Canadian Classical Musicians (2017), **Dr. Roydon Tse** is an award-winning composer and educator based in Toronto. His music, for orchestral, vocal and chamber forces, has been commissioned & performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Esprit Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic, the Atlanta Opera, Verona Quartet, and members of the Paris Opera and La Scala Orchestras, among others. Born in Hong Kong and now based in Calgary, Roydon was a teaching artist for the Canadian Opera Company and is a resident faculty for the Lunenburg Academy of Music Composition Program. He is the winner of the 2023 Johanna Metcalf Performing Arts Prize.

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