

the society for
ethnomusicology

presents

The 2017 Robert M. Stevenson Prize Concert
Friday October 27, 10:00-11:00PM
Executive Room, Denver Marriott City Center Hotel

PROGRAM

Terra Libertatis		Katelyn Best
	Nikki Schommer, voice Katelyn Best, voice Ellen Waterman, flute Miriam Gerberg, piano Michael Bakan, percussion	
Kurd		Michael Frishkopf
	SEM Orchestra	
Crane Songs	2017 Stevenson Prize winning composition Rhianna Fairchild, violin Mei - Mey Seguirá, violin	Cydonie Banting
Ben Buzi		Miriam Gerberg
	SEM Orchestra	
Best Be	2015 Stevenson Prize winning composition	Charles Lwanga
Peñaflor		Alex Rodriguez
	SEM Orchestra	

SEM Orchestra: Scott Currie, director; Katelyn Best, publicist
Performers: Katelyn Best, voice; Scott Currie, saxophone; Noé Dinnerstein, electric sitar;
Miriam Gerberg, piano/flute; Michael Frishkopf, piano/nay/percussion; Charles Lwanga,
djembe; Alex Rodriguez, trombone; Nikki Schommer, voice; Ellen Waterman, flute;

PROGRAM NOTES

Terra Libertatis, which translates from Latin as “land of the free,” provides a range of historical and contemporary snapshots of American immigration and feelings of belonging in the United States. Using Woody Guthrie’s text “This land is your land, this land is my land,” as the

structural foundation and inspiration for the lyrics, this composition presents a diverse and varied picture of what it means to be American. Drawing textually from Woody Guthrie, Emma Lazarus, Katherine Lee Bates, and Francis Scott Key, this piece aims to counter negative rhetoric on immigration in America and serve as a reminder of the sacrifices made by individuals of varying ethnicities who, as Americans, fought for freedom, equality, and justice for all. For assistance with translations, I would like to thank Tom Bolin (Latin), Heather Paudler (Spanish), and Kelsey Brickl (Irish). Musical and textual inspiration for this piece came from Woody Guthrie, Emma Lazarus, Katharine Lee Bates, Samuel A. Ward, Charles Albert Tindley, Francis Scott Key, John Stafford Smith, and Omnimusica (Vivianne Asturizaga, Michael Bakan, David Cobb, Haiqiong Deng, Jason Mitchell, Andre Fludd, John O’Keefe, Holly Riley, and Nikki Schommer). To view an online recording of this piece accompanied by pictures and closed captions, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08nW1nVtgOs>

Spanish verse translation:

You say, “This land is your land” You say, “This land is my land.”
But why do you ask me “Where are you from?” when this is my homeland?
I want to see the unity of the United States, not for some but for all.
I want to see equality, not just on paper but in reality, for everyone in the nation.

Irish verse translation:

“Together we are going across the sea. Freedom, come and fill our longing for Ireland.”

Kurd is a neo-takht composition, a musical evocation of the "dignity of difference" through free heterophony in *maqam* Kurd, originally composed for a conference of the same name.

Crane Songs (2017 Stevenson Prize winning composition) is a duet for two violins that seeks to make them sound like one large instrument. Whilst the title may evoke the mechanistic associations of the word Crane, the music does not. Rather, the reference is to the national symbol of Uganda; the Crested Crane inhabits marshland at the margins of lakes and rivers and these birds are monogamous, pairing for life. Indeed, the violins work in a clear pairing throughout, imitating one another’s gestures as well as the musical material at pitch, until the music reaches statements of an exciting pentatonic folk tune condensed into a call and response. That the music makes allusions to these folk songs (which I recorded and transcribed in Kabale, Uganda, in 2013) earlier in the piece is only possible to realise by the end.

Ben Buzi (2012) is an improvisational structure followed in similar fashion to jazz structures except that the underlying base for the main tune and improvisations is a drone and a rhythmic cycle (similar to how Arabic music improvisational structures can occur). It was originally conceived for an Arab takht ensemble to perform but can in fact be played with a minimum of any 2 melody instruments and 1 percussionist. The composition of this work (and first recording) was created under a grant from the Metro Regional Arts Council with funding from the Minnesota State Arts Board and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Best Be (2015 Stevenson Prize winning composition) for spoken text and electronics unfolds in two sections that are smoothly separated by a fading traditional *Baakisimba* music and dance groove of the *Baganda* people of Central Uganda. The first section is characterized by spoken, sung, and whispered utterances in English. Against the backdrop of spectral formants that add color and nature, the text undergoes multiple pitch alterations to construct a sense of forward

motion. Similarly, the second section of the piece is characterized by spoken, sung, and whispered text, but this time, in Chinese, and against a collage of FM instruments built by altering envelopes of carriers and modulators. While the first section is in simple time, the second is in compound. These musical imaginations and experiences unfold in the piece as a result of my dad's encouragement for me to do my best and be my best in life. Music, for me, has always been the platform of realizing this call and thus, my 2015 winning piece "Best Be."

Peñaflor was composed during the first month of dissertation fieldwork in Chile, when I was staying in the childhood home of my friends the Cerda brothers, Jorge and Santiago, in the town of Peñaflor. One morning, while warming up in Jorge's practice studio, this melody arose in my mind. Inspired by the "harmolodic" compositional approach of Ornette Coleman, I arranged it as an open-ended theme for improvising ensemble, and first performed it with a Chilean jazz quartet in February, 2016. This is its North American premiere.

BIOGRAPHIES

Scott Currie, SEM Orchestra Director, studied woodwinds with J. D. Parran, Dawn Doering, Hamiet Bluiett, and Ken McIntyre, as well as percussion with Warren Smith, and received his PhD in ethnomusicology from New York University. He has served as founding director of the Sound Vision Orchestra in New York, co-convenor of the Improvising Ecosystems interdisciplinary collaborative at the University of Minnesota (UMN) Institute for Advanced Study, and currently directs the Carnival world music ensemble he established at the UMN School of Music, as a charter member of its Creative Studies and Media faculty.

Katelyn Best is an ethnomusicologist and vocalist specializing in music aesthetics, cultural politics, and music in Deaf culture. She earned her BM in vocal performance from Saint Mary's College (2007) followed by her MM in ethnomusicology (2010) and PhD in musicology (2015) from Florida State University. As a vocalist Katelyn has performed a range of different musical styles and traditions. From 2012-2016, she performed with Omnimusica, a world intercultural jazz ensemble directed by Michael Bakan. As a composer, she predominantly uses music as both an outlet of expression and voice for social justice.

Michael Frishkopf, Professor of Music at the University of Alberta, specializes in sounds of the Arab world, West Africa, and Islamic ritual, especially Sufism. He is also a Third Stream composer/improviser, performing primarily on the nay and piano.

Cydonie Banting is an ethnomusicologist and composer. She read Music with Robert Saxton at Worcester College, Oxford, graduating with a first-class degree, before studying for an MMus in Composition (Distinction) with Gary Carpenter at the Royal Academy of Music, London. Following ethnographic research in Uganda, Cydonie developed an interest in the cross-overs between composition and ethnomusicology; in furtherance of these interests, she is undertaking doctoral study at King's College London with Frederick Moehn, under a scholarship from LAHP, examining the role of creativity in poverty alleviation.

Miriam Gerberg is a composer, performer (with specialties in Middle Eastern and Japanese musics) and an ethnomusicologist, having done her graduate work at Wesleyan University focusing on Moroccan-Jewish Women's musics. She has a broad range of experiences as an

applied ethnomusicologist and music educator, and has also presented research in the areas of World Music Education and Music in the American Deaf community. As a composer her works have been performed across the U.S., in Israel, Palestine, Holland, Australia, Japan and Sumatra, and she has received grants, awards and fellowships for her compositional work from Meet The Composer Inc., the Minnesota State Arts Board, the Ford Foundation, Arts International, the McKnight Foundation, Hillel Foundation, Brooklyn Opera Theatre, The Israeli Center for the Creative Arts and a Cedar Cultural Center Commission. Miriam is on the faculty of Hamline University.

Charles Lwanga is Visiting Assistant Professor of Music at Skidmore College where he teaches music theory and ethnomusicology. Lwanga holds a PhD in composition/theory (2012) from the University of Pittsburgh, where he is currently completing his second doctorate in ethnomusicology. Lwanga has published with *Analytical Approaches to World Music*, among others. His compositions have been performed by acclaimed ensembles in the USA, UK, South Africa, Brazil, and Uganda. His compositions are also published by *Verlag Neue Musik*. As an ethnomusicologist, Dr. Lwanga's research examines how popular music mediates marginalized publics in postcolonial Uganda.

Alex Rodriguez is a writer, improviser, trombonist, and PhD candidate in Ethnomusicology at UCLA, currently based in Portland, OR, where he serves as a Visiting Scholar and Director of Jazz Ensembles at Reed College. His research focuses on jazz clubs around the world and the creative improvised music communities that surround them. Drawing from ethnographic case studies in three countries, this forms the basis of his doctoral dissertation, "Making Jazz Space: Clubs and Creative Practice in California, Chile, and Siberia."

The **[SEM Orchestra](#)** (SEM-O), the Society for Ethnomusicology's first official performing group, is an open-instrumentation ensemble composed of SEM members performing on instruments of their own choosing. Thanks to the support of the Society and the dedication of its members, SEM-O has performed every year at SEM since its founding in 2013, in programs featuring member compositions along with repertory from Africa, Asia, and the Americas, including morna, samba, taqasim, raga, contemporary music, and world-jazz fusions. SEM-O plays a central role in the biennial **[Stevenson Prize Concert](#)**, performs for other special events such as the Sound Future Benefit Concert, and celebrates creative performance as an integral part of ethnomusicology and the Society for Ethnomusicology. To join or get involved, please visit: <https://semorchestra.wixsite.com/sem-o>

Sincere thanks to 2017 Stevenson Prize committee (Miriam Gerberg, George Worlasi Kwasi Dor, Charles Lwanga); to SEM Executive Director Stephen Stuempfle; to the participating musicians, and – especially – to Robert M. Stevenson—scholar, mentor, composer, performer, and benefactor of the biennial SEM concert and prize bearing his name

**Please silence all electronic devices and refrain from the use of video cameras unless prior arrangements have been made with the performers.
The use of flash cameras is prohibited. Thank you.**