

**79<sup>th</sup> National Folk Festival**  
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## Adonis Puentes & the Voice of Cuba Orchestra

Cuban *son*

Cuba by way of Vancouver, British Columbia

Adonis Puentes has said, “My mission in life is to share my music, giving people joy.” Propelled by the rhythms of his sextet, the Voice of Cuba Orchestra, the multitalented Puentes—an accomplished guitarist, percussionist, and songwriter—transports listeners to Cuba, his birthplace, through the mesmerizing sounds of classic *son*.

*Son* comes out of the centuries-old Afro-Cuban musical tradition, which married African percussion to the melodies and instrumentation of the Spanish *cancion*. After the abolition of slavery in 1886, many Cubans of African heritage moved from rural areas to the cities, and by the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, *son* emerged from this working-class rural/urban interchange. *Son* matured in the 1920s, becoming the island’s preeminent musical style, featuring a sextet configuration of guitar, *tres* (triple-stringed guitar), bongos, claves, maracas, and double bass. As the city of Havana became a cosmopolitan center, teeming with Americans looking to avoid Prohibition, *soneros* embraced the hot, new sounds of American jazz, introduced by the visiting musicians. Before long, a horn section became an integral component of *son*. Although eclipsed in popularity by newer genres in the 1940s, *son* remains a foundational Cuban style, a key inspiration for contemporary genres like salsa and *timba*. Even before Buena Vista Social Club’s mid-1990s recordings sparked a worldwide revival of interest in classic *son*, those same musicians had already inspired a new generation of Cuban *soneros* like Adonis Puentes.

Adonis Puentes was born in 1974 in Artemesia, a small town in the western part of Cuba. The atmosphere was rich with music: it drifted daily into the Puentes home from the Casa de Cultura across the street. Adonis’ father, Valentin Puentes, was a respected instructor at the cultural center, and he taught Adonis and twin brother Alexis (the musician Alex Cuba) to sing and play guitar. By age six, the boys were performing in a children’s guitar ensemble. At home they jammed with their father’s visiting friends, musicians like the legendary Ibrahim Ferrer. Adonis began writing his own songs as a young teenager, and at 21 gained national notice as a finalist on a televised Cuban salsa and *son* competition. In 1998, the Puentes brothers moved to Canada, and in 2005 Adonis began his solo career. He has played with legends like Ruben Blades, Celia Cruz, and Eddie Palmieri. A Grammy® nod and multiple Juno (Canadian Grammy) nominations later, Adonis Puentes is recognized as one of the Cuban diaspora’s leading young bandleaders. None other than Juan de Marcos, leader of the Afro-Cuban All Stars and a driving force behind the Buena Vista Social Club, has called Adonis Puentes a “*verdadero sonero*,” a true *sonero*.

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### Pronunciation Guide:

**son:** soh-n

**cancion:** can-see-OHN

**tres:** trays (flip ‘r’)

**claves:** CLAH-vays

**soneros:** soh-NEH-rohs

**timba:** TEEM-bah

**Artemesia:** ahr-TAY-MEE-see-ah

**Casa de Cultura:**

cah-sah day cool-TOO-rah

**Valentin:** VAH-lehn-teen

**Ibrahim Ferrer:** ee-brah-HEEM feh-RAIR

**Juan de Marcos:** hwahn day MAR-kohs

**verdadero sonero:** vair-dah-DAIR-oh soh-NEH-roh

*Group members:*

**Puentes:** PWEHN-tehs

**Mejias:** meh-HEE-ahs

**Jimenez:** xhee-MEH-nehz

## Andes Manta

Andean

Ecuador by way of Hudson Valley, New York

Masters of more than 35 traditional instruments, the four Lopez brothers in Andes Manta—Fernando, Luis, Bolivar, and Jorge—bring the vibrant and intricate music of the Indigenous peoples of South America’s Andes Mountains to the 79<sup>th</sup> National Folk Festival. From the haunting melodies of the highlands played on the panpipes to the joyous dance rhythms of village festivals and life cycle celebrations that blend pre-Columbian and Catholic ritual, the group’s music expresses the timeless power of a prehistoric musical culture that has survived 500 years of European occupation.

The Lopez family roots are in the village of San Gabriel in the remote Ecuadorian Andes. Though the Lopez brothers’ parents moved to Quito in 1960, they imparted the Andean traditions of their ancestors to all seven of their children. These were reinforced during family trips back to the mountain villages for traditional holiday celebrations and festivals. From an early age, each child learned to make and play the flutes and panpipes constructed out of native bamboo. Fernando, the eldest, showed a remarkable talent for music when he taught himself to play an abandoned guitar he discovered in a field. At the urging of a teacher, he was sent to the Quito Conservatory to study classical guitar. However, Fernando found he was more drawn to the traditional Andean music of the countryside. Together with his brothers, the four began to make a name for themselves in Quito’s musical circles as rising talents who would carry Andean traditional music forward to the next generation.

In 1986, Fernando and Luis were invited to perform concerts at Bard College, and the warm reception they received led them to take up residence in the United States. Bolivar and Jorge joined the group within a few years, and Andes Manta was formed, with the brothers eventually making their home in New York’s Hudson Valley. Between them, the four brothers are masters of the full range of traditional Andean instruments, including the stringed instruments *charango*, *bandolin*, and guitar; the Andean flute known as the *quena*; and the *rondador*, the panpipe that is considered the “national instrument” of Ecuador and that is known for producing a unique “chordal” note. They have developed a well-earned reputation for their virtuosity and their captivating live performances.

Andes Manta has appeared in 48 states and performed in venues ranging from Carnegie Hall to the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., to hundreds of universities and school assemblies. Though they tour nearly year-round, the four Lopez brothers make time to return home to Ecuador as often as possible, to strengthen and renew their cultural roots.

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### Pronunciation Guide:

**Andes Manta:** And-ease mon-tah

**Quito:** KEE-toe

**charango:** char-AHN-go

**bandolin:** bahn-doe-LEEN

**quena:** KAY-nah

**rondador:** rohn-dah-DOOR

*Group members*

**Fernando:** fair-NAHN-doe

**Luis:** loo-EES

**Bolivar:** bo-lee-VAHR

**Jorge:** HOR-hay

## **Aurelio**

Garifuna

Plaplaya, Honduras, and New York, New York

One of the most extraordinary Central American artists of his generation, Aurelio Martinez is a musical ambassador and champion of the Garifuna, a culturally threatened African Amerindian ethnic minority living primarily along the Caribbean coasts of Belize, Honduras, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. Hailing from the small community of Plaplaya in Honduras, he grew up immersed in Garifuna rhythms, rituals, and songs. With powerfully evocative vocals; talent as a composer, guitarist, and percussionist; and over 30 years' experience, Aurelio is central to the perpetuation and innovation of this unique tradition.

Garifuna culture reflects the complex roots of Aurelio's ancestors, Africans who landed on the island of St. Vincent in 1675 after the wreck of a slave ship and intermarried with local Carib and Arawak peoples, only to be deported to Central America by the British in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Garifuna language is Arawakan and their music differs significantly from that of the rest of Central America, with a dense percussive range and emphasis on vocal artistry. Garifuna music is rooted in the *dügü* ritual, a sacred practice of spirit-possession that exhibits cultural kinship with rituals documented in Central and South America, all with West African cultural roots. In 2001 UNESCO proclaimed the language, dance, and music of the Garifuna as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. The style of Garifuna music that Aurelio plays incorporates the guitar—adopted from the Spanish—and is called *paranda*. He follows in the footsteps of legendary *paranderos*, including his friend and mentor, the late Andy Palacio, whom the *New York Times* called “the man who saved Garifuna music.”

Born into a family possessing a long and distinguished musical heritage, at six Aurelio was already playing drums at social gatherings. He made his first guitar out of fishing line and driftwood and learned to play from cassettes his father, who migrated to New York City when Aurelio was young, sent back to Plaplaya. His mother, a respected singer and composer, provided the rest of his inspiration. In 1998, Aurelio contributed to Stonetree Records now-famous *paranda* recording sessions, delivering several masterful performances. He was the youngest of the *paranderos* represented on that album, and his experience rededicated him to keeping Garifuna culture alive. “My history is very special,” states Aurelio, “I don't work music to make money. I do music to support my culture.”

Aurelio's commitment to the Garifuna people saw him enter politics in 2005, becoming the first senator of African descent in the Honduran congress. In 2015, the Bronx-based Garifuna Coalition, USA celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Aurelio's career with a musical tribute in his honor. While he left politics in 2010, he remains deeply involved with projects teaching Garifuna traditions to the next generation.

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### **Pronunciation Guide:**

**Garifuna:** ga-ree-FOON-nah

**Plapaya:** pla-pah-ya

**Arawak:** ah-rah-wok

**Arawakan:** ah-RAH-wah-khan

**Dügü:** DOO-goo

**Paranda:** pa-rond-ah

**Paranderos:** pa-rond-EY-rows

**Palacio:** pa-law-sea-oh

*Group members*

**Aurelio Martinez:**

ow-RAY-lee-oh mar-TEA-nez

## **Bill Kirchen**

master of the Telecaster

Austin, Texas

Called the “Titan of the Telecaster” by *Guitar Player* magazine, Bill Kirchen is one of America’s living guitar legends. A virtual encyclopedia of rock and roll knowledge, Kirchen’s live performances, inspired by guitar heroes like Merle Travis, Danny Gatton, Duane Eddy, James Burton, and Buck Owens, are high-energy romps through the last 50 years of American guitar history.

As a kid growing up in Ann Arbor in the 1950s and ’60s, Bill Kirchen started on the trombone but quickly found a musical home as a guitarist and banjo player in the folk music scene. Kirchen says, “I’ve always considered myself a folk musician, though I tend to be one that plays too loud and too fast.” That speed was evident in the song that made his style famous: it’s Bill’s fretwork that powers the high-octane, 1972 Top-10 hit version of “Hot Rod Lincoln” recorded by Commander Cody & His Lost Planet Airmen. Kirchen played with the Commander from 1968 to 1976, helping to bring the deep American traditions of hard country and rockabilly to rock and roll fans across the nation.

Over the four and a half decades since his break-out hit, Bill Kirchen has developed a career as one of America’s leading guitarists, playing sideman to rock and pop greats like Nick Lowe, Emmylou Harris, and Elvis Costello. He’s also a legendary bandleader in his own right: for years he headed the D.C.-based Bill Kirchen and Too Much Fun, rave-up darlings of the District’s music scene. Now based in Austin, Kirchen remains steadfastly committed to the American roots music tradition he sometimes refers to as “dieselbilly.” Bill describes it as “country-flavored music ... as well as western swing, rockabilly, bluegrass, country tear-jerker, and truck-driving music.” *No Depression* magazine said, “He’s the closest thing to an auteur that the truck-driving song, one of country’s most noble subgenres, has nowadays.”

Kirchen’s most recent album, *Transatlantica*, solidified his stature as one of the foremost exponents of American electric guitar traditions; the album spent five months on the Americana Top 40 radio chart, cracking the Top 10 in 2016. Now sought out as a teacher of guitar and of music history (he’s shared his expertise in such diverse locales as the Smithsonian and TNN), Bill Kirchen lives up to his billing as “a one-man living history museum of the coolest guitar licks ever performed.”

Performing at the 79<sup>th</sup> National Folk Festival brings Bill back to the state he called home for many years. The one-time resident of Calvert County will be joined by his longtime, Maryland-based collaborators, bassist Johnny Castle and drummer Jack O’Dell.

## **Boukman Eksperyans**

Haitian *mizik rasin*

Port au Prince, Haiti

Founded in 1978, Boukman Eksperyans is one of Haiti's most beloved bands. After the group's charismatic leader, Theodore "Lòlò" Beaubrun, Jr., saw Bob Marley perform, he was inspired by Marley's example to similarly uplift and amplify Haiti's traditional music and its spiritual message. In the decades since, Lòlò and his wife Mimerose, better known as Manzè, pioneered a vibrant cultural movement, now known as *mizik rasin*.

First called *vodou adjae*, *mizik rasin* means "roots music" in Haitian Creole (Kreyol), a synthesis of French with numerous West African languages. *Mizik rasin* fuses the sacred music of the Afro-Haitian religion Vodou with electrified elements of rock and R&B. The band's moniker reflects this powerful cultural amalgam: it combines the name of Boukman Dutty, a Vodou priest who led the famous 1791 ceremony at Bois Caïman that is credited with sparking the Haitian revolution, with *eksperyans*, an invocation, in Kreyol, of the Jimi Hendrix Experience. "Eksperyans" also reflects the Beaubrun's embrace of the Vodou philosophy that "all has to be one in love."

A comic actor as well as a musician, Lòlò Beaubrun comes from a family of famous artists; his father, Theodore Sr., was a famous stage and screen actor better known in Haiti as Languichatte Debordus, for the popular comedic character he played on television. Lòlò's parents were also dancers, and despite elite disdain for—and sometimes governmental censure of—Vodou, his father passed down to him the faith's drumming tradition. In Vodou, which syncretizes West African, Catholic, and native Taïno and Arawak theologies, ceremonial drumming and song anchor the religious rites that restore balance to the world. Through Boukman Eksperyans, Lòlò and Manzè Beaubrun—herself a respected scholar noted for her published work on both Vodou and the Haitian communal culture of *lakou*—use this music "to tell Haitian people to be proud of their culture," and to universalize the call for community and connection.

The current incarnation of Boukman Eksperyans tours the world with ten musicians and two dancers, featuring leading Haitian artists including Lòlò's cousin, the drummer Hans "Bwa Gris" Dominique; bassist Donnier Mondesir; and professor of dance Johanne Dejean. Band members also play traditional African drums, the metallic *krai* (güiro), and a Haitian bamboo flute called the *vaksin*. They sing primarily in Kreyol.

Boukman Eksperyans has rebuffed appeals from politicians and political parties; instead, as Beaubrun says, "We are there as the voice of the people." In 1990, their anthem "Ke-M Pa Sote" was named best song at Port-Au-Prince's Carnival; its lyrics ("my heart doesn't leap, you don't scare me") were embraced as a rebuke of dictatorial and corrupt politicians. Despite periods of political repression and even a brief exile, Boukman Eksperyans continues to issue a rallying cry against the ills imposed upon the Haitian people, and indeed people everywhere, providing through their joyous music the inspiration for a future with "love as the base."

*(Pronunciation Guide & Presenter Notes next page)*

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**Pronunciation Guide & Presenter Notes:**

*Vodou Adjae* was also the name of the band's Grammy®-nominated first album.

Mimerose (Manzè) Beaubrun is the author of numerous scholarly works including *Nan Dòmi, récit d'une initiation vodou* (2011), translated into English as *Nan Dòmi: An Initiate's Journey into Haitian Vodou* (2013), an essential work for those who wish to understand Haitian Vodou.

Lòlò Beaubrun performed with his father on television for many years, and is still known by many in Haiti as "Barnabe," for the character he played on *Les Aventures de Languichatte*.

In the early years, Lòlò's brother and sister were in the band. Lòlò and Manzè's children have also been members during the band's 4 decades performing.

Their most recent album is 2018's *Isit E Kouneya La*.

**Pronunciation Guide:**

**Boukman Eksperyans:** BOO-cmahn ex-PEER-yahns

**Mizik rasin:** mih-ZEEK rah-ZEHN

**vodou adjae:** VOH-doo AHD-jah-eh

**Bois Caïman:** Bwa kay-EE-mohn

**Languichatte Debordus:** lahn-GEE-shat dei-bore-doods

**Taïno:** tah-IN-oh

**Arawak:** AH-rah-wok

**Lakou:** lah-COO

**Krai:** cry

**Vaksin:** bahk-SEEN

**Ke-M Pa Sote:** chem pah so-teh

**Nan Dòmi, récit d'une initiation Vodou:** non DOE-me rey-seet doon initiation VOH-doo

**Les Aventures de Languichatte:** Lays AH-ven-tours de lahn-GEE-shat

**Isit E Kouneya La:** ee-sit eh coon-yay lah

*Group members*

**Manzè Beaubrun:** mohn-sey BOH-bruhn

**Lòlò Beaubrun:** loh-loh BOH-bruhn

**Baz Clervaux:** boh-z clehr-voh

**Donnier Mondésir:** MOHN-dehs-ear

**Loud Coiscou:** lood cwahs-coo

**Bwagri Dominique:** bwah-gree

## Capoeira Luanda

Brazilian capoeira

New York, New York

When capoeira *mestre* (master) Jelon Vieira immigrated to the United States in 1975, Brazil's African-based folk traditions were little known here. Largely due to his efforts, interest in capoeira, the Afro-Brazilian fusion of dance, martial arts, and acrobatics born in the northeastern state of Bahia, has exploded. Today Capoeira Luanda is integral to Mestre Jelon's mission to promote and perpetuate this dynamic art form.

An early form of capoeira arrived in Brazil with enslaved Africans from Congo and Angola in the 1500s. Through a process of creolization, capoeira developed into a brilliant tradition—part dance and part game—on the plantations and in the *quilombos* (escaped slave communities) alongside Afro-Brazilian religions like *candomblé*, and music and dance traditions like samba, as a means of resisting slavery. *Capoeiristas* hid their practice in plain sight, camouflaging it as a dance and telling Portuguese slaveholders, who were threatened by its martial arts elements, that they were playing, not fighting, capoeira. Still, capoeira was outlawed in Brazil until 1890. Even after the ban was lifted, it remained marginalized as a working-class street game until the 1930s, when it was recognized as the national sport of Brazil. In 2014, capoeira was added to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO.

Capoeira is played in the *roda* (circle), inside which capoeiristas take turns squaring off, surrounded by the chorus and musicians who play the *berimbau* (a gourd-resonated musical bow), *pandeiro* (a tambourine-like frame drum), and *atabaque* (a hand drum similar to the conga). One person leads the chorus in call-and-response songs, drawing from capoeira history, stories of legendary mestres, and playful anecdotes.

Mestre Jelon started learning capoeira at age 10. He recalls, “I was going to get a haircut ... and I saw someone playing capoeira and I was totally taken by it. I stayed there for maybe five hours and I said to myself, ‘That’s what I want to do.’ I even forgot to get a haircut.” But social stigmas die hard; his mother did not support his interest. He found instructors anyway, studying under several great masters in his native Bahia, including Mestre Bimba, a leading figure in changing attitudes toward capoeira.

Vieira catalyzed worldwide appreciation for Brazilian culture, while simultaneously introducing the tradition to people of all ages and backgrounds. He founded the New York-based Capoeira Foundation and is the Artistic Director of DanceBrazil. After decades of study, Mestre Jelon established Capoeira Luanda in New York City in 2007. Today the group has branches across the U.S. and in 10 countries.

In recognition of his life's work, Mestre Jelon received a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in 2008, the highest honor the U.S. government bestows upon traditional artists. He strives to immerse his students in not only capoeira techniques but in the philosophy surrounding the art form. For Mestre Jelon, capoeira is more than art; it is a way of life. With Capoeira Luanda, Mestre Jelon prepares his students, including his son Tiba, to carry on the legacy for many generations to come.

*(Pronunciation Guide next page)*

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**Pronunciation Guide:**

**Capoeira Luanda:** ca-poh-EH-rah loo-ON-dah

**mestre:** mess-chre

**quilombos:** key-lohm-bows

**candomblé:** Cahn-dohm-blay

**roda:** row-da

**berimbau:** behr-EEM-bow (rhymes with cow)

**pandeiro:** pahn-DAY-row

**atabaque:** ah-tah-BAA-kay

**Bahia:** bah-EE-ah

**Tiba:** tee-bah

*Group members*

**Jelon Vieira:** zeh-LOHN vee-AY-rah

## **Cora Harvey Armstrong**

gospel

Richmond, Virginia

Gospel artist Cora Harvey Armstrong hasn't always lived the life she sings about. While she's been singing and playing piano in churches on Sundays for most of her life, she spent decades drinking, partying, and living a "hellacious life" the other six days a week. Health problems and an abusive relationship compounded her struggle. When her father passed away in 1999, Armstrong rededicated herself to her faith and her music, and has started to earn the recognition that her talent as a singer, songwriter, and pianist deserves.

Armstrong still lives in her tiny hometown of Newtown in King and Queen County, Virginia. Her father was a deacon at First Mount Olive Baptist Church where Armstrong served as minister of music for four decades. Her mother started the Harvey Family singing group, which included Cora and her sisters. "When I was coming up my mother was a real big fan of Mahalia Jackson and the Clara Ward Singers so that's a lot of the music I heard around the house," says Armstrong. "She and Daddy both used to sing in the choir at church so they knew all the hymns." Armstrong's songwriting was inspired by the verses of her poet grandfather Rev. Watson Harvey.

That songwriting blossomed at Virginia State University (VSU), where she directed the internationally acclaimed VSU Gospel Chorale. An association later in life with another shining light in the state's gospel community, Rev. Earl Bynum, led to tours of Italy and Japan. Richmond-born musician and producer Bill McGee has described Armstrong as "Aretha Franklin on piano, Mahalia Jackson with her voice, and Shirley Caesar with her style."

In recent years, Armstrong left her secretarial job to pursue music full-time and has also become a minister, studying for a master's in divinity from Virginia Union University. She released a CD that focuses on her own compositions. With her sisters she starred in *Those Harvey Girls*, a musical that played at the Swift Creek Mill Theatre in Chesterfield County. Music remains a family affair for Armstrong. At the festival she'll be joined by her sisters Clara and Virginia and her nieces Kimberly, Ruthy, and Clarissa. The group is rounded out by bassist Juan Nelson and drummers Kevin Jackson and Cora's great-nephew Davin Jackson.

While her nieces convinced Armstrong to update the group's attire, the sound remains traditional gospel. "We do my own songs," she says, "but I also like to do traditional songs like 'Precious Lord' and 'Amazing Grace'—I'm a fan of singing music that says something, so people can leave with a good feeling."

## **Danny Paisley & the Southern Grass**

bluegrass

Delaware and Pennsylvania

Danny Paisley & the Southern Grass is a hard-driving, hot-as-a-firecracker bluegrass band with a sound rooted deep in the mountains of southwest Virginia and northwest North Carolina. With Danny Paisley's rich vocals, T.J. Lundy's timeless fiddling, and Mark Delaney's stellar banjo picking, the group has earned critical praise as one of the steadfast proponents of a classic style. While often performing under the radar of the mainstream bluegrass world, Southern Grass has always been a favorite of fellow bluegrass musicians. Dudley Connell, member of the Seldom Scene, writes, "Riding the wave of one of the greatest rhythm sections in bluegrass music, Danny's vocals soar from powerhouse peaks to heart-breaking whispers. I believe everything that Danny sings, and that to me is the mark of a truly gifted singer." Danny's heartfelt singing garnered him long-deserved recognition as Male Vocalist of the Year in 2016 from the International Bluegrass Music Association.

Southern Grass has historically been comprised of equal parts Paisley family and Lundy family. In the 1960s, two transplants from the rich musical region around Galax, Virginia, and Mt. Airy, North Carolina, Bob Paisley and Ted Lundy, teamed up in Delaware to form the Southern Mountain Boys. When Ted Lundy passed away in 1980, Bob renamed the band Southern Grass. Paisley and Lundy were just two of the many thousands who left Appalachia in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in search of work, migrating to industrial centers in the Mid-Atlantic, Midwest, and Northeast. These mountain families did not leave their traditions behind. For over half a century, the Southern Mountain Boys—and later Southern Grass—have brought the sounds of the Blue Ridge Mountains to their fellow transplants in Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Washington, D.C.

Danny Paisley joined his dad's group in 1974 at age 15 and has toured with the band ever since. Ted Lundy's sons, T.J. and Bobby, continue the Paisley-Lundy connection. One of the finest fiddlers in bluegrass today, T.J. is a master of the classic '50s bluegrass sound. Bobby Lundy, who played banjo with the group for years, now provides the driving backbone on bass, in addition to singing lead and tenor vocals. Throughout the band's history, several other members of the Paisley and Lundy families have played with Southern Grass. Danny's 18-year-old son Ryan brings the tradition into the third generation, adding his dexterous picking on mandolin to the group. Banjo player Mark Delaney rounds out the ensemble.

Bluegrass is increasingly dominated by bands with slicker, more contemporary sounds. True stalwarts, Danny Paisley & the Southern Grass continue to perform their own traditional, regional style. Their impressive musicianship and dedication to this classic sound stands out from the crowd. The band's most recent recording, *That's Why I'm Lonesome*, released on Patuxent Records in 2018, is yet another testament to this dedication.

## **Daryl Davis**

boogie-woogie piano

Silver Spring, Maryland

A child of a Foreign Service officer, boogie-woogie pianist Daryl Davis was born in Chicago but spent much of his childhood bouncing around the globe with his parents. Chicago did leave an impression though; it was here that Davis absorbed the sounds of African American musicians from the Deep South who had traveled North to Chicago during the Great Migration. He also began to dream of performing with Chuck Berry.

Davis eventually came to the Washington, D.C., region to earn a degree in music from Howard University. By then, he was an avid fan of piano styles invented far before he was born; his piano chops came naturally, but the training to learn the musical nuance was not easy. Davis sought out his musical heroes whenever and wherever he could. "I learned a lot from listening to recordings," he says, "but I learned many hands-on things from visiting and making friends." In 1985, 72-year-old Pinetop Perkins, considered one of the great blues and boogie-woogie pianists, selected 27-year-old Davis to succeed him in the Muddy Waters-influenced Legendary Blues Band. Johnnie Johnson, Chuck Berry's renowned original pianist, has been equally unstinting in his praise of Davis's mastery of the boogie-woogie style. Perkins and Johnson both felt such a kinship with Davis and his playing that, at different times, they claimed him as their godson. Even Chuck Berry saluted him with his best recommendation: "You really ought to hear him!"

Davis stands out for his ability to bridge traditions that are often segregated into black and white musical categories but that actually flow from the same source, be it boogie-woogie, blues, R&B, rockabilly, or even rock and roll. These labels do not concern him. Instead, Davis is attracted to their shared musical legacy. "This is music from a community of great players," he says. "Many of them never met, but they knew about each other. I think their creation is a legacy for all Americans." *Living Blues Magazine* proclaimed, "Davis' piano work impresses with his winning combination of technique and abandon, and his vocals are strong and assured.... Black rock 'n' roll lives!"

The who's who list of artists Davis has performed with includes Bo Diddley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Elvis Presley's Jordanaires, and the great Piedmont blues duo Cephas & Wiggins. Davis has also released three solo albums. And, yes, he did fulfill his dream of playing with the legendary Chuck Berry.

At the 79th National Folk Festival, Davis will perform solo and in several exciting collaborations, including a set with jazz pianist Lafayette Gilchrist as part of the *Maryland Masters* program in the Maryland Folklife Area, and several spirited frolics through rockabilly, rock 'n' roll, and boogie-woogie with longtime friend Bill Kirchen on stages throughout the festival.

## **Drums No Guns**

percussion ensemble  
Richmond, Virginia

For over 20 years, Drums No Guns has brought together people of all ages and backgrounds through the percussive arts. The nonprofit performing arts organization's interactive performances promote youth nonviolence and community healing through diverse percussion traditions, most notably unlocking the rhythmic possibilities of buckets and other recycled materials from the junkyard.

From the New York City subway to street corners in Washington, D.C., and other cities throughout the nation, bucket drumming provides an increasingly persistent beat in the urban soundscape. A street performance tradition that uses recycled materials, bucket drumming belongs to the long line of folk art forms that create meaningful artistic expressions by combining limited resources and personal or community ingenuity.

Drums No Guns was cofounded by Dr. Ram Bhagat in the early 1990s; he continues to lead the ensemble today. A native of New Haven, Connecticut, Bhagat is deeply invested in using mindfulness as a tool for peace activism. When his brother Lester died in an unsolved shooting, Bhagat dedicated his life to exploring ways of ending the cycle of violence. He began his career in Richmond (Virginia) Public Schools, where he worked as a science teacher before becoming the school district's manager of school climate and culture strategy. The philosophy behind Drums No Guns is that "rhythm is universal, it's an energy that resonates across perceived differences, it's the beat that pulsates within all of us, regardless of age, race, or any other kind of category," explains Bhagat. "In terms of nonviolence, rhythm helps unite us around a common message, spirit, and connection."

Drums No Guns performs full-length concerts; its members are also experienced street performers. At the National Folk Festival, Drums No Guns will offer two hands-on, bucket-drumming workshops as well as two street performances. A trademark of Drums No Guns is the "junkyard jam." Frequently led by Bhagat's son, Shyam, a popular street performer and bucket drummer in Denver who is known as Shyamuu the Drum Addict, this is the moment when percussive materials that would otherwise be discarded are turned into a memorable musical experience. "We make musical instruments out of five-gallon plastic buckets, recycled metal cans, pots, pans, water jugs, and trash can tops," says Bhagat. Those are combined with traditional percussion instruments like congas, the *surdo* from Brazil, the *dumbek* from the Middle East, and the *djembe* from West Africa, as well as movement and dance, like Brazilian capoeira and hip hop, all layered with call and response vocals.

These art forms, says Bhagat, "tap into the common feeling of community, and it helps to deal with trauma awareness and resilience and restoring our heartbeat—it's about bringing together our hearts and minds," says Bhagat. "It's about how the vibe of a small group of people coming to drum together can put some smiles on some young people's faces and rejuvenate older folks, too." Harnessing the power of rhythm, Drums No Guns is able to strengthen individuals and communities and to inspire youth to develop self-confidence and explore the possibilities of creative expression.

*(Pronunciation Guide next page)*

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**Pronunciation Guide:**

*surdo:* SOOR-doe

*dumbek:* DOOM-beck

*djembe:* gym-BEH

*Group members:*

**Ram Bhagat:** Rahm BAH-gat

**Shyam:** she-OHM

## **Eddie Cotton, Jr.**

soul blues  
Clinton, Mississippi

Bluesman Eddie Cotton, Jr.'s music is rooted in the church. His father was a Pentecostal minister, shepherding the Christ Chapel Church of God in Christ that he founded in Clinton, Mississippi, just west of Jackson. While music was central to church services, his family and his congregation shunned secular music. Nonetheless, Cotton reflects, "The deepest of the blues I've ever played is in church.... The style they play on is nothing but blues."

Cotton is a master of soul blues, a style that resonates particularly with African American audiences. Emerging in the 1960s, soul blues fuses the gritty guitar sound central to blues tradition with the smoother, gospel-influenced vocal style of soul and R&B music. Soul blues is music meant to move the body *and* spirit, which is why Cotton describes his sound as "hard driving blues" or "juke joint blues." "If I'm playing to the best of my ability," Cotton explains, "you're going to move.... [This is] not sit down and look at me blues."

Eddie learned the power of music in church. When he was six, his father bought him his first electric guitar, a black and tan Peavey T-60, and by age eight, the younger Cotton was an official member of the church band, eventually becoming lead guitarist. At 18, he won a full scholarship to study music theory at Jackson State University, where he discovered that the basic structures of blues were ingrained in his playing: "I could already play the 12-bar blues because it sounded like old congregational songs. I was already doing it, but I just didn't know the theory." After college he became minister of music at the family church, and, at the same time, began playing with Mississippi bluesman King Edward Antoine, known in Jackson as "The Blues Picking King." "What King Edward did, was give me a direction I was already looking for," Cotton recalls.

Now in his late 40s, Eddie Cotton, Jr. is a blues master with a growing international fan base. He has opened for legends like Ike Turner and B.B. King, and in 2015, he took top honors at the International Blues Challenge in Memphis. However, his musical career remains focused on two things: regular gigs for enthusiastic soul blues audiences in Jackson and beyond, and a continuing commitment to his home church in Clinton, where he serves as both church administrator and minister of music. Whatever the venue, Cotton's goal is always to find what his church calls "the pocket," a place of spiritual transcendence where "the music just pulsates in everybody's mind and heart."

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### **Presenters Notes:**

His most recent album is 2015's *One at a Time*

Despite shunning secular music the Church of God in Christ denomination has produced its share of music legends, including guitar pioneer Sister Rosetta Tharpe.

Guitar is not his only instrument: Cotton also plays the Hammond B3 at church.

When he got married and started a family, Cotton took a day job as a prison guard, another experience which impacted his deeply spiritual take on the blues. "It taught me it don't take much for a man to make it, and it taught me that you don't look down on a man because of the situation that he's in.... I came out of it more grateful." It was during that year that he wrote the songs for his first recording.

More about “the pocket” from an interview in Living Blues:

“There’s a certain pocket that you need to find. You don’t need to be just playing all over the place or now you got a bunch of racket ’cause it’s not connected out here. Me reachin’ for the pocket, that’s what I play for, tryin’ to find that groove, that deep groove that sends that feeling out through the audience and makes them get with you, whether they want to or not. And that’s what I’m always reaching for. Some musicians don’t even know that it exists, they think it comes in rehearsing. Well, you can rehearse until you fall out, but if you don’t understand that you can’t get it.

Also from the interview in Living Blues:

“I’d imagine some bluesmen have saved a lot of lives, I imagine that the blues have saved a lot of lives with the joy that it brings. You never know what people are going through out here in the audience. You never know what people are going through in the audience of a church. But the two things are the same in that people are supposed to have a good time, to see something positive. As long as you are being truthful, nobody argues with the truth. You may not like the truth, but you’re a fool if you go up against it.”

## **Grupo Nematatlín**

*son jarocho*

Veracruz, Mexico

Nematatlín (pronounced neh-mah-tah-TLEEN) means “the singers” in the Indigenous Náhuatl language. It is a name that encapsulates the sweet sound and iconic power of the group that bears its name.

Grupo Nematatlín play *son jarocho*, the signature folk music of the state of Veracruz on Mexico’s Gulf Coast. The name *jarocho* refers to both the people and culture of Veracruz’s southern coastal plain, where centuries ago the entwined musical cultures of Indigenous people, Spanish colonists, and Africans, both enslaved and free, produced this genre noted for its poetic lyrics and driving, compellingly danceable rhythms. In *son jarocho*, the principal voice is the *pregonero* (caller), who leads call-and-response singing. The *pregonero* possesses a vast repertoire of *sones* and a deft ability to improvise lyrics, whether on lost love, historical memory, or struggles for justice. Musically, *son jarocho* is characterized by three principal regional instruments: the *jarana*, an eight-stringed, small-bodied guitar, often carved from a single piece of wood, that is key to the *jarocho* sound; the *requinto jarocho*, a four-stringed melody guitar; and the *arpa*, or harp. The typical performance setting is a *fundango*, both community dance and jam session, where young and old gather and social distinctions fall away.

Grupo Nematatlín is one of the most celebrated of the Veracruz-based bands whose international touring has furthered the tradition’s growing global appeal. The ensemble initially formed in 1980 as a University of Veracruz congress of some of the region’s premiere performers; they focus on promoting the music abroad and, more importantly, ensuring its continuation by teaching new generations of musicians in Veracruz.

Since 2002, the group’s *pregonero* has been Salvador “Chava” Peña Cadeza, widely acknowledged as one of Veracruz’s best improvisors of sung poetry, especially the six-line *copla* and ten-line *décima* forms typical of *son jarocho*. Chava inherited a deep knowledge of the form from his father and grandfather, well-known musicians from Mata Clara, a town located in the municipality of Cuitláhuac where African-tinged influences remain strong. “*Jarocho* is a way of life in our family,” points out his son, Salvador “Chavita” Peña Herrera.

The group boasts two *jarana*, played by Chava and bandmate Elhuikaj Yasej Hernández Ramírez. Chavita began to play the *arpa* at age 7; he studied with family members and the first generation of Nematatlín performers, and is noted for his masterful, innovative playing. The *requinto jarocho* is the province of longtime bandmember Héctor Luis “Tito” Ochoa Reyes, scion of a musical lineage from Tierra Blanca. The quintet is completed by the guitar and rich vocals of Miguel Ángel López Sánchez. Together these five musicians are the second generation to carry on the mission of Grupo Nematatlín, and to tell the story of their region through the beautiful *son jarocho* sound. As Tito Ochoa Reyes says, “My essence is here, in my house, in my town, in the ranch where I am from, in my family, and what I transmit with my instrument.”

*(Pronunciation Guide next page)*

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**Pronunciation Guide:**

**Grupo Nematatlin:** groo-poh neh-mah-tah-TLEEN

**son jarocho:** sohn hah-ROH-choh

**pregonero:** preh-GOHN-ayroh

**jarana:** hah-RAH-nah

**requinto jarocho:** ray-KEEN-toh hah-ROH-choh

**arpa:** ahr-pah

**fundango:** fahn-DAHNgoh

**copla:** co-plah

**décima:** DE-seem-ah

**Mata Clara:** Mah-tah Clah-rah

**Cuitláhuac:** Kweet-LAH-wok

**Tierra Blanca:** tee-EH-rah Blohn-kah

*Group members:*

**Salvador “Chava” Peña Cadeza:** Saul-vah-DOHR cha-ba PE-nia kah-de-SAH

**Salvador “Chavita” Peña Herrera:** Saul-vah-DOHR cha-bee-tah PE-nia eh-REH-rah

**Elhuikaj Yasej Hernández Ramírez:** el-WEE-kaj yah-she her-NAHN-des rah-ME-res

**Héctor Luis “Tito” Ochoa Reyes:** EHC-torh luis tea-TOE oh-choh-ah reh-yes

**Miguel Ángel López:** mee-GUEL AHN-hel low-pes

## **Hot Club of Cowtown**

western swing and hot jazz

Austin, Texas

As its name implies, the Hot Club of Cowtown pays homage to two legendary groups from the 1930s: the swinging guitar and violin of Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grappelli's Hot Club of Paris, decamped from the "City of Lights" to the territory of Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys. Now celebrating over 20 years together, the Hot Club of Cowtown is widely recognized as one of the finest ensembles in western swing and hot jazz today.

Western swing emerged from Texas, Oklahoma, and the lower Great Plains in the 1920s and '30s as local bands searched for ways to keep house party and dance hall audiences on their feet all night. It was an amalgamation of the country string band music and old-time fiddle traditions of the Southwest, combined with the "cosmopolitan" big-band jazz of the era. Musicians gave western swing an even stronger regional flavor by using accents from other local styles, including cowboy tunes, German polka, African American blues, and music from the Mexican borderlands. Western swing became wildly popular in the 1940s, its cultural richness and sheer danceability contributing to its enduring national appeal.

Elana James (fiddle, vocals) grew up in Prairie Village, Kansas, riding horses and playing classical violin. Elana discovered her musical home in western swing fiddle in the early 1990s, when at age 23 she met guitar wiz Whit Smith. By 1997, Whit and Elana had formed the Hot Club of Cowtown. Whit's trademark vintage tone and impeccable style have earned him admiration and accolades from fellow musicians and music critics from *Vintage Guitar* to *American Songwriter*. Jake Erwin (bass) hails from Tulsa, Oklahoma, where Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys broadcast their daily radio show. Jake is a premier practitioner of percussive "slap bass," a style begun in early New Orleans jazz that continues to be heard in country, blues, and rock and roll. The Hot Club of Cowtown is among the youngest-ever inductees into the Texas Western Swing Hall of Fame and were named Western Swing Group of the Year at the 2015 Ameripolitan Music Awards. They have toured as U.S. State Department Musical Ambassadors to Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and the Sultanate of Oman. In addition to their own worldwide touring schedule, the Hot Club of Cowtown has toured with Bob Dylan, Willie Nelson, the Mavericks, and many others.

Fans and critics alike are captured by the group's virtuosity, style, energy, and creativity. The *Chicago Tribune* put it this way: "This Austin-based western swing/jazz trio—violin, guitar and upright bass—will bring even the tamest audience to its feet."

The Hot Club of Cowtown is recording a new album this spring, which they expect to release in early September, right in time for the 79<sup>th</sup> National Folk Festival.

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### **Pronunciation Guide:**

**Django:** JAYN-go

## **Jeff Little Trio**

Blue Ridge piano trio

Boone, North Carolina

Jeff Little continues an often hidden, yet fascinating tradition of piano playing in the Blue Ridge Mountains. With few exceptions, the piano does not play a prominent part in Appalachian music, and is rarely the lead instrument. But Jeff Little is an exception—and a remarkable one. His distinctive two-handed style, much influenced by mountain flatpicked-guitar tradition, is breathtaking in its speed, precision, and clarity.

Jeff Little comes from Boone, North Carolina, in the heart of the Blue Ridge, one of America's richest regions for traditional music. So it is perhaps not so surprising that Jeff began playing piano at age five. His family ran Little's Music Store in Boone, where musicians of all types frequently dropped by to play a tune. Among those was Doc Watson, a neighbor and close family friend, whose music helped to shape Jeff's unique piano style. While Watson was a keeper of deep Appalachian traditions, he also pioneered the flatpicking of intricate fiddle melodies on the guitar and played rockabilly.

A professional musician since the age of 14, Jeff is conversant with traditional jazz, old-time, country, bluegrass, rockabilly, blues and rock 'n' roll. With rack-mounted harmonica and vocals, he can also be a one-man show. Jeff settled in Nashville for a while, where he worked as a session man in between stints on the road with a wide range of commercial country artists, most notably Keith Urban. In 2004, he returned to the Blue Ridge and started teaching at colleges around the region; currently, he is a full-time faculty member and Artist in Residence for the Popular Music Program at Catawba College in Salisbury, North Carolina.

Jeff frequently appeared with Doc Watson, and he is a regular at Merlefest, the Merle Watson Memorial Festival in Wilkesboro, North Carolina. He has released four CDs, and been featured on NPR several times. Jeff has taken his exciting piano style around the world on U.S. government goodwill tours, performing in Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bahrain, Oman, France, and Tanzania. In 2014, he was inducted into the Blue Ridge Music Hall of Fame.

Appearing alongside Jeff will be his longtime collaborator, Steve Lewis, and his son, Luke Little. Steve is one of the most respected banjo and guitar players in the Blue Ridge, and has taken top picking honors in a host of contests, including the Walnut Valley Nationals, Merlefest, Galax's Old Fiddlers' Convention, and the Wayne C. Henderson Guitar Competition. The newest member of the trio, Luke is quickly earning recognition as an outstanding mandolin player. He began playing mandolin at age 15, and in less than 4 years, he has won numerous contest ribbons, including first place at the 2018 Ashe Fiddlers Convention.

## **Jerry Douglas Trio**

Dobro master

Nashville, Tennessee

Jerry Douglas is widely recognized as the greatest innovator on the Dobro in the last half century—possibly the greatest ever. He’s been described as the Jimi Hendrix and the Charlie Parker of acoustic music. The *New York Times* has called him “Dobro’s matchless contemporary master.” He has won 14 Grammy® Awards, three Country Music Association Musician of the Year citations, 28 International Bluegrass Music Association honors, and received a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, the nation’s highest honor for traditional artists. Though he got his start in bluegrass, Douglas has made an impact in fields ranging from rock and roll to jazz, blues to Celtic, mainstream country to contemporary classical and beyond.

Born in Warren, Ohio, Jerry was exposed to music at home by his father, John, a steelworker who played bluegrass on the side. In 1963, John took his young son to a Flatt & Scruggs concert. Entranced by the sound of Uncle Josh Graves playing the Dobro, Jerry embarked on a lifelong commitment to the instrument. The Dobro is an acoustic guitar with a metal resonator that is played with a slide. It was invented by the San Diego-based Dopyera brothers in the 1920s and gained national popularity during the Hawaiian steel guitar craze of the 1920s and ’30s. The Dobro made its way through the vaudeville circuit and was eventually adopted by blues and bluegrass musicians.

In 1973, Douglas joined the pioneering “newgrass” band the Country Gentlemen. The following year he became a member of J.D. Crowe & the New South. He earned his nickname “Flux” during this time for the rich tone of his playing and lightning-fast style. By the mid-’80s he was the number one Dobro artist on Nashville recording sessions. He was featured in the National Council for the Traditional Arts’ acclaimed *Masters of the Steel String Guitar* tours in 1990, ’91 and ’93. Since 1998, he has toured regularly with Alison Krauss & Union Station as a featured soloist. Whether as a soloist or bandleader for projects like the Earls of Leicester or the Jerry Douglas Band or Trio, he is a brilliant and innovative performer.

Jerry’s distinctive sound graces over 1,500 albums, with artists including Paul Simon, Bela Fleck, Reba McEntire, Yo-Yo Ma, and Ray Charles. His recording with *mohan vina* player Vishna Mohan Bhatt led to a following of Dobro players in India. With Scottish fiddler Aly Bain, he is co-music director of BBC Scotland’s acclaimed *Transatlantic Sessions*. In addition to his various projects, Douglas has co-produced and performed on a series of platinum albums. He has produced albums for Alison Krauss, the Del McCoury Band, Maura O’Connell, the Whites, Jesse Winchester, and Steep Canyon Rangers.

Jerry will be joined by his long-time musical associates, Doug Belote (drums) and Daniel Kimbro (bass).

## **Jones Benally Family Dancers**

Navajo hoop dancing  
Black Mesa, Arizona

World Champion hoop dancer and traditional healer Jones Benally, his daughter Jeneda, son Clayson, and two young grandchildren form the Jones Benally Family Dancers. These three generations together bring the beauty and healing power of Navajo (Diné) culture to educate and uplift audiences around the globe. The Benally Family will give the National Folk Festival an unparalleled introduction to Navajo music and dance.

Navajo dance is a sacred tradition encompassing a wide variety of forms, all of which aim to heal the body, mind, or spirit. These ceremonies are led by the *haatali* (“singer”), a role that encompasses singing, dancing, and healing. When presented outside the Navajo community, these dances are modified for public viewing, but they retain their deep capacity to move hearts and minds. The family’s emotive vocals and chanting, along with rhythmic accompaniment on traditional instruments like hand drum and rattle, amplify the ceremonial mood. The Benallys’ repertoire of dances includes traditional forms like the gourd dance, eagle dance, feather dance, and friendship dance. The hoop dance is always a highlight, as audiences marvel at the phenomenal natural figures and shapes Jones, as well as Clayson, can evoke so fluidly with five, nine, a dozen, or more hoops.

Jones Benally is a respected *haatali* and elder of the Navajo Nation in northeastern Arizona. He learned from his father and grandfather, both *haatali* before him, starting with hoop dances, which are an integral part of the ceremonies. For many decades he has excelled as a performer and educator strengthening appreciation for Navajo culture among pan-Native and non-Native audiences. His skill as a hoop dancer has won him worldwide acclaim and multiple world champion titles, and he was also featured as a singer in the 1993 film *Geronimo*. In 2013, he received the first Hoop Dance Legacy Award from the Heard Museum in Arizona, home to the World Championship Hoop Dance Contest. In his own community in the Navajo Nation, he works as a healer. He was among the first traditional medical practitioners to be employed by a Western medical facility, work he did for over 20 years.

Jeneda and Clayson Benally have performed with their father for nearly four decades. Inspired by both Jones’ musical talents and passion for Native rights, they have also made their mark as the Native American Music Award-winning “alter-Native” punk band Blackfire. The siblings also perform as the duo *Sihasin* (“hope”), and mix Navajo and folk/punk sounds, sometimes featuring their father Jones as a prominent guest artist. Jeneda’s children *Dyatihi*, age 12, and *Deezhchiil*, age nine, are the next generation to take up the family legacy of Navajo music and dance.

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### **Pronunciation Guide:**

**Diné:** dee-neh

***haatali:*** HA-tah-lee

***Sihasin:*** see-HA-seen

*Group members:*

**Jeneda Benally:** ju-nay-dah behn-AH-lee

**Dyatihi Benally:** dee-YA-tee-he behn-AH-lee

**Deezhchiil Benally:** deesh-chihl behn-AH-lee

## **Kahulanui**

Hawaiian swing  
Kailua-Kona, Hawaii

In the 1930s, Hawaiian hotel ballrooms were full of dancers doing the lindy and jitterbug to island swing bands. Hawaiian orchestras took the swing of Glenn Miller, added the Hawaiian ukulele and steel guitar, and created an infectious sound that became popular across America. Like on the mainland, Hawaiian big bands disappeared as tastes changed. Now the music has reemerged thanks to Kahulanui. This nine-piece juggernaut, whose name means “The Big Dance,” is led by Lena Naipo, a third-generation Hawaiian musician.

European brass instruments were first brought to Hawaiian islands in the mid-1800s. When ragtime came to Hawaii in the 1920s, local musicians fused it with native melodies, creating a genre known as *hapa haole*—“half white.” The cultural exchange went both ways, as the Hawaiian steel guitar became a staple of blues and country bands. During World War II, American servicemen brought their swing records with them. Local orchestras added a Hawaiian touch and gained a national radio audience through the “Hawai‘i Calls” program.

Lena heard about the big bands from his grandfather, Robert, who helped lead the Royal Hawaiian Orchestra in the 1930s, and whose ukulele playing made a strong impression on his young grandson. Lena’s father, Rodgers, toured the world as a musical ambassador for Hawaiian and Aloha Airlines. He also played with National Heritage Fellow “Aunty” Genoa Keawe, a beloved singer and ukulele player who fought to preserve the Hawaiian language.

For most of his career Lena played with small combos. One day in the studio he showed his producer a YouTube clip of Ray Kinney, a Hawaiian singer and swing band leader who played on Broadway and at hundreds of army bases starting in the 1920s. “This is what I really want to be doing,” Lena said, and they embarked on Kahulanui’s debut album, *Hula Ku‘i*. Two of the album’s songs were written by Lena’s grandfather; one is a *mele pana*, a song that celebrates a place—in this case the family’s hometown on Oahu.

The album earned a 2013 Grammy® nomination for Best Regional Roots Album. Suddenly a neglected part of the Pacific paradise’s musical legacy was in the spotlight again. “The Hawaiian big bands had really been forgotten,” says saxophonist Jesse Snyder. “Wanting to preserve their music was a big reason we got together.”

As the music reemerges, the Hawaiian language is also experiencing a renaissance—once threatened with extinction, it is once again spoken in homes and at schools. Kahulanui has even given American songbook standards Hawaiian language lyrics on their most recent album, *Mele Ho‘oilina* (“A Musical Legacy”). Alongside swing-era classics, it includes the oldest known hapa haole song, “The Eating of the Poi.” Kahulanui embraces the intersection of cultures at the heart of this music.

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## **Kahulanui**

**Kahulanui:** kah-who-lah-noo-ee

***hapa haole:*** hah-pah hah-oh-lay

**Genoa Keawe:** kah-weh

***Hula Ku‘i:*** hoo-lah koo-ee

***mele pana:*** may-leh pahn-ah

***Mele Ho‘oilina:*** may-lay hoh-oh-ee-lee-nah

***Group members:***

**Lena Naipo:** LEH-nah NIE-poh

## Music from China

Chinese silk and bamboo ensemble

New York, New York

From their home on the growing edge of New York City's dynamic Chinatown, the vibrant arts organization Music from China has just celebrated 35 years as a premiere U.S. institution "on the crossroads of East and West, the traditional and contemporary." The organization is best known for its eponymous ensemble that performs the string and wind music of China, known in Chinese tradition as silk and bamboo music, a reference to the materials from which the instruments are made. With its thrilling presentations, Music from China is redefining tradition with their innovation and vision.

Traditional music in present-day China includes many diverse regional styles, from raucous community bands to the precisely stylized Chinese opera. Building on a history of reverence for the virtuosic performer, the most promising music students typically continue to the conservatory level; here they learn a repertoire that encompasses much of China's musical variety. The members of Music from China thus perform, with the highest level of skill and nuance, folk and classical music from across China.

Growing up in an immigrant family in New York's Chinatown, Music from China organizer Susan Cheng loved the sounds of traditional music, but had little access to formal training. As a young adult, she joined an amateur ensemble, first studying zither under a master Cantonese opera musician. In 1984 Ms. Cheng founded Music from China, which, in addition to its performing ensemble, provides musical education through artist residencies in schools and colleges, and a prestigious Youth Orchestra, creating a conduit for rigorous education in Chinese musical traditions for a new generation.

At the National Folk Festival, Music from China will feature three outstanding soloists. Wang Guowei trained at Shanghai Conservatory, and joined the Shanghai Traditional Orchestra at age 17, eventually becoming concertmaster. An award-winning composer, he has been Music from China's Artistic Director since 1996. Mr. Wang plays the *erhu*, a traditional two-stringed spike fiddle played with a bow between the strings. Ann Yao began her musical studies with her grandfather, a noted folk musician, before continuing at the Shanghai Conservatory; her primary instrument is the *zheng*, a five-foot long, 21-stringed, horizontal, plucked zither that is among China's oldest-known instruments. Ms. Yao has performed with Music from China since shortly after moving to the U.S. in 1985. She currently lives in Florida, where she received the Florida Folk Heritage Award in 2009. Sun Li plays the pear-shaped *pipa*, a four-stringed, plucked lute. She is a graduate of the Shenyang Music Conservatory and was a member of the Central Song and Dance Ensemble in Beijing; now living in New York, Ms. Sun has been a member of Music from China since 2002. These three solo artists are accompanied by Ms. Cheng on *daruan* (a four-stringed bass lute), and Yu Chen on *dizi*, a bamboo flute. Ms. Yu, who studied at the Central Conservatory in Beijing, recently came to the U.S. to study arts education at New York University. Together, Music from China stands out, as the *Kansas City Star* recently noted, as "musicians of extraordinary accomplishment and sensitivity performing sophisticated, involving music."

*(Pronunciation Guide and Presenter Notes next page)*

## PRESENTERS' NOTES:

Website: <http://musicfromchina.org/about/>

Music From China is also deeply involved in promoting contemporary Chinese composition and in many cross-genre collaborations, although obviously that isn't part of their performance at the NFF. For instance, they sponsor a well-regarded composition competition, a music series (Premiere Works) of new works for traditional Chinese instruments, and have collaborated with ensembles from very different genres. By supporting the creation of new ensembles at colleges, and encouraging new composition for traditional instruments, Cheng points out that Music From China "provides opportunities for professional musicians now that they are living in this country, to contribute to enriching the cultural environment here."

Chinese traditional music shares a close connection with the Chinese language, in which meaning depends on pitch, or tone; Chinese folk music's distinct regional styles, whether they include singing or not, are as easily recognizable to the practiced ear as the regions' spoken dialects.

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### **Pronunciation Guide:**

*erhu*: ARE-who

*zheng*: zhung (rhymes with young)

*pipa*: PEE-pah

**Shenyang**: shehn-YONG

*daruan*: dah-ROO-en

*dizi*: TEE-suh

*Group members*

**Wang Guowei**: wahng GOH-way

**Ann Yao**: yow

**Sun Li**: sun lee

**Susan Cheng**: chang

## **Penn Lions**

Chinese lion dance

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

From traditional dance ensembles to step teams and ritual celebrations, on-campus cultural organizations at colleges and universities have long offered students who come from a shared heritage the opportunity to reinforce their identity and traditions. The Penn Lions, an award-winning lion dance troupe at the University of Pennsylvania, are one such group.

Dating back over two thousand years, lion dance is an extension of Chinese martial arts, and one of China's most important traditions. Now associated with Lunar New Year celebrations, the dance spreads joy and prosperity. It also appears at auspicious social events like restaurant openings and weddings, where it is thought to chase away evil spirits and summon good fortune. Supposedly possessing mystical properties, everything about the lion's presence is symbolic. The costume's five colors—yellow, black, green, red, and white—represent the five cardinal directions (east, west, north, south, and center) important in Chinese aesthetics. The lion walks in a zigzag path to confuse evil spirits, which the Chinese believe move in straight lines. Lion dance choreography often tells a story involving an act of overcoming puzzles and obstacles before obtaining a meaningful object—like cabbage and scrolls. The culmination of many performances is the picking of the greens, or *cai qing*, a homonym for spreading good fortune.

The lion is enacted by two dancers. One handles the head; the other plays the body and tail. Together, they demonstrate energetic movements combined with strong kung fu stances to bring the lions to life. The head dancer moves the lion's facial features to express moods. A “laughing” Buddha figure is also important. A representation of the temple monk who, according to some versions of the tradition's origin, trained the lions and started the dance, the masked Buddha teases and leads the lion with a fan. The lion is accompanied by musicians, who play a large drum, cymbals, and a gong. The music follows the moves of the lion and symbolizes its roar.

The Penn Lions were established during Lunar New Year in 2007, when one of the founding members, Henry Chow, realized that this integral tradition was absent from a campus with a large Asian population. That fall, Henry met Winston Ma, who with 10 years lion dance experience became the troupe's artistic director. The Penn Lions practice the *Hok San* style. Originating in Guangdong province in southern China, this style is associated with the mythical monster Nian. Each new year, Nian came down from the mountains and terrorized a nearby village; scared of loud noises, fire, and the color red, the monster was chased off by villagers after they fashioned a costume accompanied by firecrackers and loud banging on pots. The Hok San style emphasizes cat-like movements and difficult tricks called stacks.

In the spring of 2010, the Penn Lions won the Ivy League Championship at the East Coast Intercollegiate Lion Dance Competition. In 2012, they organized the Second Annual East Coast Intercollegiate Lion Dance Competition and hosted seven different troupes. Since then, the Penn Lions have won the 2013 and 2016 East Coast Intercollegiate Lion Dance titles and hosted the 2014 and 2017 competitions. They perform regularly on campus and throughout Philadelphia, especially during Lunar New Year. Just over 10 years after their founding, the Penn Lions have nurtured dozens of lion dancers in this ancient Chinese tradition and held over 200 performances.

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### **Pronunciation Guide:**

*cai qing*: thai cheen

*Hok San*: hoke sen

**Guangdong**: gwahn-DOHNG

**Nian**: neon

## **Professor Horn's Punch & Judy Show**

Punch and Judy puppetry

Baltimore, Maryland

Punch and Judy, the hilarious, slapstick hand puppetry tradition, was first brought to England from Italy more than 300 years ago; by a century later, it had made its way to the United States, with some of the earliest shows taking place in Maryland. According to a 1902 publication, Punch and Judy first appeared in the state at a show in Annapolis prior to the American Revolution. Another early Punch and Judy show was presented in Baltimore, at the city's Peale Museum, in the early 1800s. But, by far, the city's longstanding stalwart is Professor Horn's Punch & Judy Show, which is a part of an unbroken Baltimore tradition that dates back to 1897. Now in the care of puppeteer Mark Walker, Old Punch, the wisecracking trickster who exemplifies the best and worst of human nature, continues to bring smiles to the faces of both children and adults. Now he's here at the National Folk Festival to entertain you!

Punch is the descendant of Punchinello, the traditional Italian stage clown in the *commedia dell'arte* of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Over time, Punch evolved from actor to marionette to hand puppet; his successive miniaturizations only serve to highlight Punch's symbolic utility as a projection of human fears, foibles, and fantasies. The grumpy, outrageous Punch—who does things other people might like to do, but don't dare—can be counted on to deflate the pompous. Over the centuries, he and his long-suffering wife, Judy, have entertained audiences ranging from London's street children to sultans and kings.

The history of Professor Horn's Punch & Judy Show can be traced to April of 1897, when James Edward Ross, a.k.a. "Professor Rosella," premiered his Punch and Judy show at Pat Harris' Dime Museum in Baltimore. It became famous throughout the Mid-Atlantic and continued for 50 years. Professor Rosella's Punch and Judy was a favorite of President Franklin Roosevelt, and was often engaged by foreign diplomats in Washington, D.C., to entertain their guests.

When Rosella retired in 1948, Steve Brenner, a Baltimore comedian who had apprenticed with him, continued to present Rosella's Punch and Judy show. In the 1950s, Brenner claimed that, while there were others who copied Rosella's act, only he and veteran Baltimore entertainer George Horn could accurately be said to carry on traditional Punch and Judy shows. Brenner continued in the puppetry business only a few years, but George Horn persevered.

It was in Baltimore's Patterson Park on a school outing in 1963 that a young Mark Walker first saw George Horn's show, which left a lasting impression on the novice magician. Twenty years later, Walker visited George Horn and asked if he could continue Horn's Punch and Judy tradition. Horn agreed, and the two remained close friends until Horn passed away in 2004 at the age of 98. Walker honored his mentor by adopting the stage name "Professor Horn," and for decades presented the same show he experienced as a child. In recent years he has expanded his show, with a new stage, new characters, and new hand-carved puppets, with Punch still at the center of all the mischief.

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### **Pronunciation Guide:**

*commedia dell'arte*: coh-MEH-deeah dehl-LAHR-tay

**Rosella**: row-SEH-lah

## Rahim AlHaj Trio

Iraqi *oud*

Albuquerque, New Mexico

A 5,000-year-old musical tradition from the heart of Mesopotamia is alive and well in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the adopted home of renowned Iraqi *oud* virtuoso Rahim AlHaj. AlHaj is a cultural ambassador for the deep musical heritage of his homeland. His music evokes the experience of exile, new beginnings, and “the message of peace and compassion and love” that he shares with audiences to heal a world beset by conflict.

The *oud* is a fretless, short-necked Arabian lute central to Iraqi music. It is an ancestor of the lute family of instruments that includes the guitar. Traditional Iraqi music is organized into a series of *maqamat*, or modes. Each *maqam* has a distinctive scale and specific melodic formulae, and is often associated with a certain mood or season. Unlike western music, which is based on whole and half tones (12 semitones altogether), Iraqi music is based on 24 quarter tones.

AlHaj began learning the *oud* at the age of nine. Studying under the legendary Munir Bashir and Salim Abdul Kareen at Baghdad’s Conservatory of Fine Arts, Rahim established himself as one of the world’s foremost *oud*ists. But his political activities were anathema to Saddam Hussein’s repressive regime, which twice imprisoned him, subjecting him to torture and beatings. His composition entitled “Why,” based on a poem by a longtime friend who lost his legs in the Iran-Iraq War, became an anthem of the resistance movement. During the Gulf War, his mother sold almost all of her belongings to acquire false documents so Rahim could escape a rumored assassination by security forces.

In 2000, AlHaj was granted political asylum in the United States, landing in Albuquerque, where he got a job as a security guard. Unsatisfied, AlHaj rented a music hall at the University of New Mexico and organized his first U.S. solo concert, relaunching an international music career. He is now a two-time Grammy® nominee. Rahim became a U.S. citizen in 2008, and in 2015 he was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellowship, our nation’s highest honor in the folk and traditional arts.

The Rahim AlHaj Trio features two other musicians who call Albuquerque home. Master artist Sourena Sefati plays *santour* (Persian hammered dulcimer); a soloist in numerous leading orchestras in his native Iran, Sefati is an award-winning composer and performer who has been living and teaching in the U.S. since 2014. The third and newest member is percussionist Nick Baker. The Trio’s recent release, *One Sky* (2018), was inspired by AlHaj and Sefati’s perspectives on the Iran-Iraq War. Reflecting on this collaboration, AlHaj notes that “our nations were sworn enemies ... but today an Iranian and an Iraqi are making music together. To establish peace in the world we need to learn and listen with open hearts to one another, to create more beauty together rather than more destruction.”

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### Pronunciation Guide:

**oud:** ood

**santour:** san-tour

**maqamat:** mah-ka-maht

**maqam:** mah-KAHM

**Munir Bashir:** moo-near bah-sheer

**Salim Abdul Kareen:** saw-leem ahh-duel  
kah-reen

*Group members*

**Rahim AlHaj:** rah-HEEM al-aj

**Sourena Sefati:** sue-reh-nah seh-fah-tee

## Rare Essence with DJ Kool

go-go

Washington, D.C.

Dubbed “the wickedest band alive,” by old-school rap hero Doug E. Fresh, the legendary go-go band Rare Essence has honed its sound to near perfection. Together since the late 1970s, the group has performed thousands of times. According to Christopher Richards of the *Washington Post*, no matter which show you experience, “it’s easy to believe you’re seeing the best one.”

Go-go is a highly syncopated, percussive, regional offshoot of funk pioneered in the early ’70s by Washington, D.C. guitarist Chuck Brown. The music is a blend of Latin beats, call-and-response chants, rhythm and blues, gospel, and jazz layered over a signature percussion pattern. Creating crowd interaction and a continuous party groove are key—the beat never stops, and like a live mix tape one song often blends into another to keep people dancing. While go-go never quite broke through on the national stage, it continues to thrive in the DMV (as locals refer to the D.C., Maryland, and Virginia region), thanks to performances, bootleg recordings, social media videos, and the loyalty of its fans.

Rare Essence (R. E. to its fans), founded by a group of teenagers who met at St. Thomas More Catholic Academy, began by playing the late ’70s funk of Parliament Funkadelic and Cameo before developing their own go-go sound. By 1981 they were playing to thousands in the DMV. Several major label singles in the ’90s—including regional mega-hits “Overnight Scenario” and “Body Snatchers”—failed to yield national stardom, and multiple R.E. members have faced early deaths or personal battles, but that hasn’t stopped R.E. from remaining a top area draw. “We get kids who grew up listening to their parents’ go-go cassettes,” explains founding guitarist Andre “Whiteboy” Johnson.

Today, original members Johnson and lead talker Jas Funk and longtime front man Shorty Corleone are joined by newer members including rapper Killer Cal and singer Tabria Dixon. “Some of our newer members grew up with our music, and now they’re part of the band.... They bring the energy that comes along with their youth,” says Johnson—as well as new material from the worlds of hip hop and R&B that R.E. can go-go-ize.

In Salisbury, R.E. will be joined by honorary member DJ Kool, the DC-bred DJ and MC who grew up on go-go and whose earlier releases reflect that influence. His 1996 single “Let Me Clear My Throat” remains a party anthem.

While go-go is now celebrated as one of D.C.’s key indigenous art forms, it also faces the challenge of seeing venues close in the wake of gentrification. Still, R.E. performs at least twice a week, and sometimes twice a night. “I know our originality has a lot to do with it,” says Johnson, “and just keeping your ear to the ground to understand what the audience really wants.”

## Samba Mapangala & Orchestre Virunga

East African rumba, soukous, and *benga*

East Africa by way of Maryland

Despite having made his home in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, D.C. for nearly two decades, Samba Mapangala retains the title of “East Africa’s most beloved singer.” With an astonishing high tenor voice that has been described as “melting in the ears,” Mapangala offers trenchant and uplifting commentaries on daily life in East Africa and beyond, while the rich melodies and undeniable rhythms of his legendary band Orchestra Virunga beckon dancers to the floor.

Samba Mapangala was born in Matadi, Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo), and sang as a youth in his church choir. Moving to the capital city in the early 1970s to attend secondary school, he soon became a part of Kinshasa’s vibrant music scene. In 1977, Mapangala and his first band, Les Kinois, moved to Nairobi, Kenya. His fame grew quickly, and in 1981 he founded Orchestra Virunga, named after a mountain chain that includes Africa’s two most active volcanoes.

The raw musical materials from which Mapangala shaped his sound reflect ways in which African music incorporated global influences in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, Congolese musicians mixed sounds from South America and the Caribbean, especially Afro-Cuban and Haitian elements, with traditional Congolese music. The result was African rumba, later called soukous, which spread across the continent in the 1970s. *Benga* is an earthier style of dance music that emerged in the 1950s in Kenya as performers adapted the lilting dance rhythms of the Luo people to Western electric instruments. Composing and singing in both Lingala and Swahili, Mapangala created an innovative musical mix of these Congolese and Kenyan styles.

Orchestra Virunga’s fame spread worldwide in 1984 with the release of their album *Malako*. The CD reissue of this classic album, under the new title *Virunga Volcano*, was named one of the “100 Essential World Music CDs” by the *Rough Guides* reference series. Since relocating to the U.S. in 1997, Samba has continued to perform around the world. He also continues to produce acclaimed—and eminently danceable—recordings, the latest being 2011’s *Maisha ni Matamu* (*Life is Sweet*). Eschewing politics, Samba Mapangala employs his gorgeous music to promote peace and unity, whether through his work as a World Wildlife Fund Goodwill Ambassador, through topical songs like his most recent single “Chagua Chagua,” which urges peaceful elections—or by uniting audiences on the dance floor.

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### Pronunciation Guide:

**Virunga:** vee-ROON-gah

**soukous:** SOO-koos

**benga:** BEHN-gah

**Matadi:** ma-TA-dee

**Les Kinois:** lay kee-nwah

**Luo:** loo-oh

**Lingala:** leen-GAH-lah

**Malako:** mah-lah-koh

**Maisha ni Matamu:** mah-ee-shah nee mah-tah-moo

**Chagua:** cha-goo-ah

## **Sheila Kay Adams**

Appalachian songs, stories, and ballads  
Marshall, North Carolina

Seventh-generation ballad singer, storyteller, and musician Sheila Kay Adams is a national treasure. She performs the old mountain ballads, stories, and songs with a sense of conviction, honesty, and dignity that reveals a deep respect for tradition, and demonstrates the emotional intensity of the unadorned human voice.

Adams hails from Sodom Laurel, a rural Blue Ridge mountain community in Madison County, North Carolina, so named during the Civil War by an itinerant Baptist preacher after he discovered a brothel nearby. This area is renowned for its unbroken tradition of unaccompanied ballad singing that early Scots-Irish and English settlers brought with them in the mid-17th century. Adams learned to sing from her great-aunt Dellie Chandler Norton, whom she called “Granny,” and other beloved singers in the community, such as Dillard Chandler and the Wallin family (including National Heritage Fellow Doug Wallin). “It’s a long line of folks,” Adams explains. “They held onto these songs. This was the love letter in their hearts, and they passed these songs on to me.”

Adams began performing in public in her teens, first singing at community gatherings known as “round robins,” where family and friends sat in a circle, awaiting their turn to sing. Throughout her career she has performed at festivals, community and family gatherings, music camps, and workshops around the region, country, and the United Kingdom, including the acclaimed International Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, Tennessee, and the 1976 and 2003 Smithsonian Folklife Festivals. She is also an accomplished clawhammer-style banjo player, and a delightful raconteur of mountain people and life, whose artistry conveys a powerful sense of family and place.

In addition to her charismatic live performances, Adams has translated her excellence as a storyteller to the page. She is the author of two books: *Come Go Home With Me*, a semi-autobiographical collection of short stories, and the 2004 novel *My Old True Love*. Adams also appeared in the movies *Last of the Mohicans* (1992) and *Songcatcher* (2000), a movie for which she also served as technical advisor and singing coach.

Adams’s lifelong devotion to preserving and perpetuating her home state’s cultural heritage earned her the North Carolina Folklore Society’s Brown-Hudson Award (1998) and the North Carolina Heritage Award (2016). In 2013, Adams was awarded a National Heritage Fellowship, the nation’s highest honor in the folk and traditional arts.

## Tamburaški Sastav Ponoć

tamburitza

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Tamburaški Sastav Ponoć represents a new generation of brilliant players of tamburitza music, the traditional string band music of the Balkans. Tamburitza has flourished for over a century in ethnic communities across the industrial Mid-Atlantic and Upper Midwest, where Eastern European immigrants found work in the region's factories and mines. Until recently, it has had limited exposure beyond these communities. But that is changing as this cadre of virtuosic young musicians bring tamburitza out of neighborhood taverns and community halls and onto concert stages across America and the world.

Tamburitza instruments have been played in the Balkans for at least 500 years. The five primary ones are the *prim*, *brač*, *čelo*, *bugarija*, and *berda*, all fretted, steel-stringed acoustic instruments in the lute family. The smallest, the *prim*, is a soprano instrument employed primarily for melody or harmony. Next is the *brač*, an alto-voiced instrument twice as large as the *prim* that is used for melody, harmony, or counterpoint. The *čelo* plays counter melody. Unlike an orchestral cello, it is held like a guitar and picked rather than bowed. The *bugarija* (or *kontra*), similar to the *čelo* in size and design, provides rhythmic chording. The *berda* is a fretted bass and, like the *čelo*, played with a pick rather than a bow.

The members of Ponoć (“midnight”) grew up surrounded by Eastern European culture—Peter Kosovec in Detroit and Mark Stafura, Ben Wagner, Nikola Vranesevic, and John Huckle in the Pittsburgh area. Peter, Mark, Ben, and Nikola come from families heavily involved with maintaining Balkan music and dance traditions in their communities. Peter released his first solo album by age 17, cementing his place as one of the tradition's finest young *primaši*. Mark's father was the longtime director of the famed Duquesne University Tamburitians (DUT). John was a latecomer to tamburitza, joining the Junior Tamburitians of Duquesne at age 16. The five musicians met when performing with DUT during their college years in Pittsburgh. They all now make their homes there and are respected performers and teachers of the tradition. Peter, Mark, Ben, and Nikola have all been honored with the Lou Cavic Founder's Award, presented by the Tamburitza Association of America to a young person who demonstrates an outstanding devotion to the preservation of tamburitza music and Slavic culture.

While in DUT, all five members of Ponoć studied multiple instruments in the tamburitza family; in this *sastav* (“ensemble”), audiences will see Peter on *prim*, John and Mark on first and second *brač*, respectively, Ben on *kontra*, and Nikola on *berda*. The ensemble's repertoire focuses primarily on music from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia. They also draw on Gypsy, Macedonian, Bulgarian, Greek, Hungarian, and Italian influences.

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### Pronunciation Guide:

**Tamburaški Sastav Ponoć:** TAHM-boo-rahsh-kee SAHS-tahv PO-noch

**tamburitza:** tahm-buh-REET-sah

**prim:** preem

**brač:** bratch

**čelo:** as in cello

**bugarija:** boo-GAH-ree-yah

**berda:** BEAR-dah

**kontra:** KOHN-trah

**primaši:** pree-MAH-shee

**Cavic:** cah-vihch

*Group members:*

**Kosovec:** KO-seh-vets

**Stafura:** sta-FYUR-ah

**Wagner:** wag-nur

**Nikola Vranesevic:** nee-ko-la vra-NEH-seh-vitch

## **Terry & the Zydeco Bad Boys**

zydeco

Duson, Louisiana

Terry Domingue is a native of Duson, a small community located 10 miles west of Lafayette in the heart of French Louisiana. Coming of age in this hotbed of Cajun and Creole culture, he developed a passion for zydeco. Since emerging on the scene nearly two decades ago with his own band, Terry & the Zydeco Bad Boys, Terry has been hailed as a rising star who is carrying deeply traditional zydeco into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

A driving, accordion-led music with signature *frottoir* (rubboard) percussion, zydeco is an energetic, highly danceable music that springs from the rich cultural mix of Southwest Louisiana and East Texas. The style emerged during the musically fertile post-World War II period but has roots in an earlier era: French-speaking African American musicians mixed older Cajun and French Creole dance music, known as “la la,” with blues, R&B, and rock and roll to create a pulsing sound that packed the dance halls. Zydeco, which is said to take its name from the idiomatic title of a popular song, “Les Haricots [zydeco] Sont Pas Salé,” continues to evolve, often incorporating hip hop elements. Yet, musicians like Terry hold true to its roots though traditional instrumentation, two-step and waltz rhythms, and French lyrics highlighting the trials and joys of life in Creole Louisiana.

Growing up immersed in French Creole culture, Terry first heard zydeco at trail rides he attended with his father. At these community gatherings at the intersection of Creole cowboy and musical heritage, four-year-old Terry would stand at the foot of the stage, enthralled by the accordion. After teaching himself to play, Terry got his first accordion at the age of eight. Learning to speak French Creole was also central to his upbringing; his grandparents would not have it any other way.

Terry quickly gained acclaim when he founded the Bad Boys in 2001 for the group’s commitment to a zydeco sound that can be traced to the music’s roots in la la music. Having released four albums—most recently, 2017’s *Allons Zydeco*—the band continues to earn praise for playing some of the most interesting zydeco today, both highly innovative and deeply respectful of tradition. In addition to Creole influences, Terry draws upon Cajun music, plus nods to swamp pop, R&B ballads, and more. He proudly sings both traditional and original compositions in French, and has recorded zydeco classics by legends like Boozoo Chavis and John Delafosse. For Terry, playing this music serves a higher purpose. “Music, to me, is my therapy,” he explains. “When I get on stage, I forget about all my troubles and free my soul.”

In 2016, Terry & the Zydeco Bad Boys were featured on an *NBC Nightly News* segment that proclaimed Lafayette the “Happiest City in America.” When the band makes their National Folk Festival debut this September in Salisbury, they are sure to inspire happy, infectious smiles and get attendees two-stepping on the dance floor.

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### **Pronunciation Guide:**

**Duson:** doo-SAHN

**Lafayette:** lah-fi-EHT

**frottoir:** froh-TWAHR

**Les Haricots [Zydeco] Sont Pas Salé:** leh  
AIHR-eeh-coh sohn pah sell-eeh

*Group members:*

**Terry Domingue:** doh-MANG

## **The Green Fields of America**

Irish

East Coast of the United States

Four decades ago, renowned musician and folklorist Mick Moloney gathered some of the finest Irish American musicians and dancers to perform at the Bicentennial Festival of American Folklife. Overwhelming interest in that program led Moloney and friends to form the Green Fields of America, the first group on either side of the Atlantic to bring together Irish vocal, instrumental, and dance traditions on the concert stage, sparking a renaissance that continues to this day. The group's ever-changing lineup draws on the legacy of immigrant musicians who created a rich new repertoire in America out of diverse traditions from across the Emerald Isle. As Moloney says, "The personnel has changed but the concept has remained constant over the past thirty years: to show in one major ensemble some of Irish America's finest musicians and dancers." Their lineup at the 79<sup>th</sup> National Folk Festival includes:

Green Fields founder Mick Moloney is a stellar singer, tenor banjo player, guitarist, and mandolin player. A native of County Limerick, he learned much of his repertoire from older musicians in neighboring County Clare, and was a well-known professional musician in Ireland before immigrating to the United States in 1973 and earning his doctorate in folklore. For many accomplishments as a teacher, producer, performer, and scholar, he was awarded a National Heritage Fellowship in 1999, the highest honor in the nation for traditional artists.

1986 All-Ireland senior button accordion champion and 2016 National Heritage Fellow Billy McComiskey began playing accordion when he was eight years old in his hometown of Brooklyn, New York, studying with the late Sean McGlynn from East Galway and Paddy O'Brien of County Tipperary. After playing the Bicentennial Festival of American Folklife, McComiskey moved to Baltimore and has played a major role in the Baltimore-Washington, D.C., Irish music scene—and Green Fields—ever since.

San Francisco native Athena Tergis released her first album of fiddle tunes at age 16. Shortly after, she moved to Galway and immersed herself in Irish fiddling, playing with groups such as the Sharon Shannon Band. She has toured with the Dublin Symphony, headlined *Riverdance on Broadway*, and has been a member of Green Fields since 2001.

Vocalist Liz Hanley grew up in a musical family in Boston, learning to play traditional Irish tunes from her father and grandfather. While completing her Bachelor's in Music at NYU, her professor, Mick Moloney, invited her to join Green Fields. After years living in Brooklyn, where she made a name for herself as one of the top young musicians in the New York Irish music scene, she now makes her home in Sheffield, England.

A former All-Ireland and World Irish Dance champion, Niall O'Leary performs as a soloist and with artists like Natalie MacMaster and Cherish the Ladies. Born in Dublin, he studied with legendary dancers Kevin Massey and Rory O'Connor. He now lives in New York, where he runs an award-winning dance studio and multiple dance festivals.

## **Tinkus San Simon**

Bolivian *tinku* parade

Northern Virginia

Northern Virginia is the epicenter of a vibrant Bolivian community that took root in the United States starting in the 1980s. As of the 2010 census, over 30,000 Bolivian Americans reside in the state. This constitutes the largest Bolivian-born population of any state in the country. Dance traditions are a major focus of cultural continuity for Bolivian immigrants in Arlington and the surrounding region. Here, community gatherings featuring competitions between vividly costumed cultural fraternities, followed by a rollicking parade with music reverberating from speakers stacked in the backs of pick-up trucks, have become a well-known feature of the cultural landscape, and a huge attraction for non-Bolivians as well.

There are hundreds of forms of folk dance in Bolivia. Some convey historical themes—for instance, *La Morenada*, which depicts the experience of slaves in the silver mines and vineyards—while others reflect religious experience, as in *La Diablada*, a Carnival de Oruro dance about the struggle between good and evil. The specialty of Falls Church’s heralded Tinkus San Simon is the *tinku*, which hails from the Potosi region. The name *tinku* comes from the indigenous Andean languages Quechua and Aymara, and means something akin to “encounter” or “coming together.”

The first tinkus were a form of ritualized combat, stretching back perhaps a thousand years, through which towns and clan groupings could resolve concerns like political succession or water rights. Any blood shed was considered a sacrifice to Pachamama, or Mother Earth, ensuring a bountiful harvest. Ritual tinku continues only in a small region in the high plains of southwestern Bolivia, but festive versions of tinku are now performed as a national dance across Bolivia. Today’s festive tinkus retain heavy, almost martial drum rhythms and athletic, fiercely swinging arm motions and kicks that recall the tinku battles. The spinning, percussive motions of grouped “blocks” of male and female dancers are highlighted by elaborate, colorful costumes with swirling embroidered skirts, traditional sandals called *abarcas*, and, for the men, leather hats called *monteras*, modeled on the helmets of the conquistadores, which they use to strike the ground to draw strength from Pachamama.

The word *tinku* refers to both the dance and the dancer, thus the name Tinkus San Simon Filial Virginia is a shorthand that indicates these are the people who dance the tinku of the San Simon fraternity, Virginia chapter. The Virginia branch is one of more than 20 San Simon fraternities worldwide. For Bolivian emigrants these fraternal groups provide social aid as well as a means for *resistencia cultural*—maintenance of cultural traditions in a new homeland. The tinku parade at the National Folk Festival will feature their performing troupe of five male and five female dancers, surrounded by a parade group of over thirty more dancers from the San Simon fraternity, including young people who have learned the tradition from family and friends while growing up in the United States.

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### **Pronunciation Guide:**

#### **Tinkus San Simon:**

TEEN-cooes sahn see-moan

***La Morenada:*** LA mow-reh-NAH-dah

***La Diablada:*** LA dee-ah-BLAH-dah

#### **Carnival de Oruro:**

Car-nee-bahl deh OH-roo-roh

**Potosi:** poe-toe-see

**Quechua:** keh-choo-AH

**Aymara:** ai-mah-rah

***abarcas:*** ah-bar-kahs

***monteras:*** mohn-TEH-rah

***resistencia cultural:*** reh-cys-tehn-see-ah cool-too-rawl

## **Yamini Kalluri & the Carnatic Ensemble**

*Kuchipudi* dance

New York City

As cultural traditions take root in diaspora communities, new connections between generations and cultures are both necessary and revitalizing. In New York City in 2019, acclaimed young dancer Yamini Kalluri, a master of the *Kuchipudi* dance of her Telugu forbearers, began a collaboration with the Carnatic Ensemble, an intergenerational trio of outstanding musicians of Tamil heritage. Their performance at the National Folk Festival braids together these two strands of South Indian tradition into a spellbinding presentation of their shared heritage.

Kuchipudi dance is named for the village where it originated in the state of Andhra Pradesh. One of India's nine classical dance forms, Kuchipudi emerged out of the ancient tradition of Hindu dance-dramas called *yakshagaana*. For three centuries an ensemble form featuring male dancers, modern Kuchipudi crystalized nearly a century ago with the introduction of a solo dance tradition and the training of female dancers. Among Kuchipudi's signature elements is its emphasis on dexterity and vigor, exemplified by a final act danced upon the rim of a brass plate.

At just 21, Yamini Kalluri has already established herself as a brilliant Kuchipudi performer, choreographer, and teacher. Born in the United States, Kalluri grew up in Hyderabad, India, where she began studying Kuchipudi dance at age seven. The form, known for its heightened use of *abhinaya* (expression), was a perfect outlet for Yamini. She was only 12 when her guru, the famed Padmasri Dr. Sobha Naidu, honored her talent by elevating her to the role of teacher. Yamini Kalluri has performed across India, England, and North America, and now lives and teaches in New York City.

As a dance form devoted to graceful and theatrical storytelling, Kuchipudi depends upon the skillful interplay between dancer and singer. Vocalist Shaaranya Pillai deftly renders these traditional epic dramas with a nuance and emotional clarity immediately accessible to modern audiences. Pillai, a New York native in her 20s, was first introduced to Carnatic music by her mother Smt. Kiruba Pillai, who began instructing her through song when Shaaranya was still in the womb. She studies now with guru Smt. Kiranavali Vidyasankar.

Carnatic percussion and melody instruments are the other essential complements to Kuchipudi dance. The *mridangam*, played by Murali Balachandran, is the defining instrument of Carnatic music. This double-headed, barrel-shaped drum undergirds the music's complex rhythmic structure. Balachandran comes from a long lineage of Tamil musicians and dancers. He is now New York's first-call percussionist for South Indian dance. Completing the Carnatic Ensemble is the skillful playing of young California-born violin master Parthiv Mohan. Carnatic musicians play the instrument in a unique seated position, producing a melodic expressiveness that carries the abhinaya of the dancer and singer from stage to audience.

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### **Pronunciation Guide:**

***Kuchipudi:*** koo-chuh-poodee

**Telugu:** tay-luh-goo

**Tamil:** tahm-uhl

**Andhra Pradesh:** AN-druh prah-DAYSH

***yakshagaana:*** yeck-shih-GAHN-ah

**Hyderabad:** hye-dur-ah-bahd

***abhinaya:*** aa-bee-nay-uh

**Padmasri:** puhd-mush-sree

**Sobha Naidu:** soh-bah NIGH-doo

***mridangam:*** mrih-DUNG-gum

*Group members:*

**Yamini Kalluri:** YAH-min-ee kahl-oor-ee

**Shaaranya Pillai:** SHAAH-run-ya pill-ay

**Bala Skandan:** bahl-uh skahn-dun

**Parthiv Mohan:** PAHR-tiv MOH-hun