

2018

Concert recording 2018-10-21

Cristi Catt

Nikola Radan

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. World Music Ensemble

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UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS.

J. William Fulbright
College of Arts & Sciences

ALL OVER THE MAP

BLUE THREAD

Cristi Catt, soprano

Nikola Radan, flute

with the

UA WORLD MUSIC ENSEMBLE

UAMusic

October 21, 2018 | 7:30 PM
Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall

CONCERT PROGRAM

Ondas do mar de Vigo Cantigas de Amigo
attributed to Martin Codax, ca. 13th century

Mandad'Ey Comigo

Mia Irmãna Fremosa

Ay Ondas Que Eu Vim Veer

Ay Deus Se Sab'Ora Meu Amigo

INTERMISSION

Ballad of the Broken Token

A new telling of the tale drawing on Portuguese, Sephardic and Ozark versions of the ballad including *Bela Infanta*, *John Reily*, *Lavabá la Blanca Nina*, *Pretty Little Maid*

Lord Banyan

Source is a field recording of *Emma Hays Dusenbery* (1862–1941) recorded by John Lomax

Ballad of the Cruel Sister

A new telling of the tale drawing from versions from England, Scotland, Iceland, Vermont, and the Ozarks

ABOUT BLUE THREAD

Over the years, Cristi Catt (soprano) and Nikola Radan (flute) have been conversing and collaborating on the ways in which music connects people as it travels. Like a replicating organism, over land or by sea, music adapts and regenerates, finding life in new times, different places. This has led to performances with BallMus and Clash of Civilizations and collaborations on various theatrical productions. The thread is blue, colored by the melancholy "blues" that haunt our tunes and by the waterways that both inspire the lyrics of many of our songs and provides a passageway to other cultures. For this program, BLUE THREAD is thrilled to perform with THE UA WORLD MUSIC ENSEMBLE a recently established music group that explores and performs music from all over the world and uses instruments from the Middle East, Medieval Europe, Western Folk music instruments, among many others.

CRISTI CATT, soprano, is a founding member of the acclaimed vocal ensemble Tapestry. A two-time Luso-American Foundation grant recipient, she has explored the Gallego-Portuguese cantigas and their cousins for over twenty years. She has recordings with MDG, Telarc, Erato and several independent labels. She teaches at Berklee College of Music, New England Conservatory and Merrimack College and presents workshops throughout the US and abroad. She is the author of *The Kinesthetic Singer: Lessons on Singing from Basketball and Yoga* (kinesthetic singer.com). The L.A. Times wrote "the stunning solo excursions by Cristi Catt were as radiant and exciting as any singing I've heard all season" while *Fanfare Magazine* described her in very different terms "Catt and Tonic sometimes sing in a manner more suggestive of folk, even pop (think Joan Baez or Judy Collins), than classical music. This doesn't seem self-consciously "hip," however, and the ease and spontaneity of their singing can't hide their expert musicianship." She has recorded Cantigas de Santa Maria and Cantigas de Amigo with Hourglass on their recording "What do you see?" available on iTunes. Stay tuned for her next recording of *Cantigas de Amigo* with Talltale Crossing. www.cristicatt.com

NIKOLA RADAN is a professor in the Department of Music at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. He is a professional flautist, composer, songwriter, producer, and educator. Nikola is the founder of the critically-acclaimed BallMus, cofounder of the internationally-awarded Clash of Civilizations music project, and has recently started a new multicultural music project called Blue Thread, where he explores Medieval ballads that connected different areas of the world—Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas—during the time of the Trade Routes. He has established himself as an artist who has been pushing boundaries between music genres and world traditions. His music has been premiered in the Istanbul Jazz Festival 2004, St. John's Smith Square Concert Hall in London 2005, Carnegie Hall 2006, and Houston Contemporary Music Society 2009. Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art 2012-2017, and various other venues in Japan and Europe. He has also composed music scores for several documentaries and independent films played on PBS, Sundance, and IFC channels. His current musical and research project is a study of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* and *Cantigas de Amigo* based on a thirteenth-century manuscript from the Iberian Peninsula.

Concert sponsored in part by the generous support of:

The UA Artists and Concerts Committee and the Fulbright Humanities Program

PROGRAM NOTES

PART I: LOVE SONGS OF THE IBERIAN PENINSULA

We open with a Galician folk song that we consider a cousin to the *Cantigas de Amigo*. It shares similar themes and sentiments as a woman waits, lamenting the absence of her lover who is away at sea. Cristi found this Galician folk song in an early 20th century folk song collection.

The melodies for most of the *Cantigas de Amigo* are lost, save a handful discovered by a Madrid bookseller in 1914. The *Cantigas de Amigo* are rooted in native song traditions and short Arabic love songs (*kiarchas*) and are unique in that they take the point of view of a woman. These "songs of a friend" are part of a love lyric tradition that dates back to the 9th century that is still with us in both oral and written music traditions. *Cantigas de Amigo* are attributed to both trovadors/composers and jograls/performers. We are lucky that there are *vidas* (life stories) of medieval Iberian musicians and composers and it is interesting to note that Martin Codax is clearly defined as a jogral. The jograls are a fascinating part of Iberian music, the link between two worlds, mixing and pollinating traditions of court and country. Some believe that rather than composing these songs, Codax became known for his performance of these songs (much like singers of today are remembered for a song while the songwriter is forgotten). It is possible that Codax learned these songs in his travels between court and countryside, creating his own versions of the songs and that his work is an extension of women's oral traditions in Medieval Iberia. Hundreds of medieval *Cantigas de Amigo* texts survive but only six appear with melodies. For the most part, the tones of the melody are clearly set. There are hints around rhythm and room for interpretation. Once the melody takes form, Blue Thread begins the process of creating a new work, weaving together old and new elements through improvisation and arrangement to craft their collective response to these magical touchstones. The language of these songs is Gallego-Portuguese which evolved into two distinct languages, modern day Portuguese and Galician. In the Middle Ages, a variety of languages flourished throughout the Iberian Peninsula and Gallego-Portuguese was known as the language of love and devotional poetry.

PART II: TWO BALLADS, ALL OVER THE MAP

This evening marks the launch of a new project which explores Ozark ballad traditions in connection with Portuguese and Sephardic songs.

Catt specializes in medieval music and has built numerous performance and recording projects around Galician Portuguese *Cantigas de Amigo*. Nikola Radan has long been fascinated by Sephardic ballad traditions that have travelled from Spain to diverse points around the globe including Greece, Istanbul, Israel, the Balkans and the US. Catt and Radan found common ground between Sephardic and Portuguese folk traditions in their debut concert tour of Portugal. As part of their concert tour, they appeared in Cascais, A Cape Verdean choir opened for their concert in Cascais. Afterwards, Catt spoke with some of the singers who told her about song connections in Cape Verde and also India. This led to more research that ultimately led her to the romance, *Bela Infanta*.

Bela Infanta is a perfect pairing with the *Cantigas de Amigo*. In the *cantigas*, a woman waits

by the sea for her lover to return. *Bela Infanta* opens with a young woman waiting by the sea and her lover returns in disguise. He tests her loyalty and in most versions they are reunited. It turns out that Catt had several versions of this ballad in her collection including songs from Tras-os-Montes and Sephardic traditions.

The story is of particular interest to Catt because it is one she has sung for over twenty years. In English folk song tradition, it is known as John Riley and various other titles as part of a "Broken Token" folk song tradition. When Blue Thread was invited to the University of Arkansas for a concert in Fall 2018, Radan and Catt were curious to know if there were Ozark ballads based on *Bela Infanta*/John Riley/Broken Token Songs. Catt's ancestors settled in the hills of southern Missouri and she spent childhood summers on Ozark rivers, soaking up local music. Her interest in the meeting points between medieval and world traditions led to gathering multiple versions of several ballads with ancient roots but she had not yet had the opportunity to explore folk ballads of the Ozarks.

This past summer, Catt and Radan discovered a wealth of these songs in the Maria Celestia Parler Ozark Folksong Collection at the Special Collections of the University of Arkansas. The collection contains several versions of John Riley/Broken Token songs under several different titles. These songs were collected throughout the Ozarks by Parler in the 1940s and 50s. Tonight our tale combines Portuguese, Sephardic, and Ozark versions of the ballad and will continue to develop and bring in other versions from all over the map with future stops in Brazil, the Azores, Sri Lanka and Goa.

Catt and Radan had the opportunity to listen to rare field recordings of Emma Dusenbury made by John Lomax for the Library of Congress in 1930. Born in 1862, Dusenbury was a bridge to older song traditions. Catt and Radan were particularly moved by a piece she called *Lord Banyan* and include it here. They are just beginning to research this ballad that seems to be somehow related to Lord Bateman, which dates back to medieval times and they will continue to research this ballad.

Catt also has close to one hundred versions of another ballad found in the Ozark Collection. It is known as Twa Sister, Cruel Sister and many other titles. The earliest version dates from 1656 when it appeared on a broadside as "The Miller and the King's Daughter." The tale is set by the river or sea and the story differs drastically from telling to telling. For this evening's version of the tale, we have mixed Ozark versions (including an excerpt of Dusenbury's version of The Miller's Daughter) with those from Vermont, Scotland, Ireland, England and Icelandic to continue the thread of this chilling tale.

UA WORLD MUSIC ENSEMBLE

Alexis Newman, flute; Prashant Andand, horn; Connor Gott, bassoon
Deborah Ellis, mandolin; Mahshid Iraniparast, santoor; Ngo Khanh, guitar
Michelle Pribbernow, hurdy-gurdy; Diana Ricketts, clarinet; Alexandra Rouw, piano
Susan Shelton, percussion, dulcimer; Jordan Strickland, bass, percussion
Nikola Radan, director

UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER

MON 22 RAZORBONES: Solos & Quartets
7:30 pm, Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall
free and open to the public

TUE 23 Faculty Recital:
Cory Mixdorf, trombone
Tomoko Kashiwagi, piano
6:00 pm, Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall
free and open to the public

TUE 23 Schola Cantorum
7:30 pm, Faulkner Performing Arts Center
\$10 general admission; \$5 student/faculty/staff

THU 25 Guest Artist Recital:
Juan Pablo "Juampy" Juárez, guitar
7:30 pm, Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall
free and open to the public

OCTOBER CONT.

FRI 26 Guest Artist Recital:
Angelique Clay, soprano
Casey Robards, piano
7:30 pm, Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall
free and open to the public

FRI 26 Fulbright Chamber Music Series
7:30 pm, Giffels Auditorium
free and open to the public

MON 29 Malis Voice Studio Recital
7:30 pm, Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall
free and open to the public

TUE 30 Collage Concert:
Celebrating Bernstein at 100
7:30 pm, Faulkner Performing Arts Center
\$10 general admission; \$5 student/faculty/staff

Ushering and stage management for this concert provided by
Sigma Alpha Iota and Phi Mu Alpha

GIVING AND SUPPORT

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The University of Arkansas, Department of Music is housed in the George and Boyce Billingsley Music Building and is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music. Home to over 300 music students and fifty faculty members, we offer a variety of degree programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Through generous support from alumni and friends, the Department of Music became an All-Steinway School in 2010. The University of Arkansas is the third SEC school to gain the distinction and one of only 150 universities worldwide with the honor.

With the completion of the 600-seat Faulkner Performing Arts Center, the University of Arkansas added a world class performance venue. The Department recital hall, Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall, is located in the Fine Arts Building, adjacent to the Music Building. The 200-seat Concert Hall offers an intimate setting for chamber and solo recitals. Department faculty and students perform over 600 concerts per year, on and off campus.

For more information on the Department or our events, contact us at (479) 575-4701, email us at music@uark.edu, or visit music.uark.edu.