

2017-18
UMS LEARNING GUIDE

Field Trip
*Piedmont Blues:
A Search for
Salvation*

2017—18



BE PRESENT

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UMS SCHOOL DAY PERFORMANCE

*Piedmont Blues:
A Search for Salvation*

Wednesday, March 14 // 11 am–12:15 pm
Michigan Theater

March 14



Attend

Coming to your E-mail Inbox!

Map and Driving Directions

Logistical Details (drop-off/pick-up locations)

Venue Information



The Details



VENUE ADDRESS

Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBER

734.764.2538

ARRIVAL TIME

Between 10:30-10:50am

TICKETS

We do not use paper tickets for School Day Performances. We hold school reservations at the door and seat groups upon arrival.

FOOD

No food or drinks (including school lunches) are allowed in the theater.

ACCESSIBILITY

We aim to maximize accessibility at our performances and below are details regarding this performance's points of accessibility. If you have further questions, e-mail umsyouth@umich.edu or call 734-615-0122.

PARKING

There is a drop-off area west of the main entrance on Liberty Street that coincides with a crosswalk ramp. This is a great entrance to use to avoid stepping onto curbs. Several accessible spaces are located within a block's radius on State St., Thompson St., E. Liberty St., and E. Washington St., as well as in the nearby Maynard parking structure.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBILITY

Michigan Theater is wheelchair accessible with a completely ramped concessions lobby. The auditorium has wheelchair accessible seating locations two thirds of the way back on its main floor. Courtesy wheelchairs are available for audience members.

BATHROOMS

ADA compliant toilets are available.

ENTRY

The front doors are not powered, however, there will be an usher at that door opening it for all patrons.

Learn

Piedmont Blues: A Search for Salvation



734.764.2538 — UMS.ORG



Why?

UMS EDUCATION ARTISTIC STATEMENT



GERALD CLAYTON – ARTIST STATEMENT

Inspired by the personal discoveries that have unfolded through my artistic practice, I'm committed to continuing the search for truth and meaning in the creative process. I strive to make music that doesn't simply entertain, but also provokes reflection, inquiry-driven music that ruminates on the human condition. I'm honored to be part of a musical lineage that values art as an essential part of intellectual development and spiritual growth.

Piedmont Blues is an exceptional opportunity for me to make manifest the emotional quality of the Piedmont blues through my compositions for *The Assembly*. The first music I can remember was piano-centric blues. The nuance of language and daily life that resides within the blues fascinates me. The blues feel close to home. The essence of the music is experiential in nature — a creative response to pain and suffering in daily life.

My aim with this project is to capture the arc of African-American pain and triumph through the expression of the Piedmont blues, to both illustrate the artistry specific to the Piedmont tradition and also to dig beneath the surface of the music, to understand the core of the compositions and the struggle to overcome oppression, poverty, and pain.

– Gerald Clayton

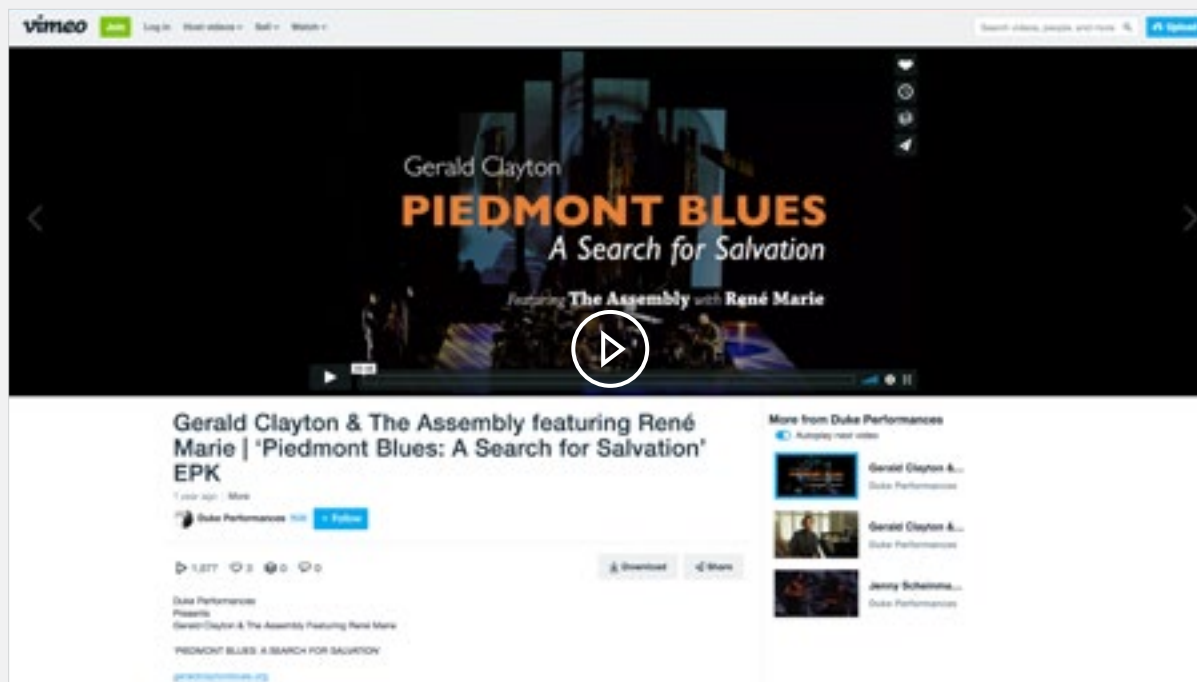
The Piedmont Blues: A Search for Salvation explores the history, emotion, dance, and song of the Piedmont region through the lens of contemporary jazz music and multimedia stage design. Through Gerald Clayton's imaginative compositional skill and Christopher McElroen's visionary direction, we are granted the opportunity to immerse ourselves in the generative power and imaginative breadth of a rich and uniquely American cultural tradition.

UMS is thrilled to present Gerald Clayton & *The Assembly* in their production *Piedmont Blues: A Search for Salvation*.

LEARN

Why?

ONLINE: CONNECTING TO THE PERFORMANCE



[Watch](#) the making of *Piedmont Blues: A Search For Salvation*.

Artist

GERALD CLAYTON & THE ASSEMBLY: FIVE THINGS TO KNOW

01

The Assembly, the nine-piece ensemble that performs in this concert, includes Gerald Clayton on piano, guitar, bass, drums, and several saxophones, Grammy-nominated vocalist René Marie, and tap dancer Maurice Chestnut.

02

Clayton began his musical journey at the prestigious Los Angeles County High School for the Arts, where he received the 2002 Presidential Scholar of the Arts Award. Continuing his scholarly pursuits, he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Piano Performance at USC's Thornton School of Music under the instruction of piano icon Billy Childs after a year of intensive study with NEA Jazz Master Kenny Barron at the Manhattan School of Music.

03

Expansion is an important part of Clayton's artistic identity. His music is a celebration of the inherent differences in musical perspectives that promote true artistic synergy. Clayton's inclusive sensibilities have allowed him to perform and record with such distinctive artists as Diana Krall, Roy Hargrove, Dianne Reeves, Ambrose Akinmusire, Dayna Stephens, Kendrick Scott, John Scofield, Ben Williams, Terell Stafford & Dick Oatts, Michael Rodriguez, Terri Lyne Carrington, Avishai Cohen, Peter Bernstein, and the Clayton Brothers Quintet.

04

Clayton's approach to translating the Piedmont blues focuses on extracting harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic ideas directly from traditional Piedmont blues tunes and stitching them together into new compositions for his nine-piece jazz ensemble.

05

Director Christopher McElroen and a team of lighting and stage designers have worked to craft a multimedia experience with a narrative that follows the growth of the tobacco plant, a vital theme featuring multimedia effects that include juxtapositions, close-ups, and manipulations of light projected across a variety of screens, an empty floor frame, and pieces of an old tobacco barn.

Artist



GETTING TO KNOW GERALD CLAYTON

Gerald Clayton searches for honest expression in every note he plays. With harmonic curiosity and critical awareness, he develops musical narratives that unfold as a result of both deliberate searching and chance uncovering. The four-time GRAMMY-nominated pianist/composer formally began his musical journey at the prestigious Los Angeles County High School for the Arts, where he received the 2002 Presidential Scholar of the Arts Award. Continuing his scholarly pursuits, he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Piano Performance at USC's Thornton School of Music under the instruction of piano icon Billy Childs after a year of intensive study with NEA Jazz Master Kenny Barron at the Manhattan School of Music. Clayton won second place in the 2006 Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Piano Competition.

Expansion has become part of Clayton's artistic identity. His music is a celebration of the inherent differences in musical perspectives that promote true artistic synergy. Inclusive sensibilities have allowed him to perform and record with such distinctive artists as Diana Krall, Roy Hargrove, Dianne Reeves, Ambrose Akinmusire, Dayna Stephens, Kendrick Scott, Ben Williams, Terrell Stafford & Dick Oatts, Michael Rodriguez, Terri Lyne Carrington, Avishai Cohen, and the Clayton Brothers Quintet. Clayton also has enjoyed an extended association since early 2013, touring and recording with saxophone legend Charles Lloyd. 2016 marks his second year as

musical director of the Monterey Jazz Festival On Tour, a project that features his trio along with Ravi Coltrane, Nicholas Payton, and Raul Midón on guitar and vocals.

Clayton's discography as a leader reflects his evolution as an artist. His debut recording, *Two Shade* (ArtistShare), earned a 2010 GRAMMY nomination in the Best Improvised Jazz Solo category for his arrangement of Cole Porter's "All of You." "Battle Circle," his composition featured on The Clayton Brothers' recording, *The New Song and Dance* (ArtistShare), received a GRAMMY nomination for Best Jazz Instrumental Composition in 2011. He received 2012 and 2013 GRAMMY nominations in the Best Jazz Instrumental Album category for *Bond: The Paris Sessions* (Concord), and *Life Forum* (Concord), his second and third album releases.

Capturing the truth in each moment's conception of sound comes naturally to Clayton. The son of beloved bass player and composer John Clayton, he enjoyed a familial apprenticeship from an early age. Clayton honors the legacy of his father and all his musical ancestors through a commitment to artistic exploration, innovation, and reinvention. For this commission, he turns his imaginative curiosity toward uncovering the essence of the Piedmont blues experience and expression in early 20th-century Durham.

Artist



GETTING TO KNOW RENÉ MARIE

In a span of two decades, eleven recordings, and countless stage performances, vocalist René Marie has cemented her reputation as not only a singer but also a composer, arranger, theatrical performer, and teacher. Guided and tempered by powerful life lessons and rooted in jazz traditions laid down by Ella Fitzgerald, Dinah Washington, and other leading ladies of past generations, she borrows various elements of folk, R&B, and even classical and country to create a captivating hybrid style.

René's recordings include the self-produced CD, *Renaissance* (1999). In 2000, she signed onto the MaxJazz label and recorded *How Can I Keep from Singing?* (2000), *Vertigo* (2001), *Live at Jazz Standard* (2003), and *Serene Renegade* (2004). She parted ways with the label and recorded and co-produced her sixth CD, *Experiment in Truth*, in 2007. René appeared in a one-woman stage show about overcoming abuse an incest, *Slut Energy Theory: U'Dean*, in 2009, and released the soundtrack that year.

René joined the Motéma label with the 2011 release of *Voice of My Beautiful Country*, followed later that same year by *Black Lace Freudian Slip*. Her 2013 follow-up, *I Wanna Be Evil: With Love To Eartha Kitt*, earned a GRAMMY nomination in the Best Jazz Vocal Album category. Her latest release is *Sound of Red* (2016), her first album of all-original material.

LEARN

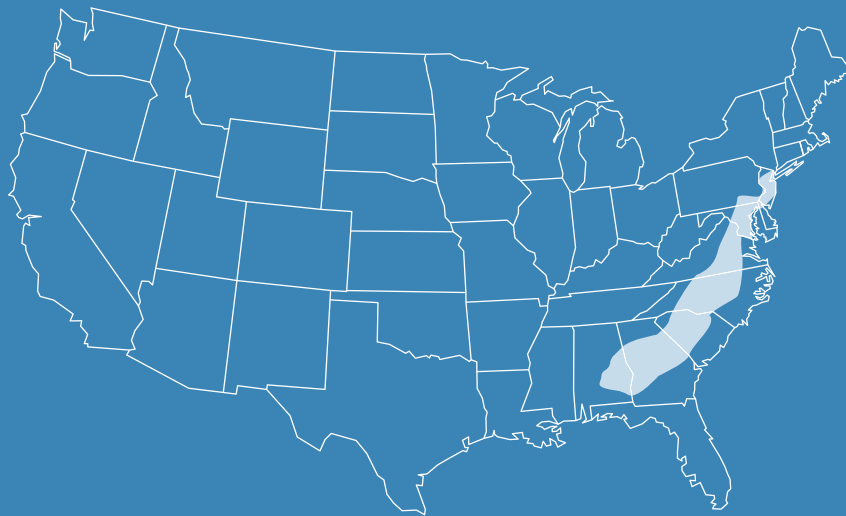
Why?

ONLINE: CONNECTING TO THE PERFORMANCE

[Listen](#) to Gerald Clayton's music using the Spotify app.

Art Form

PIEDMONT BLUES



GEOGRAPHY – THE PIEDMONT REGION

Synonymous with East Coast blues and string band music was the area known as the Piedmont Region of the United States. Geographically, this area runs along the Appalachian hills all the way from New Jersey to Alabama. It stretches as far west as the foothills of Kentucky and Tennessee and as far east as Raleigh, North Carolina and Richmond, Virginia. Some of the major cities included within this area are Birmingham, AL; Columbia and Atlanta, GA; Greenville, SC; Chattanooga, TN; Charlotte, Greensboro, Winston-Salem, Durham, and Raleigh, NC; Lexington, KY; and Roanoke and Lexington, VA. The range of this region makes it accessible to seaports like Norfolk, VA; Charleston, SC; Savannah, GA; and of course New Orleans. And all of this means one thing: cultural diversity!

During the Great Migration of African-Americans out of the South from 1910-1930 many individuals and families chose to come to these eastern cities instead of heading to the northern industrial centers of Cleveland, Detroit, and Pittsburgh. These migrants brought with them jazz from the southland and hard blues from the Mississippi Delta. The urban industrial cities throughout this region were already immersed in the pop tunes and ragtime of the day, and these new migrants would infuse this music with their own unique styles, creating a more urbane, fluid, and contemporary style of music than they had known in their homes in the deep south.

Whites had already settled in these areas prior to the Great Migration and found work in textile mills, factories, or coal mines, bringing with them the Anglo ballad tradition as well as fiddle jigs and reels. Because the Piedmont was neither as isolated nor as severely racist as places like the Mississippi Delta, there was a great deal of cultural interplay between African-American and white musicians in this area. White musicians would teach fiddle tunes and Anglo traditions like the waltz to African-Americans, and they in turn would teach the blues to whites. One of the most interesting bits of musical cross-breeding from this region is the development of bluegrass music. Bluegrass is known as a quintessentially white Appalachian musical style, and yet its roots are a remarkable hybrid. The “father” of bluegrass music — Bill Monroe, a white musician — was taught to play guitar and mandolin by Arnold Schultz, an African-American musician. The banjo, an instrument closely associated with bluegrass, is actually an African instrument, originally called a “banjar” and brought to America by slaves. Dock Boggs, a white musician credited with helping create the bluegrass style of banjo playing, developed his style by trying to emulate the blues guitar technique of the African-American musician Mississippi John Hurt.

Art Form

Continued.

It was precisely this type of close cultural interaction that made the music of the Piedmont so unique. White and African American string bands shared similar repertoires, played for each others' parties and dances, and were often believed to be of the opposite race. But it was the African-American musicians who rose to prominence in the commercial recordings that came out of the Piedmont.

Because whites had greater access to mainstream economic resources, however, they tended to use music more for social purposes than professional advancement. Dock Boggs, for instance, was offered several recording contracts but chose to hold on to the relative economic safety of a coal mining job to the caprice of a career in music. While a handful of important recordings of white string bands and solo artists from the 1920s and early 30s exist — a testament to the cultural traditions and sharing mentioned above — the primary artists to emerge from this region were African Americans. String bands emerged from Georgia (Peg Leg Howell and His Gang), Tennessee (The Tennessee Chocolate Drops, The Memphis Jug Band), North Carolina (The Three 'Bacca Tags), and Mississippi (The Mississippi Sheiks). Individual artists like Blind Willie McTell, Rev. Gary Davis, Blind Boy Fuller, and Blind Blake ruled the six string guitar and took the instrument into new and innovative directions.

Throughout the 1930s artists such as these formed the crux of a great tradition on Race Records and in cultural history. In the 1960s they served as some of the great influences of the folk/blues revival. And today they are being rediscovered and celebrated by a host of new artists.

Art Form

PEOPLE: MUSICIANS OF THE PIEDMONT



TENNESSEE CHOCOLATE DROPS
(Howard Armstrong, violin, mandolin/ Carl Martin, bass/ Ted Bogan, guitar)

The Tennessee Chocolate Drops embraced the entire spectrum of African-American and white American popular music while still retaining elements of minstrel shows, country dance music, ragtime, blues, vaudeville tunes, and jazz. Throughout their peak years they played extensively across the whole of the Appalachian region. Howard Armstrong was a virtuoso fiddle and mandolin player who was raised in a family of eight performing brothers and sisters. He began recording in 1929 with the great black songster Sleepy John Estes and perhaps the greatest pure blues mandolinists Yank Rachell. In 1930 Armstrong joined with bassist Carl Martin and guitarist Ted Bogan to form the Chocolate Drops. They were an instant success on the medicine show circuit and toured with such blues greats as Big Bill Broonzy and Memphis Minnie. In 1933 they appeared at the Chicago World's Fair, then settling in that city. Martin and Armstrong were also virtuoso players in their own right: Martin having such a wide array of plucking and bowing techniques on the bass that his playing was considered to be a tour de force of bass styles. Ted Bogan was an extremely skilled flatpicker with an approach to chording that would equal any jazz guitarist. Their playing was considered so dynamic that it was often said about them "if they played any faster they'd catch on fire!"



PEG LEG HOWELL AND HIS GANG
(Peg Leg Howell, guitar/ Henry Williams, guitar/ Eddie Anthony, violin)

Peg Leg Howell and His Gang called Atlanta, Georgia their home and represented the rougher, bluesier side of string band music.

Howell first recorded solo for Columbia in 1927 but for his return visit to the recording studio later that same year brought "His Gang" with him. Their music was based heavily in dance tunes and Anthony's fiddling style is unique in string band music: biting, and wild in its attack on the strings. They issued a number of highly successful recordings (Beaver Slide Rag and Lonesome Blues among them) but Anthony died prematurely in 1934 and Howell gave up performing.



THE GEORGIA COTTON PICKERS
(Barbecue Bob Hicks, guitar/ Curly Weaver, guitar/ Buddy Moss, harmonica)

Bob Hicks was born in rural Georgia in 1902 but moved to Atlanta around 1923. He got his nickname as a cook in Tidwell's Barbecue and entertained patrons with his guitar. He was one of the earliest African-American males to record, beginning in 1927 and established a successful solo career. In 1930 he established the Georgia Cotton Pickers, one of the finest small groups of the pre WWII era. Joining him were guitarist Curly Weaver, who like Hicks had already enjoyed a solo recording career, and Buddy Moss on harmonica. Moss was only 16 when he joined the Cotton Pickers and after Hicks died in 1931. He went on to create his own career as a singer/guitarist. The Cotton Pickers recorded a number of versions of previous hits (such as Blind Blake's "Diddy-Wah-Diddy") but turned them into newer-sounding rocking ensemble pieces.

Art Form

PEOPLE: MUSICIANS OF THE PIEDMONT

Continued.



MISSISSIPPI SHEIKS
(Walter Vinson, vocal and guitar/ Lonnie Chatman, violin)

Although not physically from the Piedmont region, the Mississippi Sheiks were arguably the most successful string band of the 1930s and their presence was certainly felt on the East Coast, both through their touring and recordings. They also recorded briefly as the Mississippi Mud Steppers, adding banjo/mandolinist Charlie McCoy to the group). They were the most sophisticated of bands of their ilk, utilizing complex chords and playing in various keys, as well as performing widely for white audiences. Their repertoire consisted of pop tunes, parlor songs, “hokum” pieces (humorous songs generally with sexual overtones), dance music, waltzes, and country blues. Their first “hit” — “Sitting on Top of the World” — became a blues standard and has been covered by innumerable artists. Lonnie Chatman (aka Chatmon) came from a family that produced several giants of the country blues. Brother Armenter “Bo” Chatmon (better known as Bo Carter) was one of the most prolific of all Mississippi blues musicians, brother Sam enjoyed a career that extended well into the 1970s, and the legendary Charley Patton — the “Father of the Delta Blues” — has always been rumored to be either an illegitimate brother or some close relative. Walter Vinson was a neighbor of the Chatmans and started playing guitar when he was six. The Sheiks were actually discovered by recording artists while playing for a white square dance.



MEMPHIS JUG BAND
(Will Shade [aka Son Brimmer] vocal and guitar/ Ben Ramey, kazoo/ Charlie Burse, guitar and vocal/ Jab Jones, jug/ Charlie Pierce, fiddle/ et. al.)

The Memphis Jug Band was organized in the late 1920s by Will Shade and over its lifetime contained a wide variety of musicians from

the Memphis, Tennessee area (even including such notables as the legendary Memphis Minnie). It is only a matter of personal preference as to whether one considers the Mississippi Sheiks or the Memphis Jug Band to have been the greatest string/jug band ever recorded, for they both crossed many musical genres from pop to blues, ragtime to country, dance to ballads. Will Shade had already played guitar in various medicine and minstrel shows by the time he got the idea to assemble a string band around 1926. Shade and Will Weldon (Shade’s first partner) played guitar duets on street corners in Memphis until they began to add other musicians and record in 1927. Musically their large membership pool allowed the Memphis Jug Band the flexibility to play a mixture of many genres. Interestingly, a number of their songs mentioned hoodoo magical beliefs, and some members also contributed to gospel recordings, either uncredited or as part of the Memphis Sanctified Singers. Although their final recordings as a group were in 1934, Shade kept them together and working well into the 1940s.



THE BAXTERS
(Andrew Baxter, violin/ Jim Baxter, vocal and guitar)

Andrew and Jim Baxter hailed from Calhoun in Gordon County, Georgia. Andrew was a well-known fiddler in the area and teamed up with his son Jim, an excellent guitarist and singer, in the 1920s. They were much in demand for dances performing country, blues, and gospel songs. Indicative of the cultural exchange between musicians of different races in the Piedmont region the Baxters often performed with the white string band The Yellow Hammers (Charles Moody, Jr. on guitar; Bud Landress on banjo; Phil Reeve on guitar; and Bill Chitwood on fiddle). Their first recording session in 1927 was shared by both groups, an extremely unusual interracial event even given the informal mixed-race performances in the area. The Baxters were the first group to record the now standard folk tune “K.C. Railroad Blues”.

Art Form

Continued.



BLIND BOY FULLER (FULTON ALLEN), GUITAR

Fulton Allen was born in Wadesboro, North Carolina in 1907 and became one of the most popular Piedmont blues guitarists of all time. He learned to play guitar as a boy and quickly picked up traditional songs and chants, ragtime pieces, and blues. By 1927 he had lost his sight and began studying the recordings of

Blind Blake in earnest. It was also at this time that he became associated with Reverend Gary Davis. He began playing on the streets of Durham, North Carolina and developed a large following, eventually leading to a record contract in 1935. It was at his first recording session that the American Recording Company decided that Blind Boy Fuller would be a more commercial name. Over the next five years he recorded over 150 songs and became known as one of the foremost of the Piedmont blues guitarists. Many of his songs included the double entendre and, unlike virtually any other Piedmont guitarist, he favored playing his complex fingerpicking on a National “steel” guitar, giving his playing and recordings a unique sound.



THE THREE 'BACCKER TAGS (George Wade, mandolin and vocal/ Luther Baucom, mandolin and vocal/ Reid Summey, guitar and vocal)

The Three 'Baccer Tags were a white string band from Gastonia, North Carolina that first recorded in Charlotte in 1931. Their name came from RCA Victor's recording engineer Ralph

S. Peer who was alleged to have told the group that if their records didn't sell he'd drop them like “the tin tags on plugs of tobacco.” Fortunately they enjoyed a great deal of success mixing sentimental ballads with pop tunes and comic

PEOPLE: MUSICIANS OF THE PIEDMONT

novelty numbers. The three members of the group all met while working at the Seminole Cotton Mills and soon began to play for church picnics and other social events in the area. By 1930 they were regularly featured on radio station WRBU in Gastonia. They were the most widely recorded pre-WWII white string band from southwest North Carolina.



THE CAROLINA TWINS - FLETCHER AND FOSTER (Gwin Foster, guitar and harmonica/ David Fletcher, guitar)

Gwin Foster began his music career in North Carolina as a harmonica virtuoso and guitar player. Although he was white, Foster was dark complexioned and was often mistaken for being of mixed race. By the late 1920s he

had teamed with David Fletcher who originally played the upright bass. The duo began playing for parties and dances throughout North Carolina and in 1928 had a regular half hour radio show on WBT-Charlotte. They were billed as the Carolina Twins and recorded some 21 sides between 1928 and 1930. While the majority of their songs stayed within the typical string band style, two of their recordings were particularly noteworthy for their uniqueness: Charlotte Hot Step and Red Rose Rag, the latter a version of the 1911 ragtime hit by the same name. They were never able to make music their full-time pursuit and like so many other musicians of this period, Black and white alike, fell victim to self-destructive drinking and difficult lifestyles.

Art Form

PEOPLE – MUSICIANS OF THE PIEDMONT

Continued.



THE ALLEN BROTHERS (Austin, banjo and vocals/ Lee, guitar and kazoo)

The Allens were another example of the cultural interplay between Blacks and whites in the Piedmont region. Although young white musicians they developed a great affinity for Black blues and string band music and by the 1920s were performing throughout the

Appalachians in coal towns and in medicine shows. While not a terribly original group they are important for their cultural impact. In 1927 they cut their first records for Columbia: a remake of the venerable bluesman Papa Charlie Jackson's "Salty Dog," "Chattanooga Blues," "Coal Mine Blues," and "Laughin' and Cryin' Blues." When the recordings were sent to Columbia's New York offices it was assumed that given the sound and themes of the songs that the Allen Brothers were Black and an advertisement for "Laughin' and Cryin' Blues" was sent out to national newspapers with a drawing of the two performers as being Black. Whether or not this confusion was in any way responsible, the record met with great success, as did the others in the issue, with "Salty Dog" selling 18,000 copies.



FIDDLIN' JOHN CARSON

Carson was born in Fannin County, Georgia in 1868, and as such his music was indicative of the earliest examples of American roots music. He started to play fiddle while in his teens on an instrument that had been brought to the United States from Ireland. He combined making music with working in a textile plant until it went on

strike in 1913 leaving him with no other option than to play on the street for nickels and dimes. Between 1914 and 1922 he was named Champion Fiddler of Georgia 7 times. He began to record in 1923 and eventually produced over 150 sides of music.



BLIND BLAKE (AKA ARTHUR BLAKE, ARTHUR PHELPS) GUITAR

Blake's first recordings were made in 1926 and his records sold very well. His first solo record was "Early Morning Blues" with the ragtime-inspired "West Coast Blues" on the B-side. Both are considered excellent examples of his ragtime-based guitar style and prototypes for

the Piedmont blues. Little is known about his life or death but his complex and intricate finger picking inspired generations of musicians to follow: Reverend Gary Davis, Jorma Kaukonen, Ry Cooder, and many others. Boggs' style of banjo playing, as well as his singing, is considered a unique combination of Appalachian folk music and African-American blues. He was born in southern Virginia in 1898 and learned much of his music from an African-American guitarist named "Go Lightning" who would "hobo" up and down the railroad tracks between Norton and Dorchester.



DOCK BOGGS, BANJO

Boggs's style is, as many other artists of the time, a hybrid of Anglo and African-American musical traits. He is considered a seminal figure in part because of two of his recordings from the 1920s, "Sugar Baby" and "Country Blues. Boggs was initially recorded in 1927 and again in 1929, although he worked primarily as a coal miner

for most of his life. He was "rediscovered" during the folk music revival of the 1960s, and spent much of his later life playing at various folk music festivals and recording for Folkways Records.

Art Form

PEOPLE – MUSICIANS OF THE PIEDMONT

Continued.



BLIND WILLIE MCTELL, GUITAR

Blind Willie McTell was born in 1898 in Thompson, Georgia. He was a twelve-string finger picking Piedmont blues guitarist, and was one of the very few country bluesmen to play the guitar in both the complex, fingerpicking ragtime style indicative of the Piedmont guitarists, and a heavier bottleneck

blues style. His playing in both idioms is masterful, fluid and inventive. McTell was also an excellent accompanist, and recorded many songs with his longtime musical companion, Curley Weaver; their recordings are some of the most outstanding examples of country blues guitar duets. He began recording in 1927 and had one of the longest careers of any artist in his style, recording his last sessions in 1949.

PINK ANDERSON, GUITAR

Pinkney “Pink” Anderson was born in South Carolina in 1900 and started playing medicine shows as early as 1914. He made his first recordings for Columbia in 1928. Anderson’s musical style on the guitar was a combination of the typical Piedmont fingerpicking and the Anglo-styled ballads common to the Appalachians. Although not as well-known as many of his contemporaries, his few recordings still stand out as some of the best examples of the Piedmont blues.



REVEREND GARY DAVIS, GUITAR, BANJO

Gary Davis was born in Laurens, South Carolina in 1896. Blind from infancy he early on developed a unique two-finger (thumb and index finger) style of finger-picking on the guitar that enabled him to create a four-part harmony sound. In the mid-1920s he moved to Durham, North Carolina and met, and apparently

mentored, Blind Boy Fuller. At the same time he was becoming an ordained Baptist minister. Davis was perhaps the most so-phisticated of all the Piedmont guitarists and his repertoire ran the gamut of folk ballads, ragtime pieces, military marches, pop songs, lullabies, and blues (which he was generally reluctant to perform in public). He moved to New York City to become a street preacher in the 1940s and was extremely influential in the folk-revival of the early 1960s.

Art Form



STYLE & TECHNIQUE: THE PIEDMONT GUITAR STYLE

The Piedmont guitar style is an approach to guitar playing in which a regular, alternating thumb bass string rhythmic pattern supports a syncopated melody using the treble strings generally picked with the forefinger and occasionally with others. The result is comparable in sound to ragtime or stride piano styles.

MUSICAL INFLUENCES – RAGTIME

Ragtime, a uniquely American, syncopated musical phenomenon, has been a strong presence in musical composition, entertainment, and scholarship for over a century. It emerged in its published form during the mid-1890s and quickly spread across the continent via published compositions. By the early 1900s ragtime flooded the music publishing industry. The popularity and demand for ragtime also boosted sale of pianos and greatly swelled the ranks of the recording industry. Ragtime seemed to emanate primarily from the southern and midwestern states with the majority of activity occurring in Missouri, although the East and West coasts also had their share of composers and performers. Ragtime's popularity promptly spread to Europe and there, as in America, soon became a fad.

Ragtime was both exciting to America's youth and threatening to America's staid polite society. The excitement came from syncopation, the displacing of the beat from its regular and assumed course of meter. Syncopation caused an individual to feel a propulsion, swing, and, if played correctly, a musical looseness generally unknown to the public at large. The threat came from the very same displaced beat that evoked a strong connotation to the "low-class" Negro music found in brothels and saloons. The Midwest, particularly postbellum Missouri, was rife with saloons, brothels, and cabarets — all places where a pianist with a decent repertoire could earn a decent living.

LEARN

Art Form

STYLE & TECHNIQUE: THE PIEDMONT GUITAR STYLE

Continued.

[Learn](#) more about Ragtime music from the Library of Congress.

LANGUAGE – VOCAL STYLINGS AND LYRICS

Elizabeth “Libba” Cotten’s song “Freight Train” is cornerstone of the Piedmont Blues musical tradition. Each of Gerald Clayton’s compositions in *Piedmont Blues: A Search for Salvation* is rooted in the rhythm, melody, and harmony of tunes like “Freight Train” or Hinton’s “Out of Jail.”

Art Form

STYLE & TECHNIQUE: THE PIEDMONT GUITAR STYLE

Continued.

[Watch](#) Elizabeth “Libba” Cotton perform this classic *tune*. Note the use of the Piedmont fingerpicking guitar style, in which the thumb plays the bass line on the bass strings and the forefinger plucks the melody on the higher strings.

“FREIGHT TRAIN” BY ELIZABETH “LIBBA” COTTEN

Freight train, freight train, run so fast
Freight train, freight train, run so fast
Please don't tell what train I'm on
They won't know what route I'm going

When I'm dead and in my grave
No more good times here I crave
Place the stones at my head and feet
And tell them all I've gone to sleep

When I die, oh bury me deep
Down at the end of old Chestnut Street
So I can hear old Number Nine
As she comes rolling by

When I die, oh bury me deep
Down at the end of old Chestnut Street
Place the stones at my head and feet
And tell them all I've gone to sleep

Freight train, freight train, run so fast
Freight train, freight train, run so fast
Please don't tell what train I'm on
They won't know what route I'm going

LEARN

Performance

“It’s the lives behind the expression, the attitude behind the music, the way it makes you feel. The blues gives back to us. The expression itself is a taste of salvation.”

—GERALD CLAYTON

Quote source: oxfordamerican.org/magazine/item/1047-picking-up-the-piedmont-blues



LEARN

Performance



Piedmont Blues: A Search for Salvation

Wednesday, March 14 // 11 am–12:15 pm
Michigan Theater

Gerald Clayton & The Assembly *Piedmont Blues: A Search for Salvation*

Featuring **René Marie**, vocals

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

This live concert presentation features Gerald Clayton's Piedmont blues-inspired compositions written for The Assembly, a top-tier nine-piece jazz ensemble featuring the GRAMMY-nominated singer and Piedmont native René Marie, who has been called "masterful" by *DownBeat* and "hip and swinging" by the *Wall Street Journal*. Entwined with the music is an assemblage of projected film, new and archival photography, and Southern folklore underscoring the verdant cultural landscape of the Piedmont region.

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Being an audience member

- No talking, unless audience participation is requested by the performers.
- Avoid fidgeting and moving around in your seat during the performance. Slumping sideways blocks the view for audience members behind you, and extra movements can be distracting to your neighbors.
- Do not take flash photography. The flash can be distracting to the performers on stage.
- Turn off and put away cell phones and other electronic devices.
- If you need to cough during the performance, wait for the pause between movements of a piece or try to “bury” your cough in a loud passage of music.
- If you need assistance, please speak to a UMS usher.
- Most importantly, relax and enjoy the performance!

WHEN SHOULD I CLAP?

The audience claps to welcome the performers as they come on stage.

The audience also claps at the conclusion of each piece on the program, but not between movements of a single piece. This can be tricky, because many musical works have several movements with pauses in between. A work’s movements will be listed in the program or announced at the performance. Not sure when the piece is over? Watch the conductor, who will lower their hands at the end of the piece.

When in doubt, it’s always safe to wait and follow what the rest of the audience does.

Being an audience member

Encourage your students to engage with and reflect on the performance by asking these questions:

- How did the performance make you feel?
- What does this performance remind you of?
- What was the most memorable part of the performance for you?
- How does this performance relate to where you live?
- During the performance, close your eyes and imagine a “mind movie” using the performance as a soundtrack. What did you see in your mind?
- Did the performance tell a specific story?
- Do you have any questions about the performance?

GLOSSARY: ELEMENTS OF PERFORMANCE

Space – venue/building, stage, distance between objects

Lighting – location of light, use of darkness, color, movement, light in the audience

Sound – sound created by voices or movements of performers and audience members, the location of the sound (behind the stage or off stage), use of musical instruments or recorded music

Movement – movement of performers, images, objects, or audience members; speed, size, or shape of movements

People:

- Dancers
- Actors
- Musicians
- Stage Crew
- Ushers
- Audience Members

Being an audience member



This imaginative figure was carved from a tree branch by Sherman Lambdin a renowned Kentucky folk whittler or carver. It seems to depict a howling bird/human figure. It is painted red with multiple black polka-dot arms and tail feathers as well as horns, the latter perhaps contributing to its appellation devil bird. As with the Piedmont Blues, this intriguing figure represents a unique and rapidly vanishing folkloric history.

The artwork was provided by the University of Michigan Museum of Art to connect to the 2017-18 UMS School Day Performance series. UMMA has a long tradition of service to K-12 students and educators of southeastern Michigan. This work is currently on exhibition in the museum. For more information about the University of Michigan Museum of Art and their programs for youth, teens, teachers, and schools, visit the UMMA website.

Piedmont Blues
Sherman Lambdin (United States, born 1948)
Red Devil Bird, 1970–91
Painted wood twig
Gift of the Daniel and Harriet Fوسفeld Folk Art Collection, 2002/1.211

Arts Online: Explore and Discover

UMS

ums.org

UMMA

umma.umich.edu

THE KENNEDY CENTER, ARTSEGE

ArtsEdge.org

ANN ARBOR DISTRICT LIBRARY

aadl.org

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC

nyphil.org

AMERICAN THEATRE

americantheatre.org

DANCEMAGAZINE

dancemagazine.com

NPR: NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO

npr.org

MICHIGAN RADIO

michiganradio.org

PBS: PUBLIC BROADCASTING SERVICE

pbs.org

NEW YORK TIMES

nytimes.com

2017-18 SCHOOL DAY PERFORMANCES: ARTIST WEBSITES

RAGAMALA DANCE COMPANY

ragamaladance.org

SPHINX VIRTUOSI

sphinxmusic.org/sphinx-virtuosi

CHANTICLEER

chanticleer.org

URBAN BUSH WOMEN

urbanbushwomen.org

PIEDMONT BLUES: A SEARCH FOR SALVATION

geraldclaytonblues.org

Recommended Reading

UMS School Day Performance Series. All titles are in circulation at the library. For more information about the Ann Arbor District Library and their programs for youth, teens, teachers, and schools, visit. aadl.org.

[Reserve a book or DVD](#)

TEEN 2017-18 UMS SCHOOL DAY PERFORMANCE SEASON

“Cuba Mía: Portrait of an All-Women Orchestra” [DVD]

This documentary features the Camerata Romeu Orchestra as they play pieces combining Cuban and classical influences.

“Kinshasa Symphony” [DVD]

This documentary introduces the Orchestre Symphonique Kimbanguiste in the Congo, where the musicians must stay focused despite ongoing violence.

Softly, with Feeling: Joe Wilder and the Breaking of Barriers in American Music, by Edward Berger

Read about the life of Joe Wilder, who was among the first black men to serve in the Marines and later play trumpet for Broadway and studio orchestras.

The Art of Music, edited by Patrick Coleman

This collection of essays reflects on the connections between visual and musical art forms.

How to Listen to Jazz, by Ted Gioia

Approachable patterns and introductions to influential artists comprise this beginner’s guide to jazz.

The Detroit Symphony Orchestra: Grace, Grit, and Glory, by Laurie Lanzen Harris

This engaging history of the DSO details how the organization has grown and persevered through hardship.

Snakes and Ladders: Glimpses of India, by Gita Mehta

Read essays about India’s political and cultural history from a personal perspective.

A New America: How Music Reshaped the Culture and Future of a Nation and Redefined My Life, by Tommy Mottola

Music executive Tommy Mottola reflects on his experiences working with popular Latin@ artists and explores how Latin music has affected American culture.

Folk City: New York and the American Folk Music Revival, by Stephen Petrus

Petrus presents photos and detailed information conveying the impact that New York City’s music scene has had on the revival of folk music in the United States.

Handmade in India: A Geographic Encyclopedia of Indian Handicrafts, edited by Aditi Ranjan and M.P. Ranjan

This large and colorful compendium features artwork from across India with accompanying details.

The Conference of the Birds, by Peter Sís

Sís presents the English translation of the Sufi epic poem with added illustrations.

African American Women: Photographs from the National Museum of African American History and Culture, by Natasha Trethewey and Kinshasha Holman Conwill

This volume of the *Double Exposure* series features photographs of African American women conveying a diversity of emotions.

Recommended Reading

Continued.

US/THEM

“I Am Eleven: A Documentary” [DVD]

Eleven-year-olds around the world share their thoughts on war, love, family, and other critical topics.

Indivisible: Poems for Social Justice, edited by Gail Bush and Randy Meyer

American teens express their diverse perspectives in this collection of poems.

Malala: Activist for Girls’ Education, by Raphaële Frier

This brief biography of Malala Yousafzai portrays her work to allow universal access to education.

The Day Our World Changed: Children’s Art of 9/11, by Robin F. Goodman

Kids and teens ages 5-18 present their drawings, collages, and other artwork in light of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

Kids Who Are Changing the World, by Anne Jankeliowitch

The Goodplanet Foundation compiles 45 interviews with children around the world who developed their own projects to improve the environment.

She Takes a Stand: 16 Fearless Activists Who Have Changed the World, by

Michael Elsohn Ross

This collection presents 16 mini-biographies of women who have fought for human rights.

YOUTH 17/18 UMS SCHOOL DAY PERFORMANCE SEASON

Hinduism and other Eastern Religions: Worship, Festivals, and Ceremonies

Around the World, by Trevor Barnes

Learn about some of the world’s major religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Shintoism, Taoism, and more.

88 Instruments, by Chris Barton

A young boy in a music shop tries to decide which instrument to play, but they all sound so appealing!

The Conductor, by Laëtitia Devernay

Create your own story in this wordless picture book depicting a man slowly cueing each part of nature into metaphorical song.

Bird & Diz, by Gary Golio and Ed Young

This tribute to jazz musicians Charlie “Bird” Parker and Dizzy Gillespie poetically reflects their signature bebop style.

The Conference of the Birds, by Alexis York Lumbard and Demi

Lumbard translates and retells the Sufi epic poem about birds searching for their king with detailed illustrations.

Excuse me, is this India? by Anita Leutwiler and Anushka Ravishankar

Follow the riddles alongside a mouse explorer to find India.

To Market! To Market! by Anushka Ravishankar and Emanuele Scanziani

Explore an Indian marketplace with a little girl who does not know what to buy.

Recommended Reading

Continued.

The Music of Life: Bartolomeo Cristofori and the Invention of the Piano,

by Elizabeth Rusch

Cristofori longs for an instrument that can play loud and soft music, which leads to his invention of the piano.

Feel the Beat: Dance Poems that Zing from Salsa to Swing, by Marilyn Singer

This rhythmic book of poems introduces various types of social dances.

The Legendary Miss Lena Horne, by Carole Boston Weatherford

This biography details the life of Lena Horne, a successful singer, actress, and civil rights activist.

Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement,

by Carole Boston Weatherford

Free verse poems and multimedia collages introduce Fannie Lou Hamer, a civil rights activist.

Performance Art, by Alix Wood

Wood introduces performance art as it manifests through diverse mediums.

Esquivel! Space Age Sound Artist, by Susan Wood and Duncan Tonatiuh

This biography introduces Juan García Esquivel, who grew up with mariachi music and eventually created his own signature lounge music.

Writing about Live Performance with your students

A LETTER TO PERFORMERS

Grade Level: Elementary School Students (K-5)

Students will compose a personal letter to a performer from the School Day Performance. The student will write about their feelings, observations, and questions from the performance. With a teacher's assistance, students may send these letters to the performers.

BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE

Discuss the following with your students:

1. Live Performances
2. The Art Form
3. The Artist
4. Origin of the Art Form or Artist

DURING THE PERFORMANCE

To help students organize their thoughts during the performance, encourage them to consider the following:

- I Notice...
- I Feel...
- I Wonder...

Once the performance is done, have students write down their notes, observations, and reflections. They will use these notes to help them write their letters.

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

Instruct students to write a letter to the performers. In completing this exercise, students should:

- Use standard letter-writing conventions (“Dear...”, “Sincerely,”)
- Mention when and where the performance took place
- Use the notes they took to share their experiences, observations, and questions with the performers

Writing about Live Performance with your students

TWO THUMBS UP: WRITING A PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Grade Level: Middle & High School Students (6-12)

BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE

Have students, in groups or as individuals, conduct background research on the performance they will be attending. Students should research and take notes on the following:

- **Art Form**
- **History of the Art Form**
- **Terminology**
- **The Artist**
- **Comparisons to similar artists and art form**

Some of this information may be found in this Learning Guide. For more information on artists and art forms, follow the sources in the “Sites We Suggest” and “Recommended Reading” sections of this Learning Guide.

Before the performance begins, consider the following questions:

- What expectations do I have for the performance?
- Do I already have an opinion about what I will experience at the performance?

DURING THE PERFORMANCE

Ask students to take mental notes during the performance. As soon as the performance ends, have students write down thoughts and words that come to mind related to the performance.

Encourage students to consider these prompts:

- What is striking to me?
- Is it vastly different from what I thought it would be?
- Has the venue transformed into something else during the performance? How?
- Are there images or ideas popping into my head? What are they?
- Is there something about the performance I may remember forever? What made it so?
- Is the audience quiet and drawn in to what is happening? Are they loud? Are they interacting directly with the performers? Are the performers directly interacting with the audience?

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

Instruct students to compare their pre-performance notes to their post-performance observations and write a 2-3 page review.

Things to consider when writing a review:

A critic’s job is to:

1. *Share an experience* – what did it feel, sound, look like?
2. *Provide context* – a broader frame of reference around what happened to help reader understand importance or significance of the experience
3. *Evaluate* – was it any good?

A strong review answers these three questions:

1. What is artist trying to do?
2. How well are they doing it?
3. Was it worth doing in the first place?

Critics typically use two modes of thought when writing a review:

1. *Analytical* – describing the grammar of the art, its execution and interpretation by the performers, and its historical, cultural, and social relevance; using concrete language, terminology, and facts
2. *Impressionistic* – describing the overall experience; using abstract language, feelings, and emotions

Encourage students to take a strong stance on aspects of the performance, just as long as they can back up their argument with evidence. If a student writes, “I didn’t like...” or “I particularly enjoyed...”, ask them to elaborate.

Writing about Live Performance with your students

MORE WRITING PROMPTS FOR REFLECTION, EXPLORATION, AND DISCOVERY:

- What was your overall reaction to the performance? Did you find the production compelling? Stimulating? Intriguing? Challenging? Memorable? Confusing? Evocative? Bizarre? Unique? Delightful? Meaningful? Explain your reactions.
- What themes of the play especially stood out in production? What themes were made even more apparent or especially provocative in production/performance? Explain your responses.
- Is there a moment in the performance that specifically resonated with you either intellectually or emotionally? Which moment was it and why do you think it affected you?
- Describe the pace and tempo of the performance (e.g., slow, fast, varied). Did it feel like the pace of the production maintain your interest throughout? Were there any moments in which you felt bored, rushed, lost, or confused? What elements of the work or interpretation led you to feel this way?
- Was there a moment during the performance that was so compelling, intriguing, or engaging that it remains with you in your mind's eye? Write a vivid description of that moment. As you write your description, pretend that you are writing about the moment for someone who was unable to experience the performance.
- How did the style and design elements of the production (e.g. sets, costumes, lighting, sound, music, if any) enhance the performance? Did anything in particular stand out to you? Why?
- What was your favorite musical selection from this performance? Why?
- During the performance, imagine a story or movie playing out in your mind, set to the music or action on stage. After the performance, write a story based on the narrative you imagined.
- All of these performances involve one or more performers on stage at any given moment. Which performer did you relate to the most? Why?

About UMS



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UMS was selected as one of the 2014 recipients of the National Medal of Arts, the nation's highest public artistic honor, awarded annually by the president of the United States at the White House to those who have "demonstrated a lifetime of creative excellence." The National Endowment for the Arts oversees the selection process.

One of the leading performing arts presenters in the country, UMS is committed to connecting audiences with performing artists from around the world in uncommon and engaging experiences. With a program steeped in music, dance, and theater, UMS presents approximately 60-75 performances and over 100 free educational activities each season.

At UMS, diversity is embraced as both a powerful educational resource and a guiding value for all our work. Our educational philosophy is dedicated to multidisciplinary artistic and educational experiences that represent a range of cultural traditions and viewpoints. Understanding our similarities and differences informs our culture, our values, and helps us navigate the world. By learning together, we can discover something new and extraordinary about each other. Throughout our K-12 Education Season, we invite educators and students to celebrate diversity in order to inform, strengthen, and unite us as community.

About UMS

2017-18 SCHOOL DAY PERFORMANCES



Sphinx Virtuosi

Ragamala Dance Company

Friday, October 20 // 11 am–12:05 pm
Power Center

Sphinx Virtuosi

Monday, October 30 // 11 am–12 noon
Hill Auditorium



Urban Bush Women

Chanticleer

Friday, November 10 // 12 noon–1 pm
Hill Auditorium

Urban Bush Women

Friday, January 12 // 11 am–12 noon
Power Center



Piedmont Blues:
A Search for Salvation

Us/Them

Thursday & Friday, January 25 & 26 // 11 am–12 noon
Arthur Miller Theatre

Piedmont Blues: A Search for Salvation

Wednesday, March 14 // 11 am–12:15 pm
Michigan Theater

Thank You!

WRITTEN & RESEARCHED BY

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PROVIDED BY

Pamela Reister (UMMA) & Kayla Coughlin (Ann Arbor District Library)



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