



UMS PRESENTS

THE BIG SQUEEZE: AN ACCORDION FESTIVAL

featuring

Accordion Virtuosi of Russia

Yuri Smirnov, Artistic Director and Conductor

Vladimir Smirnov, Conductor

Alexander Yakushev, Electric Violin

Ilya Yakushev, Piano

Julien Labro with the Spektral Quartet

Irish Duo featuring John Williams and Liz Carroll

and

Alexander Sevastian

Julien Labro

Emcee

Saturday Evening, November 1, 2014 at 8:00

Hill Auditorium • Ann Arbor

13th Performance of the 136th Annual Season

Global Series

Photo: Accordion Virtuosi of Russia; courtesy of Arts Management Group, Inc.

PROGRAM

Tonight's program will be announced by the artists from the stage.

Accordion Virtuosi of Russia

Mr. Yakushev, *Electric Violin*

Mr. Yakushev, *Piano*

Alexander Sevastian

Mr. Sevastian, *Bayan*

Julien Labro with the Spektral Quartet

Mr. Labro, *Chromatic Button Accordion, Bandoneón, Accordina*

Aurelien Fort Pederzoli, *Violin*

Austin Wulliman, *Violin*

Doyle Armbrust, *Viola*

Russell Rolen, *Cello*

Irish Duo featuring John Williams and Liz Carroll

Mr. Williams, *Diatonic Button Accordion, Anglo-Concertina*

Ms. Carroll, *Fiddle*

INTERMISSION

Accordion Virtuosi of Russia

Mr. Yakushev, *Electric Violin*

Mr. Yakushev, *Piano*

Finale

Tonight's performance is supported by Paul and Anne Glendon.

The Steinway piano used in this evening's concert is made possible by the William and Mary Palmer Endowment.

Media partnership is provided by WEMU 89.1 FM.

Special thanks to *The Big Squeeze* co-curator and emcee Julien Labro for his time, effort, and enthusiasm surrounding the planning of tonight's concert.

Accordion Virtuosi of Russia appear by arrangement with Arts Management Group, Inc.

THE BIG SQUEEZE

Whether it is a boozy uncle insisting on playing it at family parties or the distant nerdy cousin secluded in his bedroom or a friend-of-a-friend, most of you know someone who has played the accordion. Yes, you read it right!

Indeed, the theory of six degrees of separation will link you with the widely popular and multi-cultural accordion.

The accordion has always been a huge part of popular culture and is frequently the centerpiece of the folk music of that ethnicity. Whether you are Irish, French, Italian, German, Polish, Russian, Hungarian, Colombian, Brazilian, Argentinean, Dominican, Mexican, Jewish, Egyptian, Algerian, Lebanese, Persian, Indian, or Chinese, the accordion and its relative instruments dominate the musical landscape of that traditional music.

Tonight's program displays the versatility of the accordion by traveling through different musical styles and genres representing various countries.

An extensive array of diverse accordions and their relatives will appear throughout the evening: the piano accordion, the bayan, the chromatic button accordion, the bandoneón, the accordina, the diatonic accordion, and the Anglo-concertina.

All of these instruments function under the same sonic principle: an airflow streaming across a free vibrating reed that resonates a tone based on its length. The first instrument known to have used this principle can be traced back to 3000 BCE in China with the *sheng*, an instrument made out of bamboo pipes set in a small wind-chamber into which a musician blows through a mouthpiece. Suspected to have journeyed to Europe during the 13th century, the *sheng* hardly faced any major adaptations until the Industrial

Revolution. A closer predecessor of the modern accordion is arguably credited to Cyrill Damian, an Austrian instrument maker who patented the name in 1829. Naturally, the instrument wasn't as developed as the ones you will listen to this evening, but offered the general concept of the bellows sandwiched between two manuals.

At the turn of the 20th century, accordion manufacturers realized the extensive presence of the piano in American homes and salons. Consequently, they decided to seduce and target piano players with the accordion by offering piano keys in lieu of the traditional buttons on either side. Its convenient portability and comparative affordability contributed a great deal to its commercial success, which is the reason why the majority of the population familiar with the accordion recognizes it with a piano keyboard on its right side. However, the rest of the world adopted the initial concept of an all-button instrument as the primary blueprint for the accordion. In Russia, the bayan, a high-tech button accordion, became one of the centerpieces of traditional folk music. Its gigantic typewriter appearance allows for limitless technical dexterity and its distinctive sound emulates that of a pipe organ. The Accordion Virtuosi of Russia, who will perform exquisite arrangements of popular Russian folk songs and some staples of classical music for us tonight, will feature both piano accordions and bayans. Alexander Sevastian, who also hails from Russia, will demonstrate some of the finest technical dexterity and subtleties performed on bayan.

Similar to the bayan in shape and size, I will perform on the chromatic button accordion whose concept is close to its Russian relative, but its keyboard

layout and timbre very different. The chromatic button accordion is the most popular type of accordion found in Europe. Also European in its conception, I will introduce you to a German instrument conceived to replace pipe organs in underprivileged parishes, the bandoneón. Invented and named after Heinrich Band, the bandoneón is much smaller in shape than its cousin, the accordion. Although the principle of the vibrating free reed remains, you will notice a deeper, more mournful, and melancholic sound produced by this instrument. These sonic qualities staged the instrument to become the soul of the Argentinean popular music: the tango.

Additionally, I will present the accordina, which could be described as a hybrid between a harmonica and a chromatic button accordion. The accordina, invented by André Borel, can be traced back to the early 1930s in France; it borrows its free reeds and its button keyboard from the chromatic button accordion and inherits the harmonica's breathy quality which it expresses through a mouthpiece.

John Williams will transport us to Ireland and remind us that we don't need to be waiting for March 17 to be sipping on a room-temperature pint of Guinness. Tonight, he will perform on two different types of accordion that are primary instruments found in Irish traditional music: the diatonic button accordion and the Anglo-concertina. The diatonic accordion is small and offers two or three

rows of buttons. Each row is tuned to a specific tonality and only offers notes that belong to that tonal center. Most of the diatonic instruments are generally in only one or two keys, so players tend to own several instruments in order to perform throughout all key signatures. It is also interesting to note that each button on these types of instruments produce different pitches according to the bellows' direction. Hexagonally shaped, the Anglo-concertina is one of the smallest members of the accordion family. Like the diatonic accordion, one single button offers two notes depending on the bellowing. Its timbre is unlike any of its relatives, more nasal and enigmatic; it fits dreamily in some of the classic Irish ballads.

On behalf of the entire UMS team, I sincerely hope that you enjoy this program which reveals some of the existing types of diverse accordions found throughout various musical styles and cultures. Hopefully tonight's program will shed light on some of the musical versatility that the instrument has to offer beyond what you may have experienced from the boozy uncle and the distant, nerdy, secluded cousin.

And if by time you read this, you haven't found six degrees of separation between you and someone you know who has played the accordion, a simple Facebook "friend request" to any one of us will do the trick.

Enjoy tonight's concert!

— *Julien Labro*, Co-Curator, The Big Squeeze

ARTISTS

Photo: Accordion Virtuosi of Russia.



The **ACCORDION VIRTUOSI OF RUSSIA** was founded in 1943 during the Leningrad siege by Professor Pavel Smirnov. Within only six months, the ensemble was invited to record on the state radio. Since its inception, the Accordion Virtuosi of Russia has been led by three generations of the Smirnov family: first by its founder Pavel Smirnov, and now by his sons Yuri and Vladimir, as well as his grandson Yaroslav.

Throughout its history, Accordion Virtuosi of Russia has performed at some of the most prestigious venues in the world including the Leipzig Gewandhaus, Verona's Arena, Olympia Hall in Paris, and the Great Philharmonic Hall in St. Petersburg. They have toured extensively in Germany, Italy, France, Holland, Switzerland, Belgium, Austria, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Spain, Japan, Guinea, Angola, Sierra Leone, Congo, China, and Canada. They are winners of numerous competitions in Russia including the Musical Carousel and Peter-Pavel Assemblies. Most recently, the Accordion Virtuosi of Russia has been included in the Golden Book of St. Petersburg for its artistic achievements, and was named the "Best Accordion Orchestra of Europe 2013" by the orchestral society EU Musika in Frankfurt, Germany.

This outstanding ensemble was invited to be a part of the cultural program for the Olympic Games in Munich in 1972, Montreal in 1976, and Moscow in 1980. The ensemble's repertoire ranges from folk music to arrangements of rock songs, and continues to astound audiences around the world.

YURI SMIRNOV (*artistic director and conductor, Accordion Virtuosi of Russia*) has worked with the orchestra since 1967. He is also a professor at the State University of the Arts and head of the "Union of the Arts Workers" in St. Petersburg, Russia. Most recently Mr. Smirnov received the title of "People's Artist of the Russian Federation" from the Russian government. This prestigious honor is given to a very small number of artists each year for their outstanding work in the field of the arts.

VLADIMIR SMIRNOV (*principal conductor, Accordion Virtuosi of Russia*) has served in his current role with the orchestra since 1978. He has taught several generations of the orchestra's musicians and received the prestigious title of the "Honored Artist of the Russian Federation" for dedication in his work with the orchestra.

LIZ CARROLL (*fiddle*) was born in Chicago of Irish parents. She is a junior and senior All-Ireland Fiddle Champion, and has toured as a solo artist and with the Greenfields of America, Trian, String Sisters, and as part of the duo Liz Carroll & John Doyle. She's featured on 10 albums and has appeared on many more. Ms.



Photo: Liz Carroll; photographer: Suzanne Plunkett.

Carroll is a recipient of the National Heritage Fellowship Award (1994). In 2010 she became the first Irish-American musician nominated for a Grammy. In 2011, she became the first American-born composer honored with the Cumadóir TG4, Ireland's most significant traditional music prize.

Ms. Carroll's new album *On the Offbeat* has been called "magnificent" and "timeless" by critics, and "...one of the best albums of the decade so far," by *Irish Music Magazine*. For more information, please visit www.lizcarroll.com.

Deemed "brilliant" by Howard Reich of the *Chicago Tribune*, **JULIEN LABRO** (*emcee, chromatic button accordion, bandoneón, accordina*) has established himself as one of the foremost accordion and bandoneón players in both the classical and jazz worlds. His artistry, virtuosity, and creativity as a musician, composer, and arranger have earned him international acclaim and continue to astonish audiences worldwide.

French-born Labro was influenced early on by traditional folk music and the melodic, lyrical quality of the French chanson. However, he spent every last cent of his pocket money collecting CDs by jazz legends like Charlie Parker and Miles Davis, thirsty for the originality, creativity, and the endless possibilities in their musical language.

After graduating from the Marseille Conservatory of Music, Mr. Labro began winning international awards, taking First Prize in the Coupe Mondiale in 1996 and the Castelfidardo Competitions in 1997. After sweeping First Place in the Marcel Azzola, Jo Privat, and Medard Ferrero competitions in 1995 and 1998, Mr. Labro moved to the US to further pursue his studies and musical dream. There he embraced other genres of music, ranging from pop and hip-hop to electronic/techno and rap, as well as Latin, Indian, Middle Eastern, and other types of world music. Equipped with advanced degrees in classical music, jazz studies, and composition, Mr. Labro draws from both his diverse academic background and eclectic musical taste in his professional life as a performer, arranger, and composer.

As a musician, Mr. Labro is constantly evolving artistically. He searches for new themes and untried concepts, transforming and developing his creative ideas into new projects. Piazzolla, a major influence and the reason Mr. Labro picked



Photo: Julien Labro.

up the bandoneón, is also the title of his recent release on Azica Records with classical guitarist Jason Vieaux and A Far

Cry chamber orchestra and features his arrangements of the tango master's *Four Seasons*. Other releases include Grammy Award-winning vocalist Cassandra Wilson's *Another Country* (eOne Music) and critically acclaimed Hot Club of Detroit's *Junction* on Mack Avenue Records.

Mr. Labro tours with jazz groups such as the Frank Vignola Ensemble, Jazz Wagon, The Oblivion Project, and Hot Club of Detroit, and has been a guest artist with numerous symphonies and chamber ensembles. Recently, he has performed and/or recorded

with such artists such as Brazilian pianist João Donato; vocalist Cassandra Wilson; clarinetist Anat Cohen; Lebanese oud master Marcel Khalife; saxophonists Miguel Zenón, James Carter, Jon Irabagon and Victor Goines; and guitarists Howard Alden, Larry Coryell, Tommy Emmanuel, and John and Bucky Pizzarelli.

ALEXANDER SEVASTIAN (bayan)

was born in October 1976 in Minsk, Belarus. He started playing the accordion at the age

of seven. After finishing music school in 1991 he entered the Glinka Musical College in Minsk where he was taught by Myron

Boula. After finishing college he entered the Gnessin Academy of Music in Moscow in the class of Professor Friedrich Lips. In July 1998, Mr. Sevastian was trained by Professor Elsbeth Moser at the Sofia Goubaidulina Master Class in Avignon, France.

In 1996–2001, Mr. Sevastian worked in the Russian TV and Radio Orchestra with art director Nickolai Nekrasov. With this orchestra, he recorded many television performances and radio archive tapes. He has also regularly participated in music festivals including Moscow Autumn, Bayan and Bayanists, and Young Composers Introduce.

Since April 2001, Mr. Sevastian has lived in Toronto, Canada. He plays with Toronto Woodwinds, an ensemble that

was awarded the First Prize at The Golden Accordion International Competition in December 2001 in New York. Since September 2002 he has played with the internationally recognized group Quartetto Gelato and tours regularly in the US and Canada with the group.

In November 2002, he made his debut with the Hamilton Symphony under Boris Brott and has since performed as soloist with the Toronto Symphony, the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, and with orchestras in Victoria, Quebec City, Kelowna, Kamloops, Windsor, Edmonton, Charleston, Mississauga, Sioux City, and Nanaimo. He has performed concerts in 30 Russian cities as well as concerts in Belarus, Ukraine, Germany, Italy, and Japan. He has given several premiere performances, including the works of Berinsky, Bronner, Korolchuk, Zelenski, and Khondo.

In 2007 he won the prestigious Coupe Mondiale World Accordion Championship held in Washington, DC. Since that time, his solo engagements have included appearances in Mexico, Serbia, Portugal, Italy, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, the US, and several major tours in Canada.

Founded in 2010, the **SPEKTRAL QUARTET** is widely regarded as one of Chicago's most magnetic and forward-thinking chamber ensembles. The group's inclusive approach to concert format, shifting the role of audience member from spectator to ally, has earned it a loyal

Photo: Alexander Sevastian.



Photo: Spektral Quartet.



following within and beyond the city limits.

Since its inception, the Spektral Quartet has sought out the discourse between the masterworks of the traditional canon and those written this decade, this year, or this week. Rather than simply pairing Brian Ferneyhough with Josef Haydn or Thomas Adès with Béla Bartók, the group offers listeners an even more elastic and absorbing experience through its Sampler Pack concert format. For these performances, shorter works and single movements are curated in a setlist containing a menagerie of musical styles, spanning centuries. The unexpected similarities and enticing contrasts between two or three composers becomes a conversation between 12.

The 2013–14 season found Spektral Quartet venturing into the intersection of music and everyday life with its Mobile Miniatures project. For it, 40 composers from across the US including David Lang, Augusta Read Thomas, Nico Muhly, and Shulamit Ran were commissioned to write ringtone-length pieces for the quartet to workshop, record, and make available to the public for download to mobile devices. 2013–14 also saw the release of the group's first two full-length albums: *Chambers*, spotlighting the work of living, Chicago-based composers, and the South American-themed *From This Point Forward* with bandoneón/accordion virtuoso Julien Labro.

For its 2014–15 season entitled “AMPLIFY,” the Quartet unveils its four largest-scale commissions to date as well as centerpieces from the traditional canon. These adventurous new works push the ensemble into uncharted and thrilling new territory: “Artistic,” in the case of David Reminick, whose five-movement new work features the musicians singing and playing simultaneously;

“Collaborative,” for Anthony Cheung’s quintet, which partners the group for the first time with International Contemporary Ensemble founder and flutist Claire Chase; “Contextual,” with Chris Fisher-Lochhead’s mining of the timbres and cadences of comedy stars like Bill Cosby, Dave Chapelle, and Tig Notaro; and “Experiential,” in Alex Temple’s tour through scenes of gender fluidity, featuring indie luminary Julia Holter. With its commitment to an equal footing in the traditional canon and new music, essential entries from eras past balance out the quartet’s season with names such as Beethoven, Ligeti, Haydn, Crumb, Dvořák, and more.

The Spektral Quartet serves as ensemble-in-residence at the University of Chicago and was invited in 2013 to join the Rush Hour Series’ Back-of-the-Yards project, which offers year-long music education and outreach in one of Chicago’s most under-served neighborhoods.

JOHN WILLIAMS (*diatonic button accordion, Anglo-concertina*) is internationally regarded as one of the foremost players of Irish music today. With five All-Ireland titles to his credit, Mr. Williams is the only American-born competitor ever to win first place in the



Photo: John Williams; James Fraher photography.

Senior Concertina category. His additional talents on flute, button accordion, bodhran, and piano distinguish

him as a much sought-after multi-instrumentalist in the acoustic scene around the world.

Born and raised on the southwest side of Chicago, Mr. Williams spent his summers during college on the southwest coast of Ireland in his father’s village of Doolin, County Clare. Like Chicago, Doolin

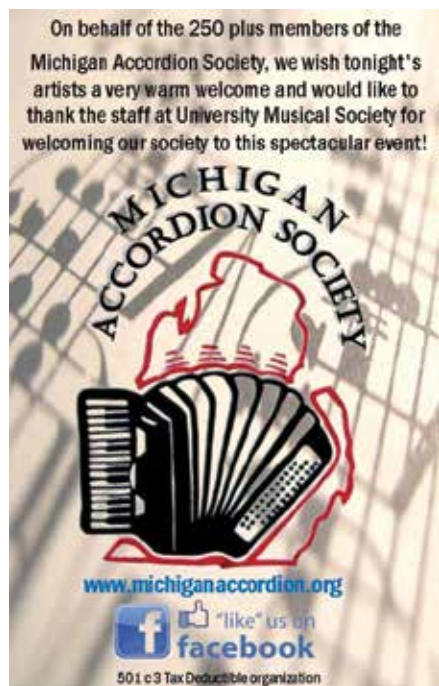
became a major musical crossroads for him and countless other local and international musicians to meet and exchange music. Gigging every night in the pubs of Doolin and Lisdoonvarna soon led to performances in Galway, Cork, Dublin, Belfast, Paris, Brittany, Zurich, and New York.

Forming the groundbreaking Solas in 1995 with Seamus Egan, Winifred Horan, Karan Casey, and John Doyle, Mr. Williams received wider recognition playing to sold-out audiences internationally and earning two NAIRD awards and Grammy nominations for the ensemble's 1996 and 1997 releases, *Solas* and *Sunny Spells and Scattered Showers*. The Irish national broadcasting network RTE has featured Mr. Williams as the subject of the radio program *The Long Note*, the television series *The Pure Drop*, and the Gaelic language and music programs *Geantraí* and *Failte*.

Outside of traditional music, Mr. Williams has collaborated on productions with Gregory Peck, Doc Severinson, Studs Terkel, Mavis Staples, jazz pianist Bob Sutter, bluegrass legend Tim O'Brien, Syrian oud player Kinan Abou Afach, Oscar-winning director Sam Mendes, the London Symphony Orchestra, and the Irish Chamber Ensemble. US audiences recognize him from numerous appearances on *Mountain Stage*, *A Prairie Home Companion*, and *The Grand Ole Opry* as well as guest performances with The Chieftains, Nickel Creek, and Riverdance.

On the silver screen, Mr. Williams appears as a bandleader, music consultant, and composer in Dreamworks' classic Chicago thriller *Road to Perdition*. Centrally featured in the Academy Award-nominated score by Thomas Newman, Mr. Williams' autumnal *Perdition Piano Duet* was released on the 2002 Universal soundtrack album as performed in the film by stars Paul Newman and Tom Hanks. Regarding the original piece by Mr. Williams, the *Los Angeles Times* wrote "Closeness is beautifully and wordlessly conveyed in a quiet piano duet...a lovely thing." Reviewing the entire score, the *Denver Post* printed "Brilliant, beautiful, brutal...the music in the film feels almost like a character itself."

ALEXANDER YAKUSHEV (electric violin, *Accordion Virtuosi of Russia*) has been a regular soloist with the Accordion Virtuosi of Russia since 1996. Mr. Yakushev has also performed extensively around the world in solo recital, and is a winner of several music competitions. He appears regularly on TV programs in Russia, and is in high demand for his unusual and capturing arrangements of popular tunes for his instrument.



ILYA YAKUSHEV (*piano, Accordion Virtuosi of Russia*), with many awards and honors to his credit, continues to mesmerize audiences on three continents. In the US, his performances of two Prokofiev concerti in the 2007 San Francisco Prokofiev Festival with Michael Tilson Thomas were included in the top 10 classical music events of the year by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and prompted a

return there in 2009, also with Maestro Tilson Thomas. In addition to many concerto and recital appearances in the US, Mr. Yakushev has extensively appeared internationally in his native Russia, Japan, Korea, and Singapore. He is the executive director of the International Keyboard Institute and Festival at the Mannes School of Music in New York, where he studied with pianist Vladimir Feltsman.

ACCORDION VIRTUOSI OF RUSSIA

Yuri Smirnov, *Artistic Director and Conductor*
Vladimir Smirnov, *Conductor*

Alexander Yakushev, *Electric Violin*
Ilya Yakushev, *Piano*

ACCORDION

Vladimir Chernenkii
Maria Egorova
Maria Falko
Ekaterina Filippova
Iuliia Grigoreva
Daria Krasotkina
Alexandr Liubomirov
Evgenii Lyskov
Kseniia Malakhovskaia
Anastasiia Mikhailovskaia
Evgenii Prokhorov
Mikhail Savin
Tatiana Trifonova

BAYAN

Alexander Bondarev
Yaroslav Brovin
Alesia Davydenko
Sergei Enns
Iakov Karmanov
Mariia Khmeleva
Mikhail Poverennyi

Anna Samokhvalova
Daniil Shperling
Nikita Venkov

GUITAR

Alexandr Kotelnikov

BASS GUITAR

Arseny Bardyzh

KEYBOARD

Ekaterina Fakhmi
Anna Ivanova

PERCUSSION

Sergey Berezanskiy
Natalia Lubenets
Anton Smirnov

HARP

Ekaterina Rantc

The Accordion Virtuosi of Russia was funded by Pavel Smirnov.



UMS ARCHIVES

This evening's concert marks **Julien Labro's** second appearance under UMS auspices following his UMS debut as a member of Hot Club of Detroit in October 2010 at the Michigan Theater. UMS welcomes the **Accordion Virtuosi of Russia** and **Yuri and Vladimir Smirnov, Alexander and Ilya Yakushev, Liz Carroll, Alexander Sevastian, John Williams**, and the **Spektral Quartet** who make their UMS debuts this evening.