2010-2011 PEAK Explores the Answer: Experiments in Arts & Technology

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The Zafir Project

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming

PEAK Performances at Montclair State University

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About the Artists

Imani Winds

Imani Winds has established itself as more than a wind quintet. An ensemble of pre-composed music and improvisation, Imani Winds’ unique sound is enriched by traditional Arabic music, American folk and jazz, and contemporary and classical styles. The group is represented by Alliance Artist Management.

Simon Shaheen

Simon Shaheen is one of the most significant Arab musicians, performers, and composers of his generation. His work incorporates and reflects a legacy of Arabic music while it forges ahead to new frontiers, bringing together many different styles in the process. This unique contribution to the world of arts was recognized in 1994 when Shaheen was honored with the prestigious National Heritage Award at the White House.

In the 1990s he released four albums of his own: Solmizah (Water Lily Acoustics), Turrith (CMP), Topaz (Lyrichord), and Simon Shaheen: The Music of Mohamed Abdel Wahab (Anson), while also contributing cuts to producer Bill Laswell’s fusion collective, Halalization Engine (Island). He contributed selections to soundtracks for The Sheltering Sky and Malcom X, among others, and composed the entire soundtrack for the United Nations-sponsored documentary for Everyone Everywhere Broadcast globally in December 1998, this film celebrated the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Human Rights Charter. But perhaps Shaheen’s most famous cut was to his Blue Flame (ARK21, 2001), where he led his group Qantara on a labyrinthian journey through the world of fusion music to discover the hearth of the Middle East. The album was nominated for 11 Grammy Awards, and the band’s performances have been called “gorious.”

A Palestinian, born in the village of Tarshiha in the Galilee, Shaheen was steeped in music from the earliest days of his life. Shaheen was a professor of music and a master oud player. “Learning to play on the oud from my father was the most powerful influence on my musical thinking. He began playing on the oud at the age of five and a year later started studying violin at the Conservatory for Western Classical Music in Jerusalem. ‘When I held and played these instruments, they felt like an extension of my arms.’”

In addition to performing with Qantara and the Near Eastern Music Ensemble, Shaheen tours as a solo artist internationally and as a featured guest with a collection of artists promoting awareness of Arabic music through lectures and workshop presentations.

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Imani Winds
The Zafir Project

featuring
Valerie Coleman, flute
Toyin Spellman-Diaz, oboe
Mariam Adam, clarinet
Jeff Scott, French horn
Monica Ellis, bassoon

with special guest
Simon Shaheen, composer, oud, and violin

Dafer Tawil, percussion

PROGRAM

“Far Away” from Quintet No.2
Miguel del Águila (b. 1957)

“Nocturne”
Valerie Coleman (b. 1970)

“Andaluza”
Manuel de Falla (1876–1946)
(arr. Wayne Peterson)

“The Lotus Pond”
Gamal Abdel-Rahim (1924–1988)
(arr. Adam Lesnick)

Wonderings
i. Gift of Life
ii. Two Songs from Nandom

~ Intermission ~

World Premiere!
Zafir

“Dance Mediterranea”
Simon Shaheen

World Premiere!
Zafir

“The Lotus Pond”
Gamal Abdel-Rahim (1924–1988)
(arr. Wayne Peterson)

City Theatre & Dance Group | ROBYN ORLIN
(South Africa)

Walking Next to our Shoes...
Intoxicated by Strawberries and Cream,
We Enter Continents Without Knocking...

February 10–20, 2011
Alexander Kasser Theater

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