



Sultans of String and Friends

A LIVE VIRTUAL PERFORMANCE WITH Q&A

APRIL 13, 2021 • 7 P.M.





Supporting the Arts at Oswego

Made possible by the Student Arts Fee, administered by ARTSwego

SUNY Oswego — Livestream interactive Zoom concert!

Featured on the *New York Times* hits list and the *Billboard World Music Charts*! Sultans of String band members Chris McKhool, Kevin Laliberté and Drew Birston perform the *Best of the Sultans*, beamed right into your living room!

Special guests include Ojibway Elder Duke Redbird, flamenco dancer and singer Tamar Ilana, JUNO Award-winning Hungarian pianist Robi Botos, Madagascar's Donné Roberts and Yukiko Tsutsui from Japan!

This is over Zoom, which is awesome because it is interactive, and we will be able to see and hear you, and you can see and hear us, and you can all see each other as well! It is a real show! So pour yourself a quarantini, and get ready to enjoy the music! The link becomes live at 6:40 p.m. to get settled and chat with our friends. And make sure you have speakers plugged in if you have them!

The show will last about an hour, and then will feature a talkback portion, so bring your burning questions, as we will be opening up the floor for anyone who has always wanted to ask any of the artists about their inspiration, or music, or whatever strikes your fancy.

Special guest performance by the SUNY Oswego's Small Group Jazz

The Girl from Ipanema Antônio Carlos Jobim (1927-1994)

Ryan Zampella, Tenor Saxophone

Brandon Schmitt, Guitar

Benjamin Coddington, Piano

Zachary Robison, Bass

Robert Ackerman, Drum Set

The State University of New York at Oswego would like to recognize with respect the Onondaga Nation, the "people of the hills," or central firekeepers of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Indigenous peoples on whose ancestral lands SUNY Oswego now stands. Please join us in acknowledging the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora Nations, their elders both past and present, as well as the future seven generations yet to come. Consistent with the university's values of diversity and equity, inclusion and social justice this acknowledgment demonstrates a commitment to cultivating relationships with Native American communities through academic collaborations, partnerships, historical recognitions, and community service in order to dismantle the legacies of conquest and colonization.



This virtual program is brought to you by the streaming services of Entertainment Engineering Collective. EEC is a collaborative technology services company that is dedicated to cultivating the artistic experience in a virtual environment. With services including digital performance production and interactive technology integration, we are committed to working with artists and progressing the artistic experience among all platforms.

For more information, please visit <https://entertainmentengineering.org>

WELCOME



Welcome to ARTSwego's last performance of the season. It's been a wild and bumpy ride these last few months, but thanks to your continued support we have made it! I am beyond thrilled to have the renowned Sultans of String performing for us tonight to mark the occasion.

Sultans of String have a fond following in our region and never disappoint with their energy, virtuosity, and eclectic music that celebrates rhythms from around the world. I had the privilege of hearing bandleader, Chris McKhool, present his touring plans for the recently released *Refuge* album back in January of 2019 at the Association of Performing Arts Professionals Conference in New York City. The mission of this work, to present songs that speak to the challenges facing the world's displaced peoples—their stories, persistence, and their humanity, was incredibly moving and I couldn't wait to bring this work to Oswego. However, little did we all know how much the world was about to change in just a few short months.

In spite of everything, Sultans of String has risen to the challenge, and charged forward with their *Refuge* project in this new virtual world. I am continually impressed with how this group has adapted and delivered high-quality live performances from their recently created home studio, while still incorporating the contributions of several guest artists. The result, as you are about to see, is a surprisingly engaging and lively concert that is sure to move you and bring a smile to your face.

I am also pleased to have the opportunity to showcase SUNY Oswego's small jazz group in this evening's performance. It's always a treat when our students have the chance to perform with guest artists, no matter the format. Congratulations to all and thank you for your hard work!

A huge thank you to everyone who made this event possible. Thank you for joining us tonight, and for sticking with us this season. I sincerely hope to see you in person again as soon as possible.

Sincerely,
Miranda Traudt

SULTANS OF STRING

Three-time JUNO Award nominees and *Billboard* charting band Sultans of String create “energetic and exciting music from a band with talent to burn!” according to *Maverick Magazine*. Thrilling their audiences with their genre-hopping passport of Celtic reels, flamenco, gypsy-jazz, Arabic, Cuban and South Asian rhythms, the group celebrates musical fusion and human creativity with warmth and virtuosity. Fiery violin dances with rumba-flamenco guitar, while bass lays down unstoppable grooves. Acoustic strings meet with electronic wizardry to create layers and depth of sound, while world rhythms excite audiences to their feet with an irresistible need to dance.

Sultans of String have never taken the easy road. Since releasing their debut album *Luna* in 2007, they have continually strived to make each chart-topping album more original and meaningful than the last. That includes working with an orchestra (2013's *Symphony*), teaming with Pakistani sitarist Anwar Khurshid (2015's *Subcontinental Drift*) and even crafting a world-music holiday album (2017's *Christmas Caravan*), which landed them on the *Billboard* charts and the *New York Times*. Their ambition and work ethic have garnered them multiple awards and accolades, including three Juno nominations, first place in the International Songwriting Competition (out of 15,000 entries), three Canadian Folk Music Awards, and countless other honors.

With their historic and visionary seventh album *Refuge*, McKhool and co. bring their unique brand of musical synergy and collaboration into the studio like never before. Their most ambitious, diverse, inclusive and passionately political album, *Refuge* puts the Toronto-based Sultans face-to-face with a VIP roster of artists from around the globe — including American banjo master Béla Fleck, Israeli vocalist Yasmin Levy and others, like Iraqi violinist Imah Al Taha and Iranian santur master Amir Amiri, who have fled the peril and persecution of their homelands for the safer shores of North America.

Their live resumé is similarly stellar. Equally at home in a concert hall, jazz club or festival setting, the Sultans have gigged at the legendary club Birdland in New York, the renowned Celtic Connections Festival in the U.K. and the San Jose Jazz Festival. They have performed with symphonies across Canada and the U.S., and played live on BBC TV, Irish National Radio, World Cafe and SiriusXM in Washington DC.



DUKE REDBIRD



Dr. Duke Redbird is an established Indigenous intellectual, poet, painter, broadcaster, filmmaker and keynote speaker who brings his breadth of cultural knowledge and artistic practice to the benefit of a global audience.

Dr. Redbird was instrumental in the implementation of innovative multimedia, technologies and beyond, bringing an Indigenous approach to art education that was rooted in his pioneering work at OCAD University. Dr. Redbird's legacy stretches far beyond his work in Canada. His art has been exhibited and his poetry has been published and translated in anthologies around the world.

He works as a multifaceted artist, practicing across a number of disciplines including literature, painting, theatre, cinema and most recently rap poetry. A well-known Canadian broadcaster and television personality, he is in demand as a keynote speaker in corporate, industry, and educational settings. Dr. Redbird received his Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies from York University in 1978, and his Doctorate from OCAD University in 2013. As a poet, essayist and screenwriter, Dr. Redbird has published and performed poetry readings, theatrical productions, video and film, both locally and internationally. His published book of poetry *Loveshine and Red Wine* was the inspiration for a multimedia musical production of his poetic work, at a command performance before Queen Elizabeth II.

In 1985, Dr. Redbird represented Canada at the Valmiki World Poetry Festival in India, reading the opening address. He has written and directed many dramatic films and documentaries. In 1993 Dr. Redbird was presented the Silver Hugo Award at the Chicago Film Festival for a drama he produced for TV Ontario. For fifteen years, from 1994 to 2009, Dr. Redbird was a familiar face on television as an on-air Arts & Entertainment reporter for City TV.

DONNÉ ROBERTS



Donné Roberts is a passionate performer. When he hits the stage he carries with him an energy that immediately exhilarates the crowd even if they've never heard his music before. He performs mainly in Malagasy, his mother tongue from his birthplace of Madagascar. Yet this never proves to be a barrier to the audience, providing living proof that music truly does transcend language.

Donné came to wider recognition after he released his albums *Rhythm Was Born* and *Internation* and for his contribution as one of the members of the African Guitar Summit project, which won a JUNO in 2005 and was nominated for another one in 2007 as member of Okavango The African Orchestra that won a JUNO Award in 2017.

Donné was raised and educated in Moscow, Russia and now lives in Toronto. In Moscow, he was the first black VJ on MTV Russia. Touring Canada, he introduces his music to new fans that might be unfamiliar with the kinds of rhythms his music conveys and his fusion of seemingly dissimilar sounds.

TAMAR ILANA



Tamar Ilana is a fiery flamenco dancer and powerful multi-lingual vocalist who has been touring the world since the age of five. With her band Ventanas, she has recorded three albums and been nominated for four CFMAs. Tamar is also the founder of the project Meegwetch, which showcases seven women of different mixed Indigenous descent from across the Americas.

Since the Coronavirus pandemic struck Toronto, Tamar has continued her role as a pivotal presence in the International music community, performing online as a part of the Aga Khan Museum's Pocket Performance Series, the Wales international Storytelling Festival, the Wanderings Podcast based out of Kiev, Toronto City Hall Live Online Series, and daily live Instagram improvisational sets where she is creating her own electro-acoustic world sound. Tamar is also keeping busy as Artist Liaison with the URGNT Live online venue.

Tamar is of Jewish-Indigenous-Romanian-Scottish descent, and she derives inspiration from her personal and cultural history growing up in the multicultural city of Toronto; accompanying her ethnomusicologist mother on fieldwork expeditions as a child; and living in Ibiza, Barcelona, Paris and Seville as a teen and young adult. Tamar has also appeared in award-winning international musical theatre productions such as *Counting Sheep Revolution* and Yaël Farber's *Salomé* and has recently collaborated with Jesse Cook, Jaffa Road, Esmeralda Enrique, Sultans of String and the Mississauga Symphony Orchestra.

ROBI BOTOS



JUNO award winner Robi Botos has been hailed as one of the most diverse multi-instrumentalists of this generation. From the hard-bop style of Bill Evans and Herbie Hancock to the swing of Oscar Peterson and the heartfelt melodic expression of Mulgrew Miller and Cedar Walton, Robi has managed to master the technique of his idols, all while showcasing his musical expressions in a voice that is purely his own. While Robi is known for being a strong player in

the traditional jazz and funk fields, he always incorporates an element of the music he grew up listening to into his playing. Says organist, trumpeter and pianist Joey DeFrancesco: "Robi is one of the most swingin', soulful, funky, world-class players I've ever heard, and he has a technique like you can't believe. Definitely one of my very favorite players!!!"

YUKIKO TSUTSUI



Yukiko Tsutsui is a singer-songwriter from Japan. She has moved to Canada to pursue her musical career and graduated from the Contemporary Music and Technology program at Selkirk College in Nelson, BC. In Japan, she had been teaching vocal, keyboard and music theory, composing and recording for a TV commercial, performing for festivals and events, including backup vocal/keyboard for Elvis tribute band. She has years of experience singing as

a member of professional A capella groups for weddings in Tokyo. After she moved to Toronto, she got into the music scene right away and started to perform with Juno award-winning guitarist Donné Roberts. In 2018 and 2019 during the Ricoh Woodbine Mile at Woodbine Racetrack, she was selected to perform the Japanese National Anthem and it was broadcasted on TSN, the sports channel. Her recently released single *Inori* freshly delivered an authentic Japanese folk melody to the Canadian music scene.



FEEDBACK FROM PREVIOUS Sultans of String ZOOM CONCERTS:

"Sultans of String are still ground-breaking after all the decades. The music is of-this-moment, our moment. It is a tonic, fresh air, in the midst of all that has separated us."

"It was so intimate. Every seat was perfect, front row centre. It's a great way to establish personal connections with the artists."

"This was the best Zoom – online show I have seen. The setting and production values were excellent. It was obvious that time was taken to ensure us of a completely professional concert. Loved the music – hope there are more to come."

"Wow! What a special evening of song, storytelling, dance and palpable heart-sharing! I was amazed at the coordination it must have taken to connect everyone, and was moved by having so much artistry connected in a "zoom-room"....just wow....what a joy!"

"It was great to have live music come right to our homes. The band played amazing music! The sound quality was wonderful. Hope to hear more live music from Sultans of String, soon."

Sultans of String website: sultansofstring.com

BUY/LISTEN NOW: smarturl.it/RefugeAlbum

REFUGE EPK: spark.adobe.com/page/nTMPzB2pbSPyP/



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SUPPORT THE ARTS — BECOME A PATRON! PATRON LEVELS AND BENEFITS FOR 2020 - 2021

What a strange time we find ourselves in! As you are well aware, performing arts organizations across the world have been placed on hold due to COVID-19. Restrictions on public gatherings, travel limitations, and loss of public and private funding sources have resulted in a devastating situation for many organizations in our industry. Although the damage is immense, we have also been greatly encouraged by the creativity and ingenuity we have seen from our arts community. Artists from all practices are adapting to these challenging times by creating new innovative works, free of physical constraints.

ARTSwego remains committed to fulfilling our mission of presenting arts programs that serve to foster patterns of life-long learning and promote cross-cultural understanding. Furthermore, we believe now is the time to support artists to ensure their future success. We hope you will join us in this cause, by helping us continue to present high-quality arts experiences — no matter what format they might take!

As we wait to safely watch live performances together again, ARTSwego events will be entirely virtual with all the usual opportunities for engagement. From post-performance discussions, to interactive experiences during the show, we can assure you that your viewing experience will be highly memorable! However, we cannot do this alone. ARTSwego relies on support from patrons like yourself — now more than ever. Please consider supporting us this season by making a tax-deductible donation below.

Yes, I want to become an ARTSwego Patron! Suggested levels below.

Contribution Level	Amount Level
Friend	\$50
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Follow this link to donate:
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