

BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

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BLANTON MUSEUM'S LATEST *SoundSpace* BRINGS THE REFUGEE EXPERIENCE TO LIFE WITH MUSICAL WORKS BY AND ABOUT REFUGEES



***SoundSpace: Refugees*
Sunday, June 4 | 2:00pm**

AUSTIN, Texas – May 26 – The Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin presents a compelling new installation of *SoundSpace*, its acclaimed music series. *SoundSpace: Refugees* is a program of works written by, performed by or depicting the experience of refugees and will take place on Sunday, June 4, 2017 at 2:00 p.m. The pieces will be performed throughout the museum in galleries that feature art related to refugee themes.

Among the program highlights is **ARCOS Dance** presenting *The Warriors: A Love Story*, winner of awards from the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and Austin Critics' Table Award. This powerful work confronts the disturbing beauty and profound devastation of WWII, through the story of an American philosopher and veteran who survived the Allied bombing of Dresden.

The program also includes the world premiere of a new work by **Brent Baldwin** sung by **Panoramic Voices** and featuring soloist **Nakia** (from Season 1 of "The Voice") and dancers **Hassan Christopher** and **Alexa Capareda**. Designed to encourage audience participation, the piece is prefaced by Dr. Ysaye Barnwell's *Would You Harbor Me?* and incorporates interpolations of *Deportees* by Woody Guthrie. An award-winning conductor, multi-instrumentalist, vocalist, arranger and composer, Baldwin leads the Texas Choral Consort and holds a master's degree in music from The University of Texas at Austin.

Performance artist **Michael Anthony Garcia (Los Outsiders)** will premiere *Sharing Ablution*, a participatory work that employs sound, performance, and projected imagery in an exploration of social responsibility and contemporary organized religion.

Also featured are performances by members of **Bereket, the University of Texas Middle Eastern Ensemble**, and **Roberto Paolo Riggio**. Riggio has toured with international stars such as Youssou N'Dour, Fathy Salama, Fairuz, Kazem Al-Saher and the Gypsy All-Stars (from the family of The Gipsy Kings). He also has collaborated with cutting-edge composers such as Aashish Khan and Fared Shafinury, and has founded various groups, including the East Austin Youth Orchestra and the Austin Global Orchestra.

Poet **Zell Miller III** and musician **Sir Charles** will present "Home?" a four-part work examining what it means to be a refugee, explored within the context of home and the absence of home. Premieres by the award-winning performers **Henna Chou**, and **Sheffield/Rippie** will be presented, as well.

SoundSpace is organized for the Blanton by Artistic Director Steven Parker. According to Adam Bennett, the Blanton's Manager of Public Programs, "In November, Steven and I were noting that how we welcome refugees, people who have been forced from their homes, is one of the most important issues this country currently faces. We began discussing how we could use music and art to start conversations about our responsibilities as Americans, as members of a nation of immigrants, to continue to be welcoming." Parker adds, "Music and art cross national boundaries all the time. These creative works by refugees and about refugees' stories can help reframe our ongoing public conversation about the role of immigrants and refugees in our daily lives."

Among the art currently on display at the Blanton are several works that explore themes related to refugees. *Cruzando El Rio Bravo (Border Crossing)* by Luis Jiménez is a monumental sculpture that depicts a Mexican man carrying a woman and infant across the Rio Grande River. *Part File Score* by Susan Philipsz is a multimedia installation based on the life and work of Austrian film composer Hanns Eisler, who worked in Hollywood after immigrating to the U.S., became a target of McCarthyism, and spent much of his life in exile.

Heralded by the *Austin American-Statesman* as "The most successful new music event in the City," *SoundSpace* is a dynamic biannual concert series that brings together musicians and other creatives from all corners of Austin's artistic community and beyond. Now in its seventh year, the series focuses on making connections between visual and sound art, and demonstrates the Blanton's commitment to nurturing collaborations that provide innovative experiences with art, inspire creativity, and support the educational mission of The University of Texas at Austin.

SoundSpace: Refugees is open to the public and included with the purchase of general museum admission: \$9 for adults, \$7 for seniors, \$5 for students, and free for Blanton members, current UT ID-holders, and children 12 and under. Get more information at www.blantonmuseum.org.

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About the Blanton Museum of Art

Founded in 1963, the Blanton Museum of Art is one of the foremost university art museums in the country and holds the largest public collection in Central Texas. Recognized for its modern and contemporary American and Latin American art, Italian Renaissance and Baroque paintings, and encyclopedic collection of prints and drawings, the Blanton offers thought-provoking, visually arresting, and personally moving encounters with art.

The museum is located at the intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Congress Avenue and is open Tuesday through Friday from 10–5, Saturday from 11–5, and Sunday from 1–5. Thursdays are free admission days and every third Thursday the museum is open until 9. Admission Prices: Adults \$9, Kids 12 and under FREE, Seniors (65+) \$7, Youth/College Students (13–21) \$5. Admission is free to members and all current UT ID-holders. For more information call (512) 471-7324 or visit www.blantonmuseum.org.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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PHOTO CAPTION:

Kimberly Pollini and Michael Anthony Garcia perform *All That You Can Be* during *SoundSpace: Music of the 1990s*, on February 28, 2016.

Photo by Gabriel Perez