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[Press Photos for 21/22 Season](#)

**EMBARGOED: DO NOT PUBLISH UNTIL THURSDAY, MAY 13, 2021**

## **UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY ANNOUNCES 2021-22 SEASON**

**Acclaimed Arts Presenter's 143<sup>rd</sup> Lineup Includes:**

### **Five Programs Featuring New Commissions**

*Including new works by Clarice Assad, Bryce Dessner, Kyle Abraham, Tarek Yamani, Jessie Montgomery, and Joyce DiDonato*

### **Season-Long Focus on Artists from the Arab World and Its Diaspora**

*Live and Virtual Programs by Tarek Yamani, National Arab Orchestra, Kabareh Cheikhats, Ali Chahrour, and more*

### **New Creative Partnership with the Philadelphia Orchestra**

*Includes Two Concerts in Hill Auditorium and Educational Residency, Plus New Musical Theatre Production of "Fiddler on the Roof" in Concert*

### **Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower* in a New Opera by Toshi Reagon**

### **Return of Many Events Canceled Due to Pandemic**

*A MoodSwing Reunion, HOME, Benjamin Grosvenor, Imani Winds & Catalyst Quartet, Ballet Folklórico de México, Caleb Teicher, and more*

### **Plus Free Digital Programming**

*Ongoing Virtual Performances & Other Programming Offered Throughout the Year*

ANN ARBOR, MI (May 13, 2021) – With more than a year since its last live, in-person concert, the **University Musical Society (UMS)** announces its 143<sup>rd</sup> season, which will run from November 2021 through April 2022. Due to the pandemic, the season will be somewhat smaller than usual, with the programming concentrated in a five-month period. UMS will also continue its commitment to digital

programming — including concerts and educational events — throughout the year, all of which will again be offered at no charge (due to a shorter planning horizon, digital events will be announced throughout the season). The season will be presented with health and safety for audiences and artists as the top priority, with audiences asked to be active participants in the measures that will help make live performance a reality once again. Additionally, UMS will continue to offer flexible ticket refund and exchange policies. A full list of performances is included at the end of this release, and details on each event are available at [ums.org](https://ums.org).

In addition to presenting world-class performances, UMS will offer unique and engaging ways for audiences to connect with the artists on stage through a robust offering of education and community engagement activities, which will be announced in the fall.

*“Of the many things we’ve learned and come to understand in this past year, one is that in times of crisis, the arts remain vital to our existence as human beings,”* says UMS president Matthew VanBesien. *“They are a constant in our lives and create joy and hope, even in times of despair, injustice, and loss. And while none of us ever imagined that we’d be looking forward to our 143rd season in the same way that we might celebrate a milestone anniversary, we are all looking forward to returning, to restarting, to reconnecting, and to rejoicing with our audiences and artists once again.”*

### **[Programming from the Arab World and Its Diaspora](#)**

The 2021-22 season will feature some events that were scheduled and then canceled during the pandemic (some dating back to March 2020), including a focus on artists, institutions, and ensembles from the Arab World and its diaspora. Artistic projects in this realm will explore the depth, complexity, and diversity of perspectives among Arab and Arab-American artists and communities. The events will serve as a platform for community building and cultural exchange. The season’s Arab World focus features Lebanese choreographer and theater maker **Ali Chahrouh’s** *Layl (Night)*, the **National Arab Orchestra with singer Abeer Nehme**, and a celebratory evening of performances, *Sahra*, by violinist/composer **Mike Khoury**, choreographer **Leyya Tawil**, vocalist/producer/DJ **Tammy Lakkis**, and the Moroccan performance group **Kabareh Cheikhats**.

Additionally, Tarek Yamani will conclude his 2020-21 Digital Artist Residency with UMS on Wednesday, October 27 with the digital world premiere of a new work for string quartet, written for and performed

by the Spektral Quartet, and co-commissioned by UMS and the Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation. The concert will explore the junctures between Western Classical, jazz, and traditional Arab music and will also include three pieces Yamani composed for string quartet and keyboards. Tarek Yamani's UMS debut on March 13, 2020 was the first UMS performance canceled due to COVID.

## New Commissions

In addition to the Tarek Yamani world premiere, the 21-22 season features four events with UMS co-commissions:

- On Friday, December 3 in Rackham Auditorium, the **Takács Quartet and accordion player Julien Labro** will perform two new works written specifically for them, one by Brazilian-American composer **Clarice Assad** and one by The National founder **Bryce Dessner**.
- Choreographer and MacArthur Fellow **Kyle Abraham** teams up with pioneering producer, composer, and EDM artist **Jlin** for a new dance piece that reimagines Mozart's Requiem. **Requiem: Fire in the Air of the Earth** will be presented January 7-8 in the Power Center.
- **Jessie Montgomery's** new piece, *Sergeant McCauley*, will be performed by the **Imani Winds and the Catalyst Quartet** on Saturday, January 29 in Rackham Auditorium.
- Another UMS Digital Residency Artist from the 2020-21 season, mezzo-soprano **Joyce DiDonato** brings her new work, **EDEN**, to Hill Auditorium on Thursday, April 14. *EDEN* explores the majesty, might, and mystery of Nature through both arresting and evocative music and theatrical effects.
- In addition to these UMS Co-Commissions, the **Sphinx Symphony** will present a new work by Carlos Simon that was commissioned by Sphinx when it launches its 25th Anniversary with its first national tour, beginning in Hill Auditorium on Sunday, January 30.

## Philadelphia Orchestra Creative Partnership

UMS has also announced a new, multi-faceted creative partnership with **The Philadelphia Orchestra**, reigniting and capitalizing on its long history with the ensemble, which served as the residency orchestra for UMS's storied May Festival for 49 years, from 1936-84. As part of the 21-22 season, UMS will present The Philadelphia Orchestra in an orchestral residency next March, which will feature two live concerts in

Hill Auditorium, a digital concert, and a series of master classes and student engagement events with the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance.

On Friday, March 12, music director **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** conducts a program featuring U-M alumna and principal tuba **Carol Jantsch** in Wynton Marsalis's new Tuba Concerto, which will have its world premiere in December, and Johannes Brahms's Symphony No. 1. On Saturday, March 13 principal guest conductor **Nathalie Stutzmann** leads the orchestra in Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 1 (with concertmaster **David Kim** as soloist), Missy Mazzoli's *Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres)*, and Franz Schubert's Symphony No. 9.

In addition to the live performances, bass-baritone **Davóne Tines** will perform a suite of arias by John Adams ("Shake the Heavens" from *El Niño*) and Anthony Davis (Malcolm's Aria from *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X*), as well as a work that he co-wrote with Igee Dieudonné in memory of Breonna Taylor, in a digital program released during the winter. Members of the orchestra will participate in a series of master classes and educational opportunities on Saturday during the day.

One month before the orchestral residency, the two organizations are collaborating on a new semi-staged theatrical concert performance of ***Fiddler on the Roof***, featuring the world premiere live performances of John Williams's Academy Award-winning 1971 adaptation of the beloved musical score by composer Jerry Bock. The production, which will feature both Broadway stars and students from the University of Michigan's celebrated Department of Musical Theatre, will begin in Ann Arbor with the Grand Rapids Symphony (February 19-20, Hill Auditorium) and then transfer to The Philadelphia Orchestra's subscription series at the Kimmel Center. A suite of contextual educational programs will be presented in conjunction with the performances.

### **[Octavia E. Butler's \*Parable of the Sower\*](#)**

UMS is pleased to present **Toshi Reagon and Bernice Johnson Reagon's** new work, ***Parable of the Sower***, a triumphant, mesmerizing work of rare power and beauty that illuminates deep insights on gender, race, and the future of human civilization. The opera brings together over 30 original anthems drawn from 300 years of Black music to recreate Butler's Afrofuturist masterpiece live on stage, with an ensemble of 20 singers and musicians (Friday, March 25 and Saturday, March 26 in the Power Center).

## The “Return” of Performances Canceled Due to the Pandemic

Several of the events that were originally scheduled and canceled for the end of the 19-20 season and the entirety of the 20-21 season will be presented in 21-22, and more will follow in the coming seasons as tours are rescheduled. Next season’s program includes:

- **Big Band Holidays with Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra** on Sunday, November 28 in Hill Auditorium — the first live event of the 21-22 season (rescheduled from December 2020)
- **Handel’s *Messiah* with the UMS Choral Union and the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra** on Saturday, December 4 and Sunday, December 5 in Hill Auditorium
- **Imani Winds and Catalyst Quartet** on Saturday, January 29 in Rackham Auditorium (rescheduled from January 2021)
- **Ballet Folklórico de México de Amalia Hernández** on Sunday, February 6 in Hill Auditorium (rescheduled from February 2021)
- ***Night/Layl* by Ali Chahrour** on Saturday, February 12 in the Power Center (rescheduled from November 2020)
- **National Arab Orchestra with Abeer Nehme** on Saturday, March 19 in Hill Auditorium (rescheduled from March 2021)
- Pianist **Benjamin Grosvenor** on Sunday, March 27 (rescheduled from April 2020)
- **Caleb Teicher’s *Swing Out!***, a program of swing dance on Friday, April 1 and Saturday, April 2 (rescheduled from February 2021)
- ***Sahra***, featuring **Tawil and Khoury’s *Zombie Frequencies of the Palestinian Diaspora***, **Tammy Lakkis**, and **Kabareh Cheikhats** on Saturday, April 9 at Spot Lite in Detroit (rescheduled from April 2021)
- ***A MoodSwing Reunion* with Joshua Redman, Brad Mehldau, Christian McBride, and Brian Blade** on Thursday, April 21 in Hill Auditorium (rescheduled from October 2020)
- ***HOME***, a theater piece by master illusionist Geoff Sobelle that explores the many forces that make a house a home on Friday, April 22 and Saturday, April 23 in the Power Center (rescheduled from April 2020)
- Cellist **Sheku Kanneh-Mason** in recital with his sister **Isata Kanneh-Mason** on Tuesday, April 26 in Rackham Auditorium (Sheku Kanneh-Mason had two performances canceled during the

pandemic: an appearance with the Chineke! Orchestra in April 2020 and a second appearance with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in October 2020.)

## Digital Programming

During the 2020-21 season, UMS's free digital programs included performances by the Paul Taylor Dance Group, the Takács Quartet, Sheku Kanneh-Mason, Trevor Noah, Cloud Gate Dance, Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, *Messiah Mixtape*, *Some Old Black Man* starring Wendell Pierce and Charlie Robinson, the Sphinx Virtuosi, violinist James Ehnes, the National Arab Orchestra, and Sir Andrés Schiff. These programs reached over 75,000 people in 65 countries across six continents.

UMS has made a commitment to continue these digital programs, bringing the arts to those who may not be ready or able to return to live performances or whose geographic boundaries may prohibit in-person attendance. Additional programs and details will be announced but will include:

- *JAM3A*, a virtual music and arts festival celebrating Arab talent, community, and identity, presented by the Arab American National Museum (September 23-26)
- Tarek Yamani and the Spektral Quartet (world premiere Wednesday, October 27)
- Cleo Parker Robinson's UMS Digital Artist Residency project, a documentary film about the creative process behind *The Four Journeys*, created by Amalia Viviana Basanta Hernández for Cleo Parker Robinson Dance (dates TBA).
- *Unmasking the Arts: Looking to the Future*, a series of conversations between multidisciplinary artist Helga Davis and prominent artistic voices, including Anthony McGill, Wu Han, Yuval Sharon, and Rhiannon Giddens, about the intersection between the arts and contemporary issues in the post-pandemic world, including the role of the arts in the context of social justice, how politics play into evolving cultural values, and more (dates TBA).
- Davóne Tines and The Philadelphia Orchestra in a suite of arias and poetry on themes of social justice (dates TBA).
- Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan (dates TBA)

## **Ticketing Information & Health/Safety Protocols for 21-22**

Season Tickets will go on sale on Monday, May 17. Season Ticket packages include Series:You, which offers a 10% discount and access to the best seats in the house, along with all other subscriber benefits when purchasing 4 or more events. The Marathon Series includes every event in the season, with a 25% discount.

Tickets to individual events will go on sale to the general public online, in person, and by phone on Tuesday, September 7. To be added to the mailing list, please contact the UMS Ticket Office at 734.764.2538 or visit [ums.org](http://ums.org). UMS also has an e-mail list that provides up-to-date information about all UMS events; sign-up information is available on the website.

Health and safety protocols will be developed in consultation with public health officials at the University of Michigan, with additional guidance from the State of Michigan. While protocols may change as we get closer to live events, all audience members will be expected to do their part to create a safe environment for everyone. Policies will match public health guidelines at the time of each event and may include wearing a face mask at all times in all venues, including during performances; respecting social distancing protocols in place; and following all health and safety protocols of the venues, regardless of vaccination status. UMS will offer Flexible exchange and refund policies (to encourage those who are not feeling well to stay home) and will ensure Enhanced air filtration systems in all venues, as well as cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, as well as enforcement of current health and safety protocols. The latest information will be posted at [ums.org/safety](http://ums.org/safety) and will be updated regularly as conditions change.

## **About UMS**

A recipient of the 2014 National Medal of Arts, UMS (also known as the University Musical Society) contributes to a vibrant cultural community by connecting audiences with performing artists from around the world in uncommon and engaging experiences. One of the oldest performing arts presenters in the country, UMS is an independent non-profit organization affiliated with the University of Michigan, presenting over 70 music, theater, and dance performances by professional touring artists each season, along with over 100 free educational activities. UMS is committed to bold artistic leadership, engaged learning through the arts, and access and inclusiveness. Since 1990, the organization has

co-commissioned and supported the production of nearly 80 new or reimagined works. Matthew VanBesien became the organization's seventh president in July 2017.