Martha Redbone Roots Project
Bowker Auditorium

Tuesday, November 9, 7:30 p.m. ET
Martha Redbone-vocals, percussion
   Aaron Whitby-piano, vocals, music director
   Charlie Burnham-violin, vocals
   Fred Cash-bass, vocals

Sponsored by Daily Hampshire Gazette, Massachusetts Cultural Council,
UMass Auxiliary Enterprises and Hotel UMass
Land acknowledgement

In a year-long consultative and deeply collaborative process with respected advisors from local Tribal Nations, the UMass Native Advisory Council co-developed this campus Land Acknowledgement. This Acknowledgement affirms our campus connection and relationship to the land the campus is built upon and our continued connection to the Nations who were the original inhabitants and caretakers of this land. The University of Massachusetts Amherst acknowledges that it was founded and built on the unceded homelands of the Pocumtuc Nation on the land of the Norrwutuck community.

We begin with gratitude for nearby waters and lands, including the Kwinitekw -- the southern portion of what’s now called the Connecticut River. We recognize these lands and waters as important Relations with which we are all interconnected and depend on to sustain life and wellbeing.

The Norrwutuck community was one of many Pocumtuc Indian towns, including the Tribal seat at Pocumtuc (in present day Deerfield), Agawam (Springfield), and Woronoco (Westfield) to name just a few. The Pocumtuc, who had connections with these lands for millennia, are part of a vast expanse of Algonquian relations. Over 400 years of colonization, Pocumtuc Peoples were displaced. Many joined their Algonquian relatives to the east, south, west and north— extant communities of Wampanoag, including Aquinnah, Herring Pond, and Mashpee, Massachusetts; the Nipmuc with a reservation at Grafton/Hassanamisco, Massachusetts; the Narragansett in Kingstown, Rhode Island; Schaghticoke, Mohegan and Pequot Peoples in Connecticut; the Abenaki and other Nations of the Wabanaki Confederacy extending northward into Canada; and the Stockbridge Munsee Mohican of New York and Massachusetts, who were removed to Wisconsin in the 19th century. Over hundreds of years of removal, members of Southern New England Tribes would make the journey home to tend important places and renew their connections to their ancestral lands. Such care and connection to land and waters continues to the present day.

Today, Indigenous Nations in southern New England continue to employ diverse strategies to resist ongoing colonization, genocide, and erasure begun by the English, French, Dutch, Portuguese and other European Nations, and that continued when Tribal homelands became part of the United States. Native Americans from Tribal Nations across the U.S. and Indigenous peoples from around the world also travel into these Pocumtuc homelands to live and work. This land has always been and always will be, Native Land.

We also acknowledge that the University of Massachusetts Amherst is a Land Grant University. As part of the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862, Tribal lands from 84 Native Nations west of the Mississippi were sold to provide the resources to found and build this university.

This Land Acknowledgement is the first step in the university’s commitment to practice intellectual humility whilst working with Tribal Nations toward a better shared future on Turtle Island. We aim to foster understanding, deep respect, and honor for sovereign Tribal Nations; to develop relationships of reciprocity; and to be inclusive of Native perspectives and thriving Native Nations far into the future. Members of Massachusetts-based Tribal Nations who are kin to the historic Pocumtuc contributed their insights in composing this acknowledgement -- namely Tribal representatives from Mashpee, Aquinnah, and Stockbridge Munsee. As an active first step toward decolonization, we encourage you to learn more about the Indigenous peoples on whose homelands UMass Amherst now resides on and the Indigenous homelands on which you live and work.
About the program
The Martha Redbone Roots Project quartet plays selections from the roots of Americana music, blues, folk, and gospel, along with songs from The Garden of Love: Songs of William Blake, Martha’s collaboration with her longtime partner/co-writer/producer Aaron Whitby. The program features a mixture of songs from Redbone’s various projects that pay homage to her Native American and African American culture.

About Martha Redbone
Martha Redbone is a Native American and African-American vocalist, songwriter, composer, and educator. She is known for her unique gumbo of folk, blues and gospel music originating from her childhood in Harlan County, Kentucky and infused with the eclectic grit of pre-gentrified Brooklyn. Redbone inherited the powerful vocal range of her gospel-singing African American father and the resilient spirit of her mother’s Cherokee, Shawnee, and Choctaw culture. Redbone broadens the boundaries of American roots music. Through songs and storytelling, Redbone shares her life experience as a Native and Black woman, and a mother in the new millennium. She gives voice to issues of social justice, and bridges traditions from past to present that connect cultures, and celebrate the human spirit.

Redbone’s album, The Garden of Love- Songs of William Blake, produced by Nitty Gritty Dirt Band founder and Grammy winner, John McEuen, is an unexpected twist. It is “a brilliant collision of cultures” says The New Yorker. It features Redbone’s magnificent voice, Blake’s immortal words, and a masterful cornucopia of roots music (blues, gospel, bluegrass, soul, and music of the traditional Southeastern Woodlands). Released on Redbone’s imprint, Blackfeet Productions, the album, rose to the top ten on Amazon folk charts after it was featured on All Things Considered. It has become the bedrock of her live shows.

Redbone brings audiences to their feet with her fiery, old-time, mountain gospel singing and foot-stomping energy. Redbone and her husband and long-term collaborator, composer, pianist, and producer Aaron Whitby, were called “the little engine that could” by Larry Blumenthal of The Wall Street Journal. Redbone has built a passionate fan base with her mesmerizing presence and explosive live shows. Her debut album, Home of the Brave, garnered extremely positive critical attention while her sophomore album, Skintalk, was described as the soulful sound of “Earth, Wind and Fire on the Rez” by J Poet, in Native Peoples Magazine. The albums Skintalk and The Garden of Love: Songs of William Blake are recognized in the library collection and the Up Where We Belong: Native Musicians in Popular Culture exhibit in the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC.

Redbone is a guest lecturer on subjects ranging from Indigenous rights to the role of the arts in politics and Native American Identity. As part of her touring schedule on numerous reservations including Red Lake, Minnesota, Cherokee, North Carolina, Yuma, Arizona, and Menominee, Wisconsin, Redbone includes workshops and motivational talks with grade school children. An exemplary ambassador for both Native and African-American Youth for the National HIV/AIDS Partnership, she was awarded the Red Ribbon Award for Outstanding Leadership presented on World AIDS Day at the United Nations in 2005. Currently Martha advocates for WhyHunger’s Artists Against Hunger and Poverty program, which raises awareness of poverty and hunger in the United States and abroad. Redbone is an advisory board member and served as the Indigenous affairs consultant and creative advisor of the Man Up Campaign, the global youth movement to eradicate violence against women and girls. She was instrumental in the Man Up Campaign’s board of directors decision to include an Indigenous North American contingent (independent of the USA) to the roll call of 50 countries taking part in their Youth Leadership Summit. The summit was
held at the University of Johannesburg in South Africa during the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Additionally, Redbone serves as an advisory board member of The Carlisle Indian School Project, and is a fellow of the Native Arts and Cultures Foundation (2016) and is a MAP Fund and Creative Capital awardee (2018).

Aaron Whitby
London-born and raised, Whitby is a producer, composer, songwriter and pianist. He was mentored by Walter “Junie” Morrison of Parliament Funkadelic and the Ohio Players. Known for the multiple award-winning albums he has written and produced with longtime collaborator Martha Redbone, Whitby also tours with Redbone, his wife, and is the leader of her band.

Charles Burnham
Charles Burnham is a singular, versatile, and virtuosic American violinist and composer whose highly imaginative improvisational style crosses bluegrass, delta punk, free jazz, blues, classical, and chamber jazz. Burnham, who hails from Brooklyn, New York, performs on harmonica and mandolin and is a highly regarded singer.

Fred Cash
Chicago native Fred Cash has recorded and toured with Martha Redbone since 2000. Cash attended the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago. His father is Fred Cash Sr. of the legendary vocal group The Impressions.

Upcoming Events:

Christopher Ladd: Guittara!
Saturday, November 13, 2021, 7 p.m.
Old Chapel

Christian Sands
Thursday, November 18, 2021, 7:30 pm
Frederick C. Tillis Performance Hall,
Randolph W. Bromery Center for the Arts

For more information on all Fine Arts Center events and for tickets please visit:

fineartscenter.com