Small Island Big Song
Randolph W. Bromery Center for the Arts
Frederick C. Tillis Performance Hall

Sunday, March 27, 2022 4:00 p.m.
This event is part of Art. Sustainability. Activism. A collaboration between the Fine Arts Center, the MFA for Poets and Writers, and the School of Earth & Sustainability.

Sponsored by:

THE ERIC CARLE MUSEUM OF PICTURE BOOK ART
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 Kwinitewk — 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 project

Small Island Big Song is a multi-platform project uniting the seafaring cultures of the Pacific and Indian Oceans through songs, and is a contemporary and relevant musical statement from a region at the frontline of the climate crisis.

Founded in 2015 by Taiwanese producer BaoBao Chen and Australian music producer and filmmaker Tim Cole, the two have been recording and filming with over a hundred musicians across sixteen island nations of the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The outcomes include an award-winning album, a feature film, outreach programs, and a live concert that has toured around the world across four continents. The concert has reached over 170K live audience members since its world premiere at SXSW 2018.

Small Island Big Song explores the cultural connections between the descendants of the seafarers of the Pacific and Indian Oceans through the Austronesian migration. Small Island Big Song works with artists who have made a choice to maintain the cultural voice of their people, to sing in the language, and to play the instruments of their land. These unique lineages mixed with a diversity of contemporary styles - roots-reggae, beats, grunge, R&B, folk and spoken word - establish a contemporary musical dialogue among cultures as far afield as Madagascar, Aotearoa (New Zealand), Taiwan, Mauritius, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Tahiti and Rapa Nui (Easter Island). The result is “One coherent jaw dropping piece” as described by Rob Schwartz of Billboard. Music critic Tom Orr noted in a RootsWorld review that the “....sound (is) like one very big, very happy family doing what they do best while helping get the word out on a most serious issue.”

About the performance

Framed in a theatrical narrative amongst panoramic visuals of the artists’ homelands, the audience experiences a musical journey across the breadth and into the soul of the Pacific and Indian Ocean island nations. There they meet an ancient seafaring ancestry and confront the impacts of climate crisis head on.

Drawing on a roster of renowned first nation artists from across the Pacific and Indian Oceans, the concert features musicians performing irresistible oceanic grooves to soulful island ballads that engage audiences from huge festival stages to intimate theatres. Guided by the artists on their homelands, Small Island Big song combines music, spoken word and audiovisual projections featuring footage collected during a three-year film trip across 16 countries. During Small Island Big Song encores, audiences often spontaneously erupt into a shared celebration of dancing bodies rising from the seats. Moving beyond the concert experience, Small Island Big Song offers a variety of opportunities for students and audiences to investigate the environmental, political, social and cultural contexts on our oceans’ islands.

About the producers

Tim Cole from Australia is the director, music producer, filmmaker, and VJ of Small Island Big Song. He is an Australian creative who has been working on cross-cultural arts projects with a musical heart since producing the band Not Drowning Waving’s album and the DVD, Tabaran, in Papua New Guinea.
His career, equal parts film and music, are the result of studying film making at Melbourne University during the day, and producing music at night. Tim’s reputation in Indigenous arts led him to Alice Springs as a senior music producer for Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association. His experience in recording traditional song lines led to the founding of Small Island Big Song. Tim holds a BEd. Media Arts from Melbourne University and A.D. in Music Production from the University of Victoria in Australia. He has received a Churchill fellowship and invitations to speak on climate change and the arts at the United Nations, APAP NYC, and WOMEX.

**BaoBao Chen** from Taiwan is the manager and project producer of Small Island Big Song. She has negotiated, booked, planned and tour-managed Small Island Big Song’s international concert tours across Europe, the USA, Asia and Oceania, a tour that includes up to thirteen artists from eight countries. Her responsibilities included the music album release, creation of the interactive website and bringing a feature film to screen. BaoBao is one of Taiwan’s most prominent producers of cross-cultural arts projects. BaoBao has a B.A. in Business Management from YuanZe University in Taiwan, which helped her bring the Small Island Big Song project from its grassroots beginnings to the successful project it is today. She is responsible for establishing the projects fundraising efforts through crowdfunding, philanthropic foundations and arts grants. Additionally, BaoBao initiated the project’s Fair Trade Music structure and recognition of Intangible Cultural Heritage. As a vivid storyteller, fluent in English and Mandarin, she has a social media following of over 150K. BaoBao has been invited to present at TEDx, APAP NYC, WOMEX, World Stage Design and numerous film and music festivals. Brought up by a vegan family on an organic farm and a member of the Roots and Shoots program of the Jane Goodall Foundation, her skills in arts management and her love for nature encouraged her to produce Small Island Big Song.

**About the artists**

**Sauljaljui 戴曉君** is from the Paiwan people of Taiwan, She is the lead singer and a musician playing nose flute, jaw harp, moon lute, and guitar. In 2009, a typhoon devastated Sauljaljui’s village and community, her response was to write *Lament of Colored Cloth*, a song that enabled the village to unite their tragedy and recover and won a prestigious songwriters award in Taiwan. Two albums and countless international concerts later, Sauljaljui is just as dedicated to her Paiwan community. She directs a yearly cultural festival, is the first female leader in her community youth group, and contributes to the community's cultural canon. With her elders, Sauljaljui created a Paiwan warriors song. This is the first time a woman has taken on this role.

**Emlyn** of Mauritius is a lead vocal and dancer, and plays the ravann, triangle, kayamb, maravann, and guitar. As a songwriter, musician and dancer, who has been featured on CNN, Emlyn is leading a wave of performers across the Indian Ocean proudly reclaiming their unique rhythms and cultural mix. Written with a reactive pen and sung in Creole, her songs rebelliously express her concern for her island’s environment. Emlyn is the co-founder of ‘Enn Losean Vivab’ (one livable ocean), a Mauritius based organization educating school students about plastic pollution. Emlyn brings the infectious grooves of Sega with its soul from the African slave trade to the stage as she plays on the ravann, triangle and kayamb.

**Putad** is of the Amis people of Taiwan and is a lead vocal, bass and jaw harp player. Powerful, entrancing, unapologetic are all words used to describe Putad’s engaging stage presence. In the proud spirit of her Indigenous Amis heritage, Putad unites ancient vocal traditions with raw energy of grunge, rock and punk as expressed in her and her brother Wusang’s band Outlet Drift. Their bold, uplifting and uncompromising
shows place their Amis heritage on center stage at “100db and 100mph”. As they confront prejudices, Putad and Wusang take the audience on an unforgettable sonic ride.

Selina Leem, spoken word artist from the Marshall Islands and the US is among the global faces of climate change. She represented her country in the film, Before the Flood, produced by Leonardo DiCaprio. As the youngest speaker at the COP21 for Paris Agreement, Selina made a passionate plea to global leaders for stronger action on climate change. Selina can push her audience into a place of understanding and care for her homeland, while at the same time she makes them look into the future and see the repercussions of current global actions.

Sammy has led an extraordinary life as a Madagascan musician, playing the valiha, kabosy, jejy, flutes, marovany, and guitar. Sammy followed his passion for Madagascar’s musical heritage, by mastering and learning how to make most of Madagascar’s instruments. When his efforts came to the notice of the UK’s world music scene, his group Tarika Sammy gained international recognition. They are a regular on major festival stages and have been acknowledged as one of the world’s best 10 bands, by Time Magazine.

Airileke is form Papua New Guinea and Australia is a percussionist whose instruments include log drums, kundu drum, and the garamut drum. A musical pioneer and a fighter for freedom traversing a timeless sonic globe without frontiers, Airileke is a producer, composer, activist, recording and global events facilitator and, in the words of Britain’s Songlines magazine, “cause for celebration.”. Airi’s unique sound melds progressive ideas with beats of ancient Melanesian culture. Hip-hop production, fierce log drumming, Papuan chants, atmospheric soundscapes and samples from the front line of the Free Papua Movement. All combine to evoke one of the region’s darkest stories: the illegal occupation and ongoing oppression of West Papua.

Kokol of Mauritius plays the Ravann, djembe, and guitar. A master of Mauritius’s creole musical heritage, Kokol is spearheading a musical movement that unites the cultural intersections of the Caribbean and Indian Oceans with a unique and uplifting fusion of Sega and Reggae. Both styles of music identify with marginalized islander communities and share a slave ancestry.

Richard Mogu of Papua New Guinea (PNG) can be heard on mambu, bass, guitar, log drums, kundu drum, garamut drum, and percussion. Hailing from Amazon Bay on the south coast, Mogu has been a featured musician in PNG for many years, both as a solo artist and session musician. His primary instrument is bass but he is also a master of the mambu (bamboo flute), garamut drumming, guitar and percussion. He was taught by legendary Sanguma founder Tony Subam.

Kan is a musician from Mauritius who plays the Ravann, boy, bob, and percussion. At the forefront of the local electronic music scene, Kan’s quest of discovering musical instruments from various cultures as a way to look for meaning in his art. With increasing deterioration of the environment came the urge to act, so in 2017, he co-founded “Enn Losean Vivab” (one liveable ocean) with Emlyn. His works started to receive worldwide interest and he was invited to deliver a TEDx talk along with an interviewed by CNN. His series of Trash to Music tutorial videos instruct viewers how to construct music instruments from tincans and plastic bottles.

Official website: https://www.smallislandbigsong.com
YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/smallislandbigsong
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/smallislandbigsong
IG: https://www.instagram.com/small_island_big_song/
**Additional Resources:**

*Our Sea of Islands.* (1994)
Hau’ofa, Epeli (Tonga) Scholarly Article

Terri Janke and Company (Indigenous Law Firm in Australia)
*True Tracks, Respecting Indigenous knowledge and culture* (book & workshop)
*Indigenous Knowledge: Issues for protection and management* (paper)
*First Peoples: A roadmap for enhancing Indigenous engagement in museums and galleries* (paper)
*Protocols for using First Nations Cultural and IP in Arts* (paper)

*The Anthropocene* (website/magazine)
https://www.anthropocenemagazine.org/

*Ideas to Postpone the End of the World* (2020)
Krenak, Ailton. (Brazil, Krenaki Tribe)

Yunkaporta, Tyson. (Aboriginal Australian)

*Indigenomics: Taking a Seat at the Economic Table* (2021)
Hilton, Carol Anne. (Nuu chah nulth descent from the Hesquiaht Nation on Vancouver Island)
https://newsociety.com/books/i/indigenomics

*Being the Change: Live Well and Spark a Climate Revolution* (2017)
Kalmus, Peter. (American climate scientist at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Lab)
https://peterkalmus.net/books/read-by-chapter-being-the-change/

*Breaking Boundaries: The Science of Our Planet* (2021 Film) hosted by David Attenborough
https://www.imdb.com/title/tt14539726/

*Chasing Coral* (2017) Film directed by Jeff Orlowski
https://www.imdb.com/title/tt6333054/?ref_=fn_al_tt_1
Upcoming Events:

**Art. Sustainability. Activism. Panel Discussion**
*Monday, March 28, 2022, 7 p.m. | Bowker Auditorium*
*Free event | Register for in person attendance*

Please join us for this unique meeting of minds working at the intersection of climate change, literature, and social justice for a lively discussion that connects an exciting mix of scientists, artists, changemakers, and scholars. Topics will include climate impacts on culture, the power of Indigenous knowledge, and how science and art communities can work together to address the pressing issues of our time. Featured guests include international artists from *Small Island Big Song*.

Free and open to the public. This event will also be livestreamed.

**Anat Cohen Quartetinho**
*Saturday, April 9, 2022, 8:00pm*
*Randolph W. Bromery Center for the Arts*
*Fred C. Tillis Performance Hall*

**Kenny Endo Contemporary Ensemble:**
*BREAKING THROUGH TRADITION TO INNOVATION: KENNY ENDO’S TAIKO JOURNEY*
*Thursday, April 7, 2022, 7:30pm*
*Bowker Auditorium*

For more event and ticket information, please visit: [fineartscenter.com](http://fineartscenter.com)