



By Peter Margasak and Monica Kendrick

A MUSIC-BIZ PROFESSIONAL told me recently that Chicago's annual World Music Festival is too big and sprawling. He thinks it should include fewer artists (this year there are more than 60) and that more of those should be marquee names. But the things he's complaining about are exactly what make the fest so special- it's a veritable smorgasbord, assembled without the music industry's regard for the bottom line. True, there's so much good music on offer every day that it's impossible to see all the shows you might like to, but how exactly is that a problem?

A number of festival artists were already planning to tour the States and simply added a stop here to their itineraries, but organizer Michael Orlove of the Department of Cultural Affairs arranged flights for other artists personally and for Extra Golden and the Culture Musical Club, these Chicago sets are anchor gigs making more extensive stateside tours feasible. Bringing in a 13-piece orchestra from southeast Africa isn't cheap-recently on Orbitz the lowest price for one ticket to Tanzania was more than \$1,600-and it seems fair to say that the Culture Musical Club's appearance, which will be their U.S. debut, wouldn't have been possible without the \$100,000 grant that the Governor's International Arts Exchange Program of the Illinois Arts Council made to Orlove's department. (That money also supported the 'Music Without Borders' series this summer in Millennium Park, featuring Seu Jorge, Goran Bregovic, and Anoushka Shankar, as well as a few other WMF concerts.) Several other exciting performers- among them Brazil's Curumin, Finland's Gjallarhorn, Venezuela's Claudia Calderon, and Portugal's Sara Tavares-are making their Chicago debuts at the festival. All told about two dozen nations are represented.

The festival takes place at more than two dozen venues around the city, and unless otherwise noted the shows are free and all-ages. Advance tickets to events with admission fees are normally available from the venues; for more information call the city's World Music Festival hotline at 312-742-1938 or visit cityofchicago.org/worldmusic. The Yat-Kha concert Friday evening at the Old Town School of Folk Music will be broadcast live on WBEZ (91.5 FM), and the early weekday performances at the Chicago Cultural Center's Claudia Cassidy Theater will air on two local college stations: Loyola's WLUW (88.7 FM) will broadcast the 11 AM concerts, and the 12:30 PM shows can be heard on

Continental Drift on Northwestern University's WNUR (89.3 FM). As it has for the past few years, the festival closes with 'One World Under One Roof,' a free extravaganza that transforms the Cultural Center into a minifestival, with overlapping sets in three different halls inside the building.

Radio Maqam

The system of maqamat, or modes, is the melodic basis of nearly all traditional Arabic music and much of the music of Eastern Europe and central Asia. Each maqam employs a different quarter-tone scale to convey its distinctive mood, and while there is no definitive count, as many as 60 different maqamat are in general use. This local ensemble, helmed by Palestinian oud player Issa Boulos—who also leads the al-Sharq Ensemble, directs the University of Chicago's Middle East Music Ensemble, and founded the Arab Classical Musical Society—plays a wide variety of maqam-derived material, including a fair number of originals. The rest of the lineup consists of clarinetist Jim Stoyloff, percussionist Omar al-Musfi, ney player Naeif Rafeh, qanun player Martin Stokes, baglama player Ozgur Sumer, and santoor player Masoud Kamgarpour.

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