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3701 Chestnut Street

Philadelphia, PA 19104

February 20, 2015

World Interfaith Harmony Week

**Subject**: Intercultural Journeys report for World Interfaith Harmony Week

**Event**: Intercultural Journeys presents The Apple Hill String Quartet with Kinan Azmeh and Sally Pinkas

To Whom It May Concern:

Intercultural Journeys was pleased to participate in the annual World Interfaith Harmony week celebration that took place from February 3-9, 2015. We planned a concert from our 2014/15 season to coincide directly with this initiative. What follows is our report on the event for your information and consideration. The event was lovely and it meant a lot to us to be able to showcase the wonderful Apple Hill String Quartet, Kinan Azmeh, Sally Pinkas, and Kareem Roustom in a program honoring interfaith peace, dialogue, and harmony.

I welcome any additional questions or comments you might have on the report. We look forward to participating in World Interfaith Harmony Week in 2016.

Peace and thanks,



Lindsey S. Crane

Managing Director

Attachments: Photos of the musicians involved in a community engagement project at another local Philadelphia institution, headshots of the artists, and a link to a pre-concert talk we posted on our SoundCloud page.

**Report: Intercultural Journeys presents The Apple Hill String Quartet, Kinan Azmeh, and Sally Pinkas**

On Saturday, February 7, 2015, we welcomed the Apple Hill String Quartet with clarinetist Kinan Azmeh and pianist Sally Pinkas to take the stage in the third concert of our *Songs for Peace* season. The concert took place at International House Philadelphia, our community partner and an institution with a mission complementary to our own, located in the heart of the University City neighborhood in Philadelphia.

The program featured chamber music, including the Philadelphia premieres of two works by Emmy-nominated composer Kareem Roustom , *Traces* and *A Muffled Scream*. The following project rationale and explanation is taken from the evening’s program book:

“Like Vedran Smailovic the cellist whose music rang out during the 1990s Siege of Sarajevo, acclaimed clarinetist Kinan Azmeh and Emmy-nominated composer Kareem Roustom use music to speak to the suffering of their homeland, Syria.

The two join pianist Sally Pinkas and the world-renowned Apple Hill String Quartet (Elise Kuder and Colleen Jennings, violins, Michael Kelley, viola, and Rupert Thompson, violoncello) for a concert that includes the Philadelphia premiere of two works by Roustom that speak to the beauty of Syrian culture and the catastrophe of the country’s current civil war.

Initiated as part of Playing for Peace, an internationally known 25-year-old program of the Apple Hill Center for Chamber Music in Nelson, NH, the new works are part of a project that aims to bring together musicians from Arab (Muslim and Christian) cultures with Israeli/Jewish and American cultures. Through creative collaboration the goal of this project is to use music as a means to cross cultural, religious, and political divides to seek truth, humanity, and beauty.

The two works by Roustom are *Traces*, for clarinet, piano and string quartet, and *A Muffled Scream*. Co-commissioned by the Apple Hill Center for Chamber Music, The Hopkins Center at Dartmouth College and the Gammage Auditorium Series at Arizona State University Public Events, “*Traces* is a meditation on loss: both the loss of people and infrastructure as well as the loss of a sense of place and connection that one has with a place,” Roustom wrote in program notes about the piece. Since the start of the Syrian uprising, he said, all of his concert works have reflected on the situation in his homeland.

*Traces* takes its title and inspiration from a genre of pre-Islamic poetry that often begins with the poet and his companions returning to a desert campsite where his beloved lives, only to find that the camp has been broken and all its inhabitants have moved to another site that is unknown to the poet. All that is left behind are al-atlaal or traces of the site’s former inhabitants.

*A Muffled Scream* is a work for solo clarinet, played by Azmeh, a friend and previous collaborator of the Boston-based Roustom. Roustom wrote that it was “composed after reading a news article about the terrible state of Syrian refugees at the Zaatari camp in Jordan. A specific incident, two children who died in the night because they did not have enough blankets, moved me to compose this work.”

The new works share the bill with the haunting Piano Quintet by Mieczyslaw Weinberg, which he wrote in 1944, five years after fleeing his native Poland for the Soviet Union (leaving his parents and sister, who ultimately perished in the Holocaust). The concert begins with Mozart’s D Major String Quartet, K. 499, composed in the same year as *The Marriage of Figaro* and hence known for its Italian operatic features.”

-Lenny Matczynski

Director, Apple Hill Center for Chamber Music

Co-Commissioner *Traces* and *A Muffled Scream*

Overall, we had 95 chamber and new music lovers, diverse patrons, and friends brave the winter cold to attend the concert.

In addition to this, the members of the Apple Hill String Quartet, Kinan Azmeh, Sally Pinkas, and Kareem Roustom all visited another local institution as part of our community engagement initiative. On the afternoon of Saturday, February 7, the musicians visited Settlement Music School to engage in master classes with members of the advanced study music program. Together, the musicians gave individual masterclasses to students, and they performed Kareem’s work “Traces.” Following the performance, the students engaged in a dialogue with the artists, learning more about their individual backgrounds as well as what it meant to them to perform a piece like “Traces.”

The IJ community engagement initiative is a component unique to Intercultural Journeys concerts. All Intercultural Journeys artists are expected to take part in a specially formulated event designed to strengthen our impact in the community, and to increase their interactions with diverse, and many times under-served, audiences. Many of our community engagement events focus on area youth and we have done engagement events connected to the 2014/15 concert season with partners such as International House Philadelphia, KIPP Elementary Academy- Philadelphia, Folk Arts – Cultural Treasures Charter School (Philadelphia), and Settlement Music School.

**About Intercultural Journeys**

Intercultural Journeys is a small non-profit operating in Philadelphia with the mission of promoting tolerance and cultural understanding between people of diverse faiths, backgrounds, and cultures through world-class performances of music, dance, the spoken word, and other art forms. Originally formed in 2002, Intercultural Journeys has performed over 160 concerts in the greater Philadelphia region, throughout the U.S., and across the world in places such as China, Israel, Italy, and Spain.