

Refugees

Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars transcend war with music

During Sierra Leone's savage, decade-long civil war in the 1990s, hundreds of thousands of refugees streamed into often squalid refugee camps. Eventually, seven musicians from the Freetown area, many of whom had suffered or witnessed brutal atrocities, formed a band. Music became a refuge from the horrors of civil war and exile. A powerful documentary film shown on public television brought the story to millions around the world, followed by an acclaimed album and world tour — which arrives at the Shedd on Feb. 21. The reggae-accented Afrobeat music of **Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars** measures up to the band's compelling story.

That's only the first of a flurry of strong world music shows over the next month. They've warmed up the crowd for Arcade Fire and Gogol Bordello and played gigs from Malaysia to Macedonia to Istanbul, and on Feb. 28, Brooklyn's **Slavic Soul Party** hauls brass to Cozmic Pizza. This ten-tet has got to be one of the most fun aggregations on tour, featuring horn-goosed Balkan and gypsy music propelled by irresistibly danceable funk rhythms, sort of like Dirty Dozen Brass Band with an East European accent.

On Feb. 29, Fenario Gallery (8th and Willamette) hosts the great Algerian-born, Paris-starring, San Francisco based **DJ Cheb I Sabbah**. His fantastic mixes of electronica, Indian classical music (tabla, sitar), North African guitar pop, Asian dub and more sounds like the music of the global future. The show also features the acclaimed Pakistani singer **Riffat Sultana** and Afghan tabla master **Salar Nader**.

The next evening, March 1, another fusion outfit, Oakland's **Gamelan X**, brings its theatrical Indonesian/African/Balkan/American groove thing to Sam Bond's. A Burning Man favorite, the group's arsenal includes Balinese bronze gongs (which they use in performances of traditional ceremonial marching music called Beleganjur) as well as synth-bass, drums, brass, strings and African percussion. If you'd rather go to Rio that night instead, the WOW Hall's **Carnaval Brasil** features the mighty drums of **Samba Ja** and other Brazilian music makers and shakers.

As Virginia Woolf noted, for most of history, Anonymous was a woman. We don't know the names of many composers, male or female, before the turn of the first millennium, but the magnificent music of the 12th century German nun Hildegard of Bingen shows that gender has never been a barrier to genius. Hildegard's soaring sounds reappeared in the 1980s thanks to groups like Gothic Voices and especially Sequentia, which recorded her complete surviving works. UO visiting professor Laurie Monahan, a renowned Boston-based early music performer, collaborated on those historic Sequentia recordings and co-founded the equally wonderful early music ensembles Project Ars Nova and Tapestry. On Feb. 29, Monahan



JANE RICHEY

leads **Tapestry** in a highly recommended concert of ancient and modern music at the UO's Beall Hall, featuring music by and about remarkable women through the ages. This show ranges from great 12th and 13th century composers such as Hildegard and Perotin to contemporary (male) composers such as the UO's own Robert Kyr and Ivan Moody, plus Rachmaninoff, Malvina Reynolds and more — many anonymous. And the songs come from what's now Spain, Ireland, Germany, Appalachia and elsewhere.

More fine singers take the stage at LCC on Feb. 21, when a couple of UO faculty members, singer **Douglas Webster** and pianist **John Jantzi**, join LCC sopranos **Siri Vik** and **Laura Wayte** and tenor **David Gustafson** in songs from operas and movies. For modern music fans, the **Eugene Contemporary Chamber Ensemble** performs music of Schoenberg, David Roberts and Gracin Dorsey in a free show on Feb. 27 at Beall. For the more electronically inclined, the UO's Future Music Oregon is bringing a contemporary female composer, **Elainie Lillios**, whose sound sources include pebbles in water, feet crunching in snow and tree branches rustling. The March 1 concert in Room 163 of the music school also features typically futuristic music of the UO's own **Jeffrey Stolet**, whose instrumentarium this time includes flashlights, video, "custom interactive performance environment" and Nintendo Wii remote controllers.

Also at the UO, on March 2 in the Collier House, traditional Scottish Gaelic singer and storyteller **Rich Hill**, of Seattle's Keltoi and Bones 'n' Drones, leads a free concert with the women's a cappella ensemble **Kitchen Ceilidh** and the voice-harp duo **Trilogy**. And to see what happened when those old Gaelic tunes made their way over the pond, check out the excellent newgrass band **Cadillac Sky** at the Shedd on Feb. 24 and watch Celtic sounds morph into bluegrass and country and territory in between.

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