

Kitka sings songs of Eastern Europe

Vocal ensemble Kitka will perform music rooted in Balkan, Slavic and Caucasian vocal traditions at 8 p.m. Friday, April 8, at the Unitarian Center, 87 Fourth St., Ashland.

The American group was formed in 1979, and the 2011 ensemble features vocalists Kelly Atkins, Caitlin Tabancay Austin, Leslie Bonnett, Briget Boyle, Shira Cion, Janet Kutulas, Elizabeth Setzr and Corinne Syke.

Each woman contributes to the asymmetric rhythms, harmonies and resonance of the music to meet the technical and artistic demands of contemporary Eastern European vocal stylings.

Kitka has traveled to Eastern Europe several times to perform and collect repertoire. In 2002, the ensemble was asked to perform with the Le Mystere des Voix Bulgares

for the Bulgarian choir's 50th anniversary concert at the National Palace of Culture in Sofia. Last fall, Kitka performed at the International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Under the direction of Cion, Kutulas and Juliana Graffagna, the group aims to expand the boundaries of folk song. In 2000, with large grants from the National Endowment of the Arts and Rockefeller Foundation's MAP Fund, Kitka launched the New Folksongs Commissioning Project, recruiting several promising composers to write works specifically for Kitka. Among these commissioned projects are "The Rusalka Cycle: Songs Between the Worlds," a theater project featuring music by Ukrainian composer Mariana Sodovask; "The Origin" by Ricard Einhorn; and "Rootabaga Opera" by Dan Cantrell.

Along with its tours, commissions and vocal workshops, Kitka has appeared on international radio and television broadcasts and collaborated with film composers.

The ensemble's 11th album, "Cradle Songs," a collection of traditional and original lullabies and poetic texts, was named one of the "most memorable internationally flavored CDs of 2009" by National Public Radio.

Members of Kitka will offer a "Harmony and Dissonance" workshop from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, April 9, at the Unitarian. The workshop costs \$25.

Tickets to the show cost \$20 in advance, \$22 at the door, \$10 for ages 12-17 and free for children younger than 12. Tickets are available at Music Coop in Ashland, www.stclairerevents.com or by calling 541-535-3562.

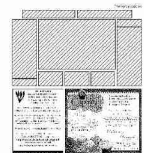




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Vocal ensemble Kitka performs traditional songs from Eastern Europe.