

Ensemble: The Afro-Semitic Experience

Bandleader: David Chevan

Ensemble members:

NAME	INSTRUMENT
Warren Byrd	Piano, voice
Will Bartlett	Various reeds
Baba David Coleman	Percussion, voice
Alvin Carter, Jr.	Drum set
Saskia Laroo	Trumpet, synthesizer
Stacy Phillips	Violin, dobro, guitar

Title of Work: The Road That Heals the Splintered Soul
 Composer: David Chevan and the Afro-Semitic Experience
 Date completed: November 2010
 Work Length (minutes): 100 minutes

Work Description: The Road that Heals the Splintered Soul is a collaborative work consisting of 12 pieces that were composed, developed, and premiered with my group, the Afro-Semitic Experience between 2008 and 2009. We created an extended composition inspired by memories of the difficult journeys and trails of upheaval of our ancestors, especially as these experiences have unveiled themselves in imagery and song, hoping to carry on the legacy as a mode of collective healing.

Upheavals have been a formative part of the history of both African and Jewish diaspora, much of it involving geographical displacement and change. Both peoples have stories and song, both secular and sacred, that speak to these experiences. For African-Americans, the Middle Passage, Underground Railroad, the Great Migration, Civil Rights marches/Freedom Rides represent such crucial, defining upheavals. Comparable trials in the previous two millennia of Jewish people include the Exodus from Egypt, the European expulsions, the emigration to America, and the Nazi Holocaust. A point of intersection in the road for African and Jewish Americans are the Civil Rights marches/Freedom Rides.

For both peoples one result of these historic moments was the development of a canon of songs. The Road That Heals the Splintered Soul allows us to explore this canon from a fresh perspective, to delve into the angst of such moments and as well the subsequent triumphs of spirit. The result is a large sectional work comprised of newly distilled compositions and original improvisations.

The work had three premieres: in Hartford, Connecticut at the Charter Oak Cultural Center on November 14, 2009; in Kalamazoo, Michigan at the Michigan Festival of Sacred Music on November 16; and New York City at the Museum of Jewish Culture on January 17, 2010.

Recording: The Road That Heals the Splintered Soul, Reckless DC Music, RMCD-1054

Technical Requirements/Specs: PA and enough mics for the band with 7 monitors (4 mix minimum), backline of bass amp, guitar amp, drum set, congas, table for congas, piano

General Information:

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