



MEDIA RELEASE

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Davu Seru brings Minnesota Civil Rights History to Zeitgeist's annual *Playing it Close to Home* concert

With winning songs from the Eric Stokes Song Contest plus music by local composer Davu Seru, Zeitgeist's annual *Playing it Close to Home* concert celebrates the wealth of musical creativity found right here in our own backyard.

The program includes music by Eric Stokes Song Contest winners **Isaac Mayhew, Tetsuya Takeno**, and **students from Folwell School**, plus the world premiere of **Davu Seru's** new work *Dead King Mother*, which tells the story of a near-forgotten event in North Minneapolis and United States civil rights history that has been with Seru since early childhood.

Minneapolis native Davu Seru is known internationally as a free-jazz drummer and performs regularly in jazz, rock and avant-garde improvised music. He currently works in a trio with French clarinetist Catherine Delaunay and French bassist Guillaume Seguron, the bands Click Song (with Marc Anderson), Merciless Ghost (with George Cartwright and Josh Granowski), and is co-leader with Mankwe Ndosi of The Mother of Masks, an improvising ensemble of poets, storytellers, activists and musicians. His work as a PhD scholar of African and African American literature and culture colors his musical and artistic sensibilities.

Dead King Mother

On April 4th, 1968, upon hearing of the news of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Davu Seru's great-uncle, Clarence C. Underwood stood before family on Minneapolis' northside and announced that he was going to kill the first white man that he saw--and he did.

When encountered by the police he raised his hands and remarked, "shoot me, they killed my king."

The last time Davu saw Clarence was at the funeral of the wife he had left behind

once he was committed to prison for murder. Reflecting on his sacrifice during the eulogy, Clarence remarked, “those were different times for our people.”

The story has been with Davu since early childhood, but is near-forgotten in Twin Cities and U.S. history. *Dead King Mother*, a blues for female vocalist and ensemble, attempts to rewrite this near-forgotten event into North Minneapolis and United States Civil Rights history.

The **Eric Stokes Song Contest** is sponsored by Zeitgeist in memory of late composer Eric Stokes; the contest was designed to encourage and celebrate amateur composers throughout the Twin Cities. *Playing it Close to Home* will feature winning songs by Isaac Mayhew and Tetsuya Takeno in the adult category, and students from Folwell School, Performing Arts Magnet Elementary (grades 5-8) in the youth category.

Zeitgeist: Playing it Close to Home

Feb. 23-24, 7:30 p.m.

Studio Z: 275 East Fourth Street, Suite 200, St. Paul

April 4, 7:30 p.m.

Capri Theater: Capri Theater: 2027 W Broadway Ave, Minneapolis

Tickets: \$15 / \$10 students & seniors

Tickets and details at zeitgeistnewmusic.org.

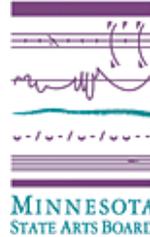
About Zeitgeist:

Founded in 1977, Zeitgeist is a new music chamber ensemble consisting of two percussion, piano and woodwinds, and is one of the oldest and most successful new music groups in the country. Based in St. Paul, Minn., the group presents an annual concert series and delivers a wide variety of community-based performance programs for residents of the Twin Cities and the surrounding areas. Zeitgeist's mission is to bring newly created music to life with performances that engage and stimulate. Members are: Heather Barringer, percussion; Patti Cudd, percussion; Pat O'Keefe, woodwinds; Nicola Melville, piano.

Zeitgeist is supported by the The City of St. Paul's Cultural STAR Program, The Amphion Foundation, The Knight Foundation, The Lowertown Future Fund, the Target Foundation, the McKnight Foundation, the Jerome Foundation, the Albrecht Family Foundation, the Aaron Copland Fund, The Mandel Family Foundation, and the Minnesota State Arts Board and the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, through an appropriation by the Minnesota State Legislature.

Zeitgiest, in partnership with Davu Seru, is a fiscal year 2017 recipient of a Cultural Community Partnership grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board. This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation by the Minnesota State Legislature; and by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

This activity is made possible with support from the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council through an appropriation by the Minnesota State Legislature from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund with money from the vote of the people of Minnesota on November 4, 2008.



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