



## MEDIA RELEASE

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**Contact:**  
Katherine Bergman  
Director of Communications, Zeitgeist  
612-819-8981  
katherine@zeitgeistnewmusic.org

### **Inn-fest 2018 brings innova Recordings Label Showcase to Lowertown Saint Paul April 27-28**

Inn-fest, the innova label showcase, comes to the Twin Cities April 27-28 and features a smorgasbord of local and national acts from its roster of visionary artists. Co-presented with Zeitgeist, Inn-fest is a three-day celebration at Studio Z in Lowertown Saint Paul that shows the range of groundbreaking music on the label, tied to brand new and recently released albums. Artists from as far afield as India, China, Syria, Ohio, Woodbury, and Golden Valley are converging to make this a harmonious gathering. From pancultural mashups and laptop-percussion dialogues, to what a sax can do in a single breath and the world of possibilities with a bassoon reed, there's enough to pique any listener's curiosity.

**Innova**, the record label of the St. Paul-based American Composers Forum, is the premier label for American new music. Innova's catalog of nearly 600 titles encompasses diverse genres, concepts, and approaches — all somehow non-conformist, individualistic, and groundbreaking. More than just a record label, innova coaches artists throughout the process of releasing their work into the wider world. They also produce occasional live events such as at The Stone and National Sawdust in New York, and Meridian Gallery in San Francisco. Now Inn-fest descends on the Twin Cities to showcase the talent we have in our own backyard, mixing local and visiting artists with recent releases on the label.

Inn-fest kicks off on April 24 with an album release event for *Life As Is: The Blending of Ancient Souls from Syria and China*, a new project from Issam Rafea (oud) and Gao Hong (pipa) at The Cedar Cultural Center in Minneapolis. The festival continues at Studio Z April 27-28 with two marathon days of music from an illustrious list of local and visiting artists.

#### **Visiting Artists:**

Praised for her diverse talents, Oberlin-based bassoonist **Dana Jessen** is highly active as a soloist, chamber musician, improviser and new music specialist. She is the co-founder of the Bay Area reed quintet, Splinter Reeds, and has performed with prominent ensembles including the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, Ensemble Dal Niente, Calefax Reed Quintet, Callithumpian Consort, Anthony Braxton's Tri-Centric Orchestra and the Amsterdam Contemporary Ensemble, among others.

*"Carve is an eye-opening experience in the ways of an underutilized instrument. Jessen's virtuosity, and selection for this program, make this an intriguing listening experience."* — All About Jazz

Through repetition, vocal techniques, circular breathing and unconventional articulation, **Nick Zoulek** pushes past the typical sound of the saxophone. He is currently pursuing his DMA in Contemporary Music Performance at Bowling Green State University.

*"Nick Zoulek has it going on! His album Rushing Past Willow reshuffles our expectations of sound, projecting trancelike cultural memories up a psychic periscope rising into imaginal realms. It's wickedly contagious, bizarrely beautiful and extraterrestrial all at the same time. In short, it's magnificent."* — Huffington Post

**Issam Rafea** (a master of the Oud, the Arabic lute) and **Gao Hong** (a leading player of the Pipa, the Chinese pear-shaped lute) met in the spring of 2017 at Carleton College. Both artists came from lands going through political strife — Issam Rafea living through the recent war in Syria, and Gao Hong growing up during the Cultural Revolution. Now, they continue to pursue their musical visions in the United States. They both are performers and composers and love to improvise, just like they have had to navigate their lives to survive. They both use their hearts to play music, and both believe that music needs to come from their souls and deepest feelings. Hence the title of their debut album — *Life As Is: The Blending of Ancient Souls from Syria and China*.

Minnesota-based artist **Nirmala Rajasekar** is a world renowned Carnatic veena virtuoso, singer, and educator of South Indian Music. She has performed in venues throughout the world and is a recipient of many awards including a Bush Artist Fellowship, a McKnight Fellowship, Rotary Vocational Excellence award and Best Senior Veena Artiste. She is known for her talents in exploring South Indian Classical (Carnatic) to create collaborative projects with other music traditions including western classical and jazz. In addition to her solo performance at Inn-fest she will present her new multicultural ensemble project, **Maithree: Music of Friendship**, in preparation for their innova album release this fall.

### **Inn-fest Kick-off and *Life As Is* Album Release**

Gao Hong (pipa) and Issam Rafea (oud)

**April 25, 7:30 p.m.**

**Cedar Cultural Center:** 416 Cedar Ave. S, Minneapolis

Tickets: \$20 (advance) / \$25 (door)

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1518493211602134/>

### **Inn-fest 2018: innova Recordings Label Showcase**

**April 27, 6-10 p.m.**

**April 28, 12-8 p.m.**

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

Free

**April 27: 6-10 p.m.**

(Times approximate)

6:00 Nirmala Rajasekar (veena and vocals)

6:20 Gao Hong (pipa) and Issam Rafea (oud)

6:40 Dana Jessen (bassoon)

7:00 Maithree; the Music of Friendship - Nirmala Rajasekar (veena), Pat O'Keefe (clarinet), Tim O'Keefe (percussion), Thanjavur Muruga Boopathi (mrdangam), Michelle Kinney (cello). Innova album pre-release event with artist discussion.

7:40 Nick Zoulek (saxophone)

8:00 Patti Cudd (percussion)

8:20 Zeitgeist

8:40 Pat O'Keefe (reeds)

9:00 Gao Hong and Issam Rafea

9:20 Dana Jessen (bassoon)

9:40 Nick Zoulek (saxophone)

**April 28: 12-8 p.m.**

(Times approximate)

12:00 Patti Cudd (percussion)

12:20 Gao Hong (pipa) and Issam Rafea (oud)

12:40 Dana Jessen (bassoon)

1:00 Zeitgeist

2:00 Nick Zoulek (saxophone)

2:20 Pat O'Keefe (reeds)

2:40 Zeitgeist

3:00 Gao Hong and Issam Rafea

3:40 Dana Jessen (bassoon)

4:00 Nick Zoulek (saxophone)

4:20 Patti Cudd (percussion)

4:40 Dana Jessen (bassoon)

5:00 Zeitgeist

6:00 Nick Zoulek (saxophone)

6:20 Pat O'Keefe (reeds)

6:40 Zeitgeist

7:00 Dana Jessen (bassoon)

7:20 Nick Zoulek (saxophone)

7:40 Ensemble improv

**More information at [zeitgeistnewmusic.org](http://zeitgeistnewmusic.org) and**

**<https://www.facebook.com/events/1011300712341698/>**

**Video playlist of featured artists:**

**[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLnH0-Qo8cMXfJ-YzDI6WNxh19h0XJ6EGi&disable\\_polymer=true](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLnH0-Qo8cMXfJ-YzDI6WNxh19h0XJ6EGi&disable_polymer=true)**

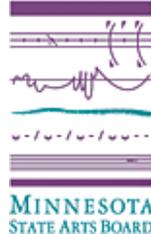
**Inn-fest Soundcloud playlist:**

**<https://soundcloud.com/innovadotmu/sets/inn-fest-innova-label-showcase>**

**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.



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