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La Caccina presents

YOUR LAND / MY LAND

YOUR LAND

This Land is Your Land (2005)

Sharon Jones and the Dap Kings
arr. Carling FitzSimmons

WE ALL WANT TO CHANGE THE WORLD

Blowin' in the Wind (1962)

Bob Dylan
arr. Rachel Mast Mohr

Revolution (1968)

John Lennon
arr. Alana Grossman

THE DAWNING OF THE REST OF OUR LIVES

Holiday (2004)

Billie Joe Armstrong
arr. FitzSimmons

Idioteque (2000)

Paul Lansky
arr. Carey Crows

SOLDIERS ARE CUTTING US DOWN

For What It's Worth (Stop, Hey What's That Sound)
(1966)

Stephen Stills
arr. Lily Wirth

Ohio/Find the Cost of Freedom (1970)

Neil Young
arr. Tamara Ghattas

When I'm Gone (1966)

Phil Ochs
arr. Crows

THE TREACHEROUS WATERS OF TALKIN' SMALL

Elephant in the Room (2017)

Chris Thile
arr. Crows

INTERMISSION

MY LAND

Shaking As It Turns (2019)

Lula Wiles
arr. Crows

A STRANGE AND BITTER CROP

What's Going On (1971)

Marvin Gaye
arr. FitzSimmons

Strange Fruit (1938)

Abe Meeropol
arr. Ghattas

We Shall Overcome (1945)

Lucille Simmons
arr. Mast Mohr

STRONG, INVINCIBLE, WOMAN

You Don't Own Me (1963)

John Madara and David White
arr. Grossman and Wirth

Quiet (2017)

Connie K. Lim
arr. Joan Szymko

I Am Woman (1971)

Helen Reddy and Ray Burton
arr. FitzSimmons

THERE AIN'T NO OTHER WAY

Born This Way (2010)

Stefani Germanotta and Jeppe Laursen
arr. FitzSimmons

Friday, May 20, 2022, 7:30 p.m.

Kibbitznest

2212 North Clybourn Avenue, Chicago

Saturday, May 21, 2022, 7:30 p.m.

Uncommon Ground (Lakeview)

3800 North Clark Street, Chicago



**This project is partially supported
by a CityArts Grant
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of Cultural Affairs & Special Events.**

PROGRAM NOTES

Protest music has been a part of American culture since our country was founded. With easy-to-remember lyrics and melodies borrowed from hymns or other songs people already knew, the earliest American protest songs were designed to rally citizens around a central cause: emancipation from British rule. As the years went by, protest songs evolved to fit the major political and social issues of the time. Two things remain constant: American protest music tends to skew liberal in ideology, and the songs themselves focus on either political or social issues.



As you'll hear tonight, these criteria afford musicians a huge range of creative freedom, encompassing everything from tone to tempo, and impacting the way listeners perceive the messages in their songs. Adding a further layer of interpretation to tonight's program is the fact that all of the pieces in this concert have been reimagined for women's voices, most by members of La Caccina. As we worked on our arrangements of these iconic songs, some of which were written almost 100 years ago, we imagined that it would be difficult to replicate the urgency behind the original performances and recordings. What we discovered is that, sadly, all of the issues that inspired the protest music of the past century still impact our society today.

Protest music has always existed to inspire change, and we hope that tonight's concert will do likewise. Our songs are grouped not chronologically or by artist, but by issue, thus allowing them to dialogue across the decades. Within the pages of this program, you will find QR codes with links to some of our favorite organizations working to address these same issues. We hope that, as you hear these songs, you will feel called to act, to make your voice heard within our ongoing "American experiment" and to work to create the kind of society in which you want to live. We hope that you'll join the song!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carling FitzSimmons'.

Carling FitzSimmons
Artistic Director, La Caccina

In 1940, folk singer Woody Guthrie was tired of hearing the patriotic fervor of Irving Berlin's "God Bless America," which had dominated the radio waves since 1938 amid rising tensions abroad and increasing nationalism at home. Using a tune inspired by a Baptist gospel hymn, Guthrie wrote **This Land is Your Land**, a biting critique of America that contrasted the beauty of its landscapes with the ugliness of its poverty, hunger, and racial injustice. In 1944, he revised his lyrics, removing the most critical verses as WWII neared its end. In 2005, funk and soul group Sharon Jones & the Dap Kings used Guthrie's original lyrics as the foundation for their cover.

About the ambiguous hook of his 1962 song, **Blowin' in the Wind**, Bob Dylan wrote, "There ain't too much I can say about this song except that the answer is blowing in the wind. It ain't in no book or movie or TV show or discussion group. Man, it's in the wind — and it's blowing in the wind. Too many of these hip people are telling me where the answer is but oh, I won't believe that. I still say it's in the wind . . . I still say that some of the biggest criminals are those that turn their heads away when they see wrong and know it's wrong." With a melody adapted from the popular civil rights anthem, "We Shall Overcome," Dylan's song was lauded by Black artists including Mavis Staples and Sam Cooke, who was surprised that a song that so deliberately spoke to the Black American experience could have come from a white man, and who incorporated the song into his own repertoire almost immediately.

Things were moving fast in 1968. Widespread media coverage of the Vietnam War spurred increasing protests, with members of the New Left espousing violent tactics to make their message clear to those in power. John Lennon recognized the need for social change, but was deeply opposed to such an extreme approach, and wrote **Revolution**, which The Beatles released as a single in August of that year. Unfortunately, his peaceable lyrics enraged the New Left, who saw the song as a betrayal of their cause, which caused Lennon to advocate publicly for the necessity of Marxist revolution. In one of his final interviews before his death in 1980, however, Lennon reaffirmed the pacifist sentiments expressed in "Revolution."

Four years after the release of the acoustic-laden album *Warning*, Green Day and its frontman Billie Joe Armstrong returned to their rock roots with *American Idiot*, which featured two undeniably political singles. The second of these, **Holiday**, took aim at American conservatism, which Armstrong felt was intent upon exploiting the planet and the weak in order to enrich the wealthy and powerful. Inspired (and perhaps intimidated) by the music of Bob Dylan, Armstrong took two months to complete the song, wanting to get the lyrics just right, and imagining all the ways in which the song could be adapted over time to fit contemporary political issues and ideology.

"**Idiotique** is the happiest song we've ever written," joked Radiohead lead singer Tom Yorke. With lyrics patched together using phrases pulled at random from a hat and a structure inspired by a 50-minute improvisation by lead guitarist Jonny Greenwood, the song takes place in a post-

apocalyptic world, where humans huddle in a bunker, desperately trying to make sense of what has befallen them. The song's four-chord progression was sampled from a piece of computer music by American composer Paul Lansky, who in turn drew inspiration from Wagner's famous "Tristan chord," a unstable-sounding chord with many possible resolutions but no clear tonal function used throughout the opera *Tristan und Isolde*.

Climate Change

Like Green Day and Radiohead, the **Citizens' Climate Lobby** is committed to fighting climate change through education and initiatives. Scan the code below to support climate action.



Although many associate Stephen Stills's song **For What It's Worth (Stop, Hey What's That Sound)** with the Kent State Massacre of 1970, the song, recorded in 1966 by Buffalo Springfield, was in fact a response to the Sunset Strip curfew riots in Los Angeles. This series of clashes between young people and police outside several popular music venues became synonymous with rising tensions across the nation between the establishment and the counterculture. The title arose from a miscommunication when Stills pitched the song to record executives at Atlantic. "I've got this song here," he said humbly, "for what it's worth, if you want it." The song was released two weeks later, and saw renewed popularity during the Black Lives Matter protests in the summer of 2020.

Shaken by the photographs in *Life* magazine of the Kent State Massacre, Neil Young wrote the lyrics to **Ohio** in a matter of days. Released in a sleeve that pointedly reprinted the Bill of Rights article that guarantees Freedom of Assembly, the record included Stephen Stills's **Find the Cost of Freedom** as a B-side, and was lauded as an instant American classic. Many in 1970, inspired by the directness of the lyrics, felt certain that musicians were leading the way to revolution. Yet, in 1972, Nixon won reelection by a landslide, many young people lost faith in their ability to effect change,

and the song was banned from radio stations across the country, including those in Ohio.

Phil Ochs described himself as a “singing journalist,” and drew inspiration for many of his songs from the newspapers. When he arrived in New York City in 1962, he quickly became part of the thriving folk scene in Greenwich Village. Inspired by artists including Bob Dylan, Ochs performed **When I’m Gone** accompanied only by his acoustic guitar. Despite his insistence that his songs were “topical songs” rather than “protest songs,” “When I’m Gone” speaks of the urgency of right action. The lyrics are particularly poignant in light of Ochs’s mental health; after a prolific music career in the 1960s, Ochs struggled with bipolar disorder and alcoholism, and died by suicide in 1976, at the age of 35.

Peace and Nonviolence

Sunflower of Peace is a nonprofit that provides medical and humanitarian aid to those affected by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. If you would like to help promote peace in the region and support those defending their homeland, scan the code below.



Mandolin player and singer-songwriter Chris Thile’s 2017 **Elephant in the Room** was released just before Thanksgiving, at the end of the first year of Donald Trump’s presidency. “Right now, with how easy it is to be the talker on social media, how hard it is to maintain focus or give something enough attention to appreciate it, we’re in a place where listening is a precious commodity,” remarked Thile of the song, adding that it was “a celebration of people who haven’t switched off, despite being given every reason to do so.”

With their haunting three-part harmonies, guitar-rock sensibilities, and truth-to-power lyrics, New England folk trio Lula Wiles is re-establishing folk music as a protest genre. Their 2019 album *What Will We Do?* features music that gets at the heart of current political and social issues. “We wanted to make an album that reflected, in a current way, what we are all staying up late thinking about and talking about over drinks at the dinner table,” explained singer Mali Obomsawin in a 2021 interview for the Sisters Folk Festival. “What is everyone worried about, confiding in their friends about, losing sleep about?” **Shaking As It Turns** gets at the heart of the divisions in contemporary American society, and responds to Guthrie’s original assertion with a question: “Is this land yours? Is this land mine?”

While on tour with The Four Tops in 1969, Obie Benson witnessed an act of police brutality against anti-war protesters in Berkeley, California. Startled by the violence, he began asking, “What is happening here? Why are they attacking their own children in the streets?” After The Four Tops turned it down, Benson brought the song he had written as a response to his experience to Marvin Gaye, who rewrote the melody and edited the lyrics to make it feel more natural for his voice. The result is **What’s Going On**, a career-defining song for Gaye that marked a departure from his polished Motown sound and contrasted a mournful melody and lyrics with party-style chatter in a way that feels uniquely American.

American poet and songwriter Abel Meeropol wrote a poem called “Bitter Fruit” after seeing a photograph of the 1930 lynching of Thomas Shipp and Abram Smith. Though he asked several musicians to set the poem to music, they refused, citing it as too inflammatory, and so Meeropol wrote the music himself. **Strange Fruit** was first performed by Meeropol’s wife, Anne, and singer Laura Duncan at Madison Square Garden in 1938, but it wasn’t until Billie Holiday began incorporating it into her concerts that it acquired the notoriety that surrounds it to this day. “I wrote ‘Strange Fruit’ because I hate lynching, and I hate injustice, and I hate the people who perpetuate it,” explained Meeropol. Graphic and unflinching, the song remains a full-throated condemnation of the violence committed against Black Americans.

Though **We Shall Overcome** began its life in 1901 as a hymn called “I’ll Overcome Someday,” the version we know now was first sung in Charleston, South Carolina in 1945 by striking tobacco workers led by Lucille Simmons. Community organizer and folklorist Zilphia Horton learned the song from Simmons, and in turn taught it to folk singer Pete Seeger, whose rendition became the unofficial anthem of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Singer Joan Baez led a crowd of 300,000 in singing the song at the 1963 March on Washington, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. quoted the lyrics in a sermon he delivered just four days before his death. With its universal lyrics and accessible melody, “We Shall Overcome” has lent legitimacy and hope to countless movements throughout the decades, becoming one of the most well-known protest songs today.

Civil Rights

The **American Civil Liberties Union** has been a part of nearly every major civil liberties battle in the United States for the past century. Their mission is to realize the promise of the United States Constitution for all people, especially those who have been historically marginalized. Scan the code below to support the work of the ACLU.



In the 1960s, songwriting duo John Madara and David White felt that there were far too many songs about girls mooning over boys. Looking for something new, they wrote **You Don't Own Me** in 1963 and gave it to 17-year-old pop princess Lesley Gore to record. Hailed as “incredibly defiant,” the song reached number 2 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart and became an anthem for the second-wave feminist movement. The transition from the minor-key verses to the spirited major-key chorus drives the song forward, and the powerful lyrics helped redefine Gore as a confident, mature artist.

Connie Lim, who performs as MILCK, wrote **Quiet** in 2015 as a means of coping with her experiences of sexual assault and abuse as a teenager. During the 2016 election, Lim realized just how similar the rhetoric used to describe women was to things she was told by her abusers, and she organized a choir of 26 singers to perform the song at the 2017 Women's March in Washington, D.C. Their performance went viral on the internet, and **Quiet** became the unofficial song of the Women's March. Since then, it has traveled around the world, resonating wherever women feel that their voices have been silenced.

Australian singer-songwriter Helen Reddy explained that, in 1971, she couldn't find any songs that accurately reflected what it was to be a woman. “I thought about all these strong women in my family who had gotten through the Depression and world wars and drunken, abusive husbands. But there was nothing in music that reflected that.” So she took

matters into her own hands, writing **I Am Woman** with guitarist Ray Burton. The song flew under the radar until it was included under the opening credits of the film *Stand Up and Be Counted*, when Capitol Records decided to re-release the song as a single, and “I Am Woman” eventually reached the top spot on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart in December 1972.

Women’s Rights

The **Chicago Foundation for Women** envisions a world in which all women and girls have the opportunity to thrive in safe, just, and healthy communities. The organization invests in women and girls, identifying a need and bringing together mentors, experts, and funding to fit that need. To support this work, scan the code below.



While on tour in 2010, Lady Gaga began working on her second studio album, *Born This Way*. As soon as she realized what she wanted to say, the title track practically wrote itself; Lady Gaga compared the experience of writing **Born This Way** to the Immaculate Conception. Inspired by 90s dance anthems by Madonna and TLC, Lady Gaga remarked, “I don’t want [the message] to be hidden in poetic wizardry and metaphors. I want it to be an attack, an assault on the issue because I think, especially in today’s music, everything gets kind of washy sometimes and the message gets hidden in the lyrical play.” An infectious and unapologetic celebration, “Born This Way” inspired Lady Gaga and her mother, Cynthia Germanotta, to create the Born This Way Foundation, which supports the mental health of LGBTQ+ youth and works to destigmatize mental health issues in all young people.

LGBTQ+ Rights

The rights of transgender people are under renewed attack. The **National Center for Transgender Equality** advocates for trans rights in Washington, D.C., providing the trans community with a strong voice in politics and winning life-saving change for trans people. To support their work, scan the code below.



Join us for our 2022-2023 season • *Body and Spirit*

In our 11th season, La Caccina explores what it means to be human. First, join us in the fall for ***Extraordinary Machine: Songs of Embodiment***, featuring music by Melissa Dunphy, Tracy Wong, Jeanette Gallant, and Stacey V. Gibbs, and commissions by Chicago composer Liza Sobel Crane and our 2022-2023 Hearing in Color Young Composer-in-Residence. Keep your ears open as we record our third studio album in the winter, and then come with us in the spring as we return to our roots in ***Clear Blue Morning: La Caccina Sings The Wailin' Jennys***. All concerts will be performed live and live streamed, so no matter where you are, you can join us for beautiful, impactful music for women's voices.

Subscribe and save! Season subscribers get priority seating at all La Caccina concerts and enjoy a discount on tickets. Subscriptions will be available in August at lacaccina.org/season.

November 12 & 13, 2022 • ***Extraordinary Machine***
May 19 & 20, 2023 • ***Clear Blue Morning***



La Caccina is a Chicago-based professional women's vocal ensemble committed to musical excellence across a wide range of styles. La Caccina is dedicated to contributing new and innovative works from diverse voices to the treble canon and inspiring the next generation of musicians through femme-centered leadership and advocacy.

The ensemble finds its namesake in Francesca Caccini, a prolific Baroque composer known for her virtuosic musicality and beautiful singing voice. Following in Caccini's footsteps, the women of La Caccina bring a variety of expertise to the ensemble, enabling them to easily adapt to a wide range of musical styles—from Renaissance madrigals to South African folk songs, and from contemporary pop songs to classical masterworks such as Vivaldi's *Gloria* and Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols*.

Over the past ten seasons, La Caccina has collaborated with ensembles including the Pavo String Quartet, the DuPage Symphony Orchestra, and bluegrass trio Glass Mountain, and has commissioned and premiered works by Katherine Pukinskis, Augusta Read Thomas, Matthew Harris, Melissa Dunphy, and Eric Malmquist, among others. No matter the music, La Caccina's expressive, emotional singing highlights the versatility of the treble voice and brings musical excellence, integrity, and honesty to every performance.

**Carey Crows, Carling FitzSimmons, Tamara Ghattas,
Alana Grossman, Lauren Iezzi, Patty Kennedy, Rachel Mast Mohr,
Lily Wirth, and Madeleine Xiang Woodworth**

Please join us in thanking our season donors!

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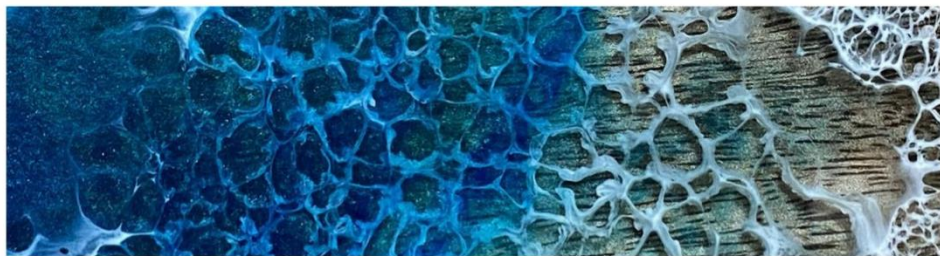
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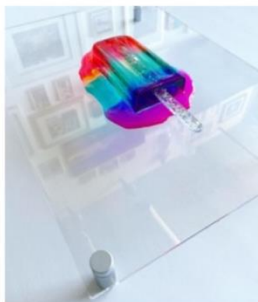
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