

# American Patchwork Quartet

Friday, November 14  
Luth Concert Hall  
Prior Presents 2025–26

**MUSIC  
WORCESTER**

**PRIOR**  
Performing Arts Center

# Welcome

Dear Friends,

The term “patchwork” is defined as “something composed of incongruous parts” by Merriam-Webster.

The term is often used to describe conditions of the Americas: views from a plane reveal rich tapestries; autumnal days expose one to a kaleidoscope of colors; and a rich variation of architecture exists in its cities. However, it is the stitching together of souls, traditions, and expressions that most meaningfully constitute the patchwork that defines us.

In music, generations of voices, rhythms, and roots overlap to form something greater than any single thread. Tonight's performance celebrates that living fabric. The musicians before you come from different traditions, each bringing the tones, instruments, and memories that shaped them. Reinterpretations of folkloric melodies are more than arrangements—they're conversations across time and culture. They remind us that the patchwork of our history is not static.

The American Patchwork Quartet seeks to bottle this spirit, pour a glass, and allow us all to savor it. Allow the shared sound they create to wash over you. Recognize the bits that are familiar. Indulge in those that introduce something new. Celebrate being a part of something that revels in, and is strengthened by, the act of the weaving.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jeffrey de Caen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

Jeffrey de Caen  
*Nancy Savage Skinner '79* Director  
Prior Performing Arts Center

# Biographies



American Patchwork Quartet (left to right): Moto Fukushima, bass; Clay Ross, guitar/vocals; Falu, vocals; Clarence Penn, drums

**American Patchwork Quartet (APQ)**, led by multi-GRAMMY® award-winning guitarist/vocalist Clay Ross, binds timeless American folk songs with jazz sophistication, country twang, West African hypnotics, and East Asian ornamentation. APQ's sound is a masterful confluence of tradition and innovation, transcending culture, politics, and ideology. Their debut was recently nominated for "Best Folk Album" at the 67th GRAMMY® Awards.

A southern-born roots music aficionado, Ross is also the founder of the world-renowned Gullah group Ranky Tanky. In APQ, Ross intertwines with other Grammy-winning artists: Falu (Falguni Shah), an eleventh-generation Hindustani classical vocalist; Moto Fukushima, an internationally acclaimed Issei jazz bassist; and Clarence Penn, a drumming protégée of Ellis Marsalis whose fibers were honed by African American church traditions.

APQ resonates as a potent symbol of unity in diversity. It stands testament to the notion that, from a collage of varied backgrounds, a coherent and beautiful whole can be fashioned. Mirroring America's cultural mosaic, APQ stitches together a story that's both intricate and resilient. The fabric of their music is genuine—it neither feigns tolerance nor presents an overly-embellished image of unity.

Instead, each carefully chosen piece dives deep into America's patchwork soul and shares the joys, sorrows, and unwavering hope of a nation crafted by shared dreams and diverse histories. Far from being a haphazard collection of musical scraps, APQ is a deliberately designed homage to America's past and a showcase of its dynamic present. It beckons listeners to meditate upon our shared identity and relish in the musical threads that bind us. Just as an intricately designed quilt becomes a cherished family heirloom, when the distinct patterns of APQ's music align in perfect harmony, the result is both a blanket of warmth and a timeless treasure.

# Biographies



American Patchwork Quartet (left to right): Moto Fukushima, bass; Falu, vocals; Clay Ross, guitar/vocals; Clarence Penn, drums

**Clay Ross** is a 2x Grammy Award-winning artist and the founder of the Billboard chart-topping band Ranky Tanky. A native of South Carolina, Ross moved to NYC in 2002 and has since collaborated with artists as diverse as Gregory Porter, Snarky Puppy, and Bobby McFerrin. Winning multiple grants through the U.S. State Department, he has toured worldwide as a Cultural Ambassador.  
[www.clayross.com](http://www.clayross.com)

**Clarence Penn** is an "inexhaustibly creative" drummer (*The New York Times*) renowned for his dynamic interpretations across global styles. He has collaborated with esteemed artists such as Ellis and Wynton Marsalis, Betty Carter, and Michael Brecker. Penn's extensive touring and prolific recording career encompass a diverse array of musical expressions.  
[www.clarencepenn.com](http://www.clarencepenn.com)

**Falu (Falguni Shah)** is a GRAMMY® Award-winning artist acclaimed for her innovative fusion of modern styles with classical Indian vocal traditions. She has collaborated with renowned musicians such as Yo-Yo Ma, Wyclé Jean, Philip Glass, Ricky Martin, Blues Traveler, and A.R. Rahman. Notably, Falu performed at the world's largest stadium before 132,000 attendees, an event broadcast to billions globally. She has graced the GRAMMYS pre-telecast ceremony, entertained President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama at the White House, and was the featured performer at the Time 100 Gala in 2009. Since 2006, Falu has served as Carnegie Hall's ambassador of Indian music.  
[www.falumusic.com](http://www.falumusic.com)

**Moto Fukushima**, bassist and Grammy-nominated co-leader of House of Waters, blends Western classical, traditional Japanese, and South American music into unique jazz compositions. A Berklee alumnus, he has worked with artists like Mike Stern and Dave Weckl. House of Waters' albums have topped iTunes charts, and Moto has earned accolades like the Sports Emmy and ASCAP Plus Award. Currently based in NYC, his talents continue to resonate globally.  
[www.motobass.com](http://www.motobass.com)

# The Prior Performing Arts Center

An uncommon commons for transformative experiences with the arts

## Prior Presents

The keystone of the Prior Performing Arts Center's public-facing programming, Prior Presents merges thrilling live events by visiting artists with robust educational and outreach activities. Defined by exceptional artistic quality, interdisciplinary impulses, and the potential to spark both wonder and reflection, this annual series celebrates artistic risk-taking and the exchange of ideas and perspectives from around the globe. Short- and long-term visiting artist residencies include performances, artist talks, installations, workshops, and experiential learning opportunities for Holy Cross students and the greater Worcester community.

The internationally acclaimed artists of current and previous seasons embody our vision for artist residencies at The Prior Performing Arts Center. Their performances and lectures offer an exhilarating complement to the creativity and innovation of emerging student artists and Holy Cross faculty and staff also featured in our season this year.



1) Rhiannon Giddens in concert | Spring 2024; 2) Compagnie Hervé Koubi | Spring 2024

## Stay in touch!



Scan to sign up for our email list and stay up to date with announcements and upcoming events from The Prior Performing Arts Center.

# Upcoming Prior Presents Events



## LayeRhythm | *SWITCH*

Dedicated to serving transformative art experiences to all-age audiences, LayeRhythm invigorates communities from clubs, festivals, and stages, with interactive and improvisational games between the audience and performers. In *SWITCH*, audience ideas are collected and turned into music, lyrics and movement by the MC and performers.

Nov 21 @ 7 p.m. | Free entry, open to all.

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## Sunny Jain | *Wild Wild East*

Composer, drummer and dhol player Sunny Jain celebrates cultural diaspora and the interconnectedness of global styles with his band in *Wild Wild East*, a raucous, powerful, and jubilant recognition of a truly American spirit.

A co-presentation with the Department of Music.

Mar 12 @ 7:30 p.m. | Tickets \$35 | \$45 | \$55

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## yMusic

yMusic is a genre-leading American chamber ensemble renowned for its innovative and collaborative spirit. Praised by NPR Music as “deeply, profoundly skilled,” yMusic has been tapped to lend their orchestral sound and instantly-recognizable style to recordings and concert projects by a dizzying array of popular artists from John Legend to Paul Simon.

Mar 29 @ 6 p.m. | Tickets \$35 | \$45 | \$55



Scan to purchase tickets and learn more about our schedule of upcoming presentations.



## Currently at the Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Art Gallery



### *The Vietnamese Áo Dài in a Time of War: Fashion, Citizenship, and Nationalism (1954-1975)*

This exhibition explores the significance of Vietnam's national costume—the áo dài—during the Vietnam War. Honoring the 50th anniversary of a conflict, the legacies of which continue to haunt us to this day, the exhibition highlights the contributions of Vietnamese women to politics, society, and culture.

**Open now through Dec 19**

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## Upcoming Events from the Arts Ecosystem at Holy Cross

### Holy Cross Jazz Ensemble

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC. Join us for an unforgettable evening of music as the Holy Cross Jazz Ensemble and Jazz Combos take the stage! Experience the sounds of swing, bebop, funk, and more performed by some of the college's most talented student musicians.

**Nov 20 @ 8 p.m.**

### Holy Cross Laptop Ensemble Federation

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC. Join the Holy Cross Laptop Ensemble Federation (H-CLEF) for a concert of choreographed sound and image showcasing final student projects written for Music 242: Coding Music.

**Dec 2 @ 8 p.m.**

### Gamelan Gita Sari Concert

DEPARTMENTS OF MUSIC AND THEATRE & DANCE. At the end of each semester the students in I Nyoman Catra's Balinese dance and gamelan classes display what they have learned in a delightful evening showcasing the Balinese performing arts.

**Dec 6 @ 7:30 p.m.**



Scan to purchase tickets and learn more about our schedule of upcoming presentations.

# Prior Performing Arts Center Staff

Jeffrey de Caen, *Nancy Savage Skinner '79* Director

## ARTIST ENGAGEMENT

Marta Beyer, Manager of Artistic and Engagement Initiatives

## PRODUCTION SERVICES

Brenda Shepard, Manager of Production  
Matthew Freije, Pro Audio/Video Supervisor  
Christine Goguen, Costume Shop Manager  
Stephen McGonagle, Technical Director  
Judi Olson, Costume Shop Assistant  
Mason Parece, Production Technician  
Betsy Pierce, Assistant Technical Director

## PATRON ENGAGEMENT & OPERATIONS

Katrina Lewonczyk, Manager of Operations & Administration  
Ethan Bates, Arts Marketing & Communications Manager  
Evan Crocker, Event & Front of House Manager  
Morgan Fitzpatrick, Office Coordinator

## STUDENT STAFF

Students play a crucial role in the operation of the Prior Performing Arts Center, working as Production Assistants, Front of House Assistants, and more: Adele Feldberg, Alyshia Solomon, Andrea Gomez, Angela Almanza, Anna Rowley, Brigit O'Connell, Camila Müller-Juez, Elise O'Neill, Emily Fox, Emma Buchanan, Frank Amuso, Gabriellie De Gouveia, Gracie Lopez, Jamie Schmid, Jazmin Lopez, Kiera Ryan, Laurel Deneen, Maya Pinto, Morgan Kane, Nadia Frempong, Natalia Salinas, Rose Knoll, Sophia Rowley, Adelaide Abstoss, Alejandro Irizarry, Alexa Rodriguez Villatoro, Atiya Woolman, Billy Suter, Brandon Curtis, Daniel Hickey, Eliza Simpson, Emelia Jones, Emily Karlson, Emma Butler, Fiona Nelson, Gail Durkin, Gracyn Epstein, Irene Mandile, Jake Sidell, Joshua Love, Julia Divine, Katelyn Murphy, Lee (Leah) Varela, Lily Jaramillo, Luis Ramirez, Margaret DeWald, Maxim Tereshchenko, Melina Valencia, Meredith Brady, Meredith Shaw, Natalie Gasowski, Nevaeh Fleming, Osmaly Bonilla, Paige Thomson, Phoebe Wong, Piper Guiney, Savannah Rhodes, Scarlett Dawson, Sebastian Torres, Sofia Corvo, Solar (Ciara) Bello, Sophia Tran, Sophia Suffoletto, Sophie Sundaram, Vivian Higgins, Xiaoyi Wang, Yasmin Fernandez

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Music Worcester thanks the following supporters of this presentation:



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