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***Art on theMART* Announces Summer 2021 Programming Celebrating the City of Chicago's the Year of Chicago Music**

The Series of Projections Features a Wide Array of Contemporary Musical Genres

CHICAGO – In partnership with Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, ***Art on theMART*** will launch a series of new projections saluting Chicago-based musicians in honor of the City's Year of Chicago Music celebration. The new pieces will be projected onto the façade of theMART nightly July 5 – September 16 at 9:00 and 9:30 p.m.

The Year of Chicago Music series will include:

- ***Footnotes***, an animated projection focused on Chicago footwork, produced by artists and filmmakers Wills Glasspiegel and Brandon K. Calhoun, featuring original music by DJ Spinn, the Chicago Bucket Boys, Angel Bat Dawid, Elisha Chandler and Amal Hubert from Hypnotic Brass Band.
- ***the light of the dark***, created by the Chicago-based, Grammy Award-winning ensemble Eighth Blackbird and new media artist and filmmaker Xuan, featuring music by renowned composer and Bang on a Can co-founder Michael Gordon, written for and recorded by the ensemble, as the inspiration for projections by Xuan.
- ***Woven***, created by visual artist Selina Trepp and musician Dan Bitney, collaborating as Spectralina, interlacing music inspired by Chicago's rich musical history with hand-drawn animations of images of woven patterns found in the culturally diverse neighborhoods.

*Art on theMART* kicked off its 2021 projections Thursday, April 1 with the world premiere of *Astrographics*, a 16-minute piece developed in collaboration with the Adler Planetarium.

*Art on theMART* can best be experienced for free from the jetty section of the Chicago Riverwalk on Wacker Drive between Wells Street and Franklin Street, where accompanying audio is also available. Current social distancing practices, based on recommendations from the City of Chicago and the State of Illinois, must be observed by all *Art on theMART* visitors. For more information, visit [artonthemart.com](http://artonthemart.com).

For complete descriptions of the Year of Chicago Music pieces, see below.

***Footnotes***

***Footnotes*** is an animated projection focused on Chicago footwork, produced by artists and filmmakers Wills Glasspiegel and Brandon K. Calhoun, featuring original music by DJ Spinn, the Chicago Bucket Boys, Angel Bat Dawid, Elisha Chandler and Amal Hubert from Hypnotic Brass Band. The projection features footwork dancing from some of Chicago's leading footwork artists, including Sterling "Steelo" Lofton, Jamal "Litebulb" Oliver, Diamond Hardiman and Crystal James.

Forging connections between the iconic architecture of Chicago and the musical heartbeat of the city, *Footnotes* follows the musicians and dancers as they build a new footwork track inspired by the classic blues song, "Sweet Home Chicago." Hand-drawn animations by Calhoun emphasize the fact that Chicago footwork is both music and dance simultaneously. Footwork started to the sounds of house music on the West Side of Chicago in the 1980s.

**Wills Glasspiegel** is a filmmaker, artist and scholar from Chicago. His films have screened widely, including at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, the Chicago Cultural Center, MANA Contemporary and the Paris Philharmonic. Glasspiegel is part of The Era Footwork Crew and works as a creative director on *IN THE WURKZ*, an award-winning footwork performance by The Era. He was recently awarded a storytelling grant from the MacArthur Foundation and the Field Foundation for his work with Brandon Calhoun on the forthcoming documentary *Body of the City* about Chicago Footwork. Glasspiegel has produced public radio segments for *All Things Considered* and *Morning Edition* and was recognized as a co-recipient of a Peabody Award in 2014 for his contributions to the public radio program *Afropop Worldwide*. He co-founded the arts and racial justice nonprofit, Open the Circle ([otcprojects.org](http://otcprojects.org)) in Chicago in 2017. Glasspiegel is currently finishing his PhD in African American Studies and American Studies at Yale University.

**Brandon K. Calhoun** is a footwork dancer, animator and filmmaker from the South Side of Chicago. Calhoun first rose to prominence as a battle dancer in the competitive world of Chicago footwork. In 2014, he co-founded The Era Footwork Crew. As a filmmaker, his shooting, editing and animation has helped define the look and feel of The Era across over a dozen videos. He was recently awarded a grant from the MacArthur Foundation for his work as a co-director on the forthcoming footwork documentary *Body of the City*. His animation of footwork dancing was featured in the VICE documentary *Meet The Era*. In 2020, Calhoun directed the short dance film, *The Testament*, which connects footwork to Black Lives Matters movement. As a footwork dancer, he has performed on stages across the world, from Kuwait to Mexico. He was featured alongside Chance the Rapper in the video for *Clean Up*. Calhoun, also known by the nickname "Chief Manny," is now working with The Era to bring footwork education into Chicago Public Schools. He lives and works on the South Side of Chicago.

**DJ Spinn** (aka Morris Harper) is the musical director of *Footnotes*. He has been making juke and footwork music in the Chicago area since he was a teenager growing up in the south suburbs of the city. He founded the Teklife record label with longtime partner, DJ Rashad. Spinn's classic dance anthems from the 90s and 2000s, including *Bounce and Break Yo Back*, are still regularly played on the radio and at parties in Chicago. Alongside his former partner DJ Rashad, who passed away several years ago, Spinn introduced footwork, a long-running underground Chicago tradition, to audiences and artists across the world. Spinn is signed to the London-based record label Hyperdub, and he continues to tour the world, representing the Chicago footwork sound past and future.

### ***the light of the dark***

This projection, created by the Chicago-based, Grammy Award-winning ensemble Eighth Blackbird and new media artist and filmmaker Xuan, celebrates the Year of Chicago Music by spreading joy and adventure through adventurous music. *the light of the dark* features music by renowned composer and Bang on a Can co-founder Michael Gordon, written for and recorded by the ensemble, as the inspiration for projections by Xuan.

In the program note for *the light of the dark*, Gordon writes, "I imagined a chaos onstage, with the musicians grabbing the nearest available instrument and playing music on it. The piece starts with a heavy-metal-esque cello line and builds from there into a kind of out-of-control late-

night jam session, complete with unpredictable metallic crashes, swirling virtuosic fiddling and colliding glissandos.” Xuan’s visual design depicts this exuberant landscape by using bright, colorful shapes and geometric animations derived from theMART, simultaneously highlighting architectural aspects of the building’s facade and the intricate compositional structure. *the light of the dark* is available on the newest Eighth Blackbird album, “Singing in the Dead of Night,” available on Cedille Records.

**Eighth Blackbird** is a four-time GRAMMY Award-winning Chicago-based ensemble that has gained international recognition since winning the 1998 Concert Artists Guild Competition. More recently Eighth Blackbird was named Musical America’s 2017 Ensemble of the Year, was an inaugural recipient of Chamber Music America’s Visionary Award and garnered the prestigious MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions. Recent institutional expansions include the Blackbird Creative Lab (2017), a mentorship program for emerging artists, and the Chicago Artists Workshop (2020), an online concert series. The group has commissioned and premiered hundreds of works by composers including Viet Cuong, Bryce Dessner, Jennifer Higdon, Amy Beth Kirsten, David Lang, Julia Wolfe, Pamela Z and Steve Reich, whose Double Sextet won the 2009 Pulitzer Prize. A long-term relationship with Chicago’s Cedille Records has produced nine acclaimed recordings.

**Xuan** is a new media artist, filmmaker and pianist working at the intersection of music, art and technology. Her work encompasses projection design, experimental animation, abstract scenography and interactive installations, and has been shown at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, and Smithsonian Institution, as well as in concert venues across the US and internationally. Her training and experience as a performer provide an insightful depth into music interpretation and the nuances of interdisciplinary collaboration. This actively guides her in the development of innovative projects that help diversify audiences and broaden the immersive scope of new music.

### ***Woven***

Visual artist Selina Trepp and musician Dan Bitney, collaborating as Spectralina, interlace music inspired by Chicago’s rich musical history with hand-drawn animations of images of woven patterns found in the culturally diverse neighborhoods of Chicago for their projection *Woven*. The shapes within these patterns transform and reconstitute themselves in response to the music, morphing from one pattern into the next in dynamic, unexpected and joyful ways. In the creation of their music for this projection, Spectralina weaves sounds and genres from the city’s musical history in homage to the beauty and creativity cultivated in Chicago. The audio includes a mix of digital tracks and acoustic studio recordings with musical collaborators Jaimie Branch, John Herndon, Jeff Parker, Norman W. Long and Dustin Laurenzi.

Spectralina is the audio-visual performance project of Dan Bitney and Selina Trepp. Spectralina creates an image-sound relationship that treats each medium as equal, resulting in animations and performances in which projection and sounds come together as visual music. For Spectralina’s projects, Bitney uses a computer, synthesizers, drums, voice and analog processors to create sounds and Trepp sings and creates animated projections in real-time.

Bitney is an American multi-instrumentalist and composer, best known as an experimental musician working with jazz, electronic, rock and improvised music groups. He has released many records, has composed music for films and art installations and has performed in concerts across the world. He has been a member of Tortoise since 1994, was a founding member of Isotope 217 in the early 1990s and has been performing as one-half of Spectralina since 2001.

Trepp works across media, combining performance, installation, painting, and sculpture to create intricate setups that result in photos, drawings, furniture and animations. She is also active in the experimental music scene. Trepp's work has been widely exhibited internationally and has received numerous awards and honors including The Swiss Art Award as well as an Illinois Arts Council Grant.

### **About *Art on theMART***

*Art on theMART* is the largest permanent digital art projection in the world, projecting contemporary artwork across the 2.5-acre river-façade of theMART. This expansive permanent piece of public art continues Chicago's legacy of providing both residents and visitors with exceptional art that is both free and accessible to all. Projections are visible to the public from Wacker Drive and along the Chicago Riverwalk.

The program content rotates seasonally and is selected with the assistance and expertise of the Curatorial Advisory Board. The City of Chicago and theMART work in partnership to manage and curate the projected artwork over the course of a 30-year agreement. Privately funded by Vornado Realty Trust, owner of theMART, *Art on theMART* marks the first time a projection of its size and scope is completely dedicated to digital art with no branding, sponsorship credits or messaging. The permanent projection system illuminates theMART with 34 state-of-the-art projectors totaling almost one million lumens. For more information, visit [www.artonthemart.com](http://www.artonthemart.com).

### **About theMART**

theMART (formerly The Merchandise Mart), located in the center of the sought-after River North submarket, is interwoven into the fabric of Chicago as an innovator in business, technology, culture, art, media and more. As the largest privately owned commercial building in the United States, it is also one of the world's leading commercial buildings, wholesale design centers and the preeminent international business location in Chicago. Encompassing 4.2 million gross square feet, theMART spans two city blocks, rises 25 stories, and is visited by an average of 30,000 people each business day and nearly 10 million people annually. Offering continuous innovation and creativity from leading manufacturers and design forward showrooms, theMART serves as the home to Chicago's most creative and technologically innovative companies including Motorola Mobility, 1871, Yelp, PayPal and MATTER, as well as Fortune 500 companies ConAgra, Allstate, Kellogg, Beam Suntory and Grainger. For more information, visit <http://themart.com>.

### **About the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events and the Year of Chicago Music**

The Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) is dedicated to enriching Chicago's artistic vitality and cultural vibrancy. This includes fostering the development of Chicago's non-profit arts sector, independent working artists and for-profit arts businesses; providing a framework to guide the City's future cultural and economic growth, via the Chicago Cultural Plan; marketing the City's cultural assets to a worldwide audience; and presenting high-quality, free and affordable cultural programs for residents and visitors. For more information, visit [Chicago.gov/dcase](http://Chicago.gov/dcase).

Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events have designated 2020/2021 as the Year of Chicago Music. This citywide focus on music is one of the first of its kind in the U.S. The City of Chicago and its partners, working with the local music industry, will launch a marketing campaign for Chicago music; provide additional financial grants for musicians and music projects; encourage dialog around inclusion and equity; and call on civic, philanthropic, arts and business leaders to support the music industry.

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