

The Red Skies Music Ensemble



The Red Skies Music Ensemble combines music, theater and scholarship, making archives and special collections come alive through research and performance.

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THE
RED SKIES
MUSIC
ENSEMBLE
RESEARCH &
PERFORMANCE

Program Description

Using a humanities approach, Trudy Williams (Artistic Director/Curator) and George Boziwick (Curator/Music Director) create and produce entertaining research-based multimedia programs that extend the general public's engagement with the resources, collections and exhibits of museums, libraries, historical societies, and educational institutions. Using music as the portal, each program presents an engaging research-based narrative illustrated by lively music, theatrical vignettes, and large screen images of archival documents and artifacts. During the hour long program, these elements bring audiences on an experiential journey that connects the dots between fascinating historical and cultural facts and interpretations, many of which have been hidden in plain sight, omitted from narratives, or lost to social memory. Programs include an opportunity for audience participation, and end with a Q&A.

Origins Inspired by involvement and interest in music, American socio-cultural history and community theater, Trudy Williams conceived of a public musicology performance model for creating research-based public history programs for general audiences at museums, libraries, historical societies and educational institutions. In 2009, she invited fellow musician and musicologist George Boziwick to co-found The Red Skies Music Ensemble and co-author programs that use this multimedia performance model to make American archives, special collections and exhibits come alive for the public.

Performances

(Partial list)
Library of Congress
Lincoln Center Public Programs/New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
American Repertory Theater at Oberon/
Houghton Library, Harvard
Yale Institute of Sacred Music
Long Island Museum of Art and History
Emily Dickinson Museum/Jones Library
Emily Dickinson International Society/Amherst College





Music and the Artistry of William Sidney Mount

Trudy Williams, Author

Music and the Artistry of William Sidney Mount takes general audiences on an experiential journey of Mount's artistic inventive genius and vibrant contribution to American culture in art, music and dance. A lively research-based narrative spans the program, weaving in music performance and theatrical vignettes, accompanied by large-screen images of art work, music notation, and artifacts. Using music as the portal, the narrator and actors convey facts and interpretations about Mount's biographical, socio-historical and cultural formative influences; his contribution to new art forms in American art and music; his music and dance interactions and the artistic evidence he created that attests to the key contributions of African Americans in the emerging multi-racial and multi-cultural American musical synthesis; the cultural shifts and power struggles of his times to impose a 'high' and 'low' identity for the arts; his inventions (including a new kind of fiddle and a mobile art studio); and his legacy and relevance today.

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“Take Me Out to the Ball Game”: The Story of Katie Casey, Suffrage and Our National Pastime

George Boziwick and Trudy Williams,
Co-Authors

Take Me Out to the Ball Game

Verse 1

Katie Casey was baseball mad,
Had the fever and had it bad
Just to root for the hometown crew,
ev'ry sou Katie blew.
On a Saturday, her young beau called to see
if she'd like to go
To see a show but Miss Kate said
No, I'll tell you what you can do:

Chorus

Take me out to the ballgame,
Take me out to the crowd,
Buy me some peanuts and cracker-jack,
I don't care if I never get back, for it's
Root, Root, Root for the Home team...

Katie Casey's reply, “Take Me Out to the Ball Game” is sung by generations of baseball fans, most unaware of the social significance of the song's rarely-heard first verse, or the last verse that tells why and how Katie takes the lead in getting fans in the stadium to sing the iconic chorus.

With vivid narration, this multi-media program with live music and theatrical performance, large screen archival images and a dozen songs, presents an entertaining and revealing tour of “Katie Casey’s” world and the emergent popular cultural events and social issues of the time that endure to this day.

“Take Me Out to the Ball Game” is more than a “baseball song”. The song's lyrics provide the clues to little known, fascinating connection between baseball, music, suffrage, social activism and vaudeville.

Against the background of the tune's Irish-American heroine, her love of baseball, women's rights activism, African American's and men's activism and organizations, and the deeply opposing forces, the program traces and animates the social and musical interactions by which the chorus grew into one of America's most popular refrains.





“My Business is to Sing”: Emily Dickinson, Musician and Poet

George Boziwick and Trudy Williams,
Co-Authors

“My Business is to Sing:” Emily Dickinson, Musician and Poet conveys a new perspective on Dickinson’s daily musical activities of home piano performance, sheet music collecting and attending concerts as vital to her emerging artistic persona.

Selected performances from her own collection of published sheet music, monologues, and theatrical readings from her correspondence and poems furnish an informative and entertaining backdrop to the narrative that vibrantly situates Dickinson’s daily musical engagements in the context of her encounters with the music-making of the local community, the music of the Dickinson’s Irish and African American servants, and the New England hymn tradition.

The program vividly captures and illustrates how these interactions allowed Dickinson to fashion a compelling and enduring musical persona that would ultimately serve a vibrant role in forming her unique poetic voice.

