



MUSCATINE ART CENTER PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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RED CEDAR CHAMBER MUSIC TO PERFORM AT ART CENTER

Celebrate Mother's Day with a special performance of "Brinton Surprise" May 8

MUSCATINE, Iowa – Celebrate Mother's Day Weekend this year at the Muscatine Art Center with a special performance of *Brinton Surprise*, a Red Cedar Chamber Music production, at 3 p.m. on Mother's Day (May 8) in the Muscatine Art Center's Music Room. The performance is free and open to the public.

Red Cedar Chamber Music's Directors and core ensemble, violinist Miera Kim and cellist Carey Bostian, present the third in a series of programs featuring early silent films and magic lantern slides accompanied by chamber music. The core ensemble is joined by flutist Claudia Anderson and guitarist John Dowdall in accompanying these rare films. Historian Michael Zahs will narrate the program.





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This is Red Cedar's third program built on the Brinton Collection. Red Cedar produced *Brinton Silent Film Project* in 2015, and followed that up a year later with *Music and Magic Lanterns*. Each project featured multiple commissions, some of which are present in today's *Brinton Surprise* program. In all, 10 new works have been commissioned to accompany and enhance the incredible films and slides selected from the collection. In addition to performances in Eastern Iowa, the ensemble has presented in Washington, D.C., Minneapolis, and at the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival in Washington state.

BRINTON SURPRISE is a multi-media extravaganza featuring magic lantern slides and early silent films from the **Brinton Collection** of early entertainment materials. Michael Zahs, who rescued the collection from the garbage heap in 1981 and gifted the entire collection to the University of Iowa Special Collections, was the subject of the 2017 documentary *Saving Brinton*. Red Cedar will reprise several commissioned works from previous programs and have commissioned three new works to accompany six more films from the collection.

Philip Wharton has created a magical score for *The Fairy of Springtime*, a 1902 French film which features hand-painted color. Michael Kimber has scored *Venetian Tragedy*, a nine-minute drama with a surprise ending. New to Red Cedar for this project is a duo of French composers, Jean-Francois Charles and Nicolas Sidoroff, who have teamed up to create a major multi-media work (*A Méliès Voyage*) that explores the life of the great French filmmaker Georges Méliès, known by most from the 2011 film *Hugo*.

The Brinton Entertaining Company Papers, housed in a dedicated room at UI Special Collections, is over 50 linear feet and includes films, projectors, glass slides, 78 rpm records, wax cylinders, memorabilia from travels, patent applications with drawings, plans for flying machines, posters, and tickets.

"The Brinton Entertaining Company Papers provide inspiration for students, faculty, and the curious alike," Elizabeth Riordan, lead outreach and instruction librarian for the UI Libraries Special Collections and Archives, said. "The collection's rare films and film ephemera are



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enough to make it special, but the story of Frank and Indiana Brinton's journey across the central swath of the United States showing early film is what makes it remarkable.”

Red Cedar’s founding directors, flutist Jan Boland and guitarist John Dowdall, began their partnership with historian Michael Zahs following Red Cedar’s first Rural Outreach concert at the Ainsworth Opera House in 2001. Over the years, they have collaborated with him on several concert programs featuring Michael’s collection of original civil war letters dating from 1861-1865, as well as two bus trips celebrating Red Cedar’s 10th Anniversary Season. Zahs had been showing some of the films from the Brinton Collection at the opera house since 1998.

While the three had talked about the collection, it was not until Humanities Iowa and the University of Iowa Special Collections partnered with Michael Zahs to preserve, digitize, and develop the collections that the idea of a concert program came about. In August of 2013, Jan, John and Carey traveled to Ainsworth to meet with Michael and the project was officially launched. Accompanying them was Red Cedar’s videographer and filmmaker John Richard, and the idea of a documentary about Michael and the collection took shape.

John Richard teamed up with Andrew Sherburne and Tommy Haines, and began documenting the project and Michael’s other endeavors. The feature length documentary *Saving Brinton* was premiered in 2018 and in part documents the journey that Zahs and Red Cedar undertook together to highlight the incredible life of Frank Brinton.

This series of concerts is made possible by support from the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, AEGON Transamerica Foundation, the McIntyre Foundation, the Grandon Foundation, Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust, and Hills Bank. Additional support comes from the City of Marion, the Giacoletto Foundation, Farmers State Bank, CRST International, United Fire Group, and the Iowa Arts Council (a division of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs and the National Endowment for the Arts).

Special thanks to Artist Sponsors Juanita Dennert and Don & Irene (Naxera) Hamous.



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To find out more about *Brinton Surprise* and all Red Cedar Chamber Music events, visit <http://www.redcedar.org/performance-schedule/>

Visitors to the Muscatine Art Center encounter paintings made by artists recognized around the world, fascinating objects connected to Muscatine's past, beautifully crafted decorative arts, charming period rooms, and a Japanese Garden installed nearly a century ago. Learners of all ages can pique their curiosity through changing exhibitions, classes, and events. The Muscatine Art Center is located at 1314 Mulberry Avenue in Muscatine, Iowa. Hours are Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 10 a.m-5 p.m., Thursday evenings until 7 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 1-5 p.m. Admission is free. Donations are appreciated. For more information, visit the [Muscatine Art Center](#) website, visit the [Art Center](#) page on the City of Muscatine website, or follow the Art Center on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#), Please contact Katy Loos, Program Coordinator, with any questions about upcoming programs at (563) 263-8282 or email her at kloos@muscatineiowa.gov.

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