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## **ROBUST SPRING "BLOSSOMS" LINEUP SHOWS THAT LOTUS IS MUCH MORE THAN A FESTIVAL**

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Lotus Blossoms program is the largest ever with 7 artists, 13 public performances, and 50 outreach events across 7 Indiana counties.

*Bloomington, Indiana:* With a mix of public performances and educational outreach scheduled from March 19 through April 11, the 2018 Lotus Blossoms programming offers a diverse musical mix of all-ages opportunities to listen and learn. Now in its 23<sup>rd</sup> year, Lotus Blossoms extends Lotus' multicultural arts mission into schools and the community. This year features Blossoms' largest spring artist roster and most robust calendar of activities in the program's history.

The 2018 Lotus Blossoms lineup comprises seven artists representing five countries: Crosspulse Duo (United States); Dance of Hope (Uganda); Giri & Uma Peters (United States); Kardemimmit (Finland); Madame Gandhi (United States/India); Radha Lakshmi (India); and Victor Gama (Angola).

Three of the seven artists represent significant "firsts" in Blossoms' 23-year history: Radha Lakshmi is Blossoms' first visual artist, while Dance of Hope and Giri & Uma Peters are musicians under the age of 18, offering unique opportunities to forge connections with Blossoms' K-12 audiences. This year also marks Lotus Blossoms' first engagement with incarcerated youth in a regional detention facility.

## **PROGRAMMING**

Lotus Blossoms highlights include educational outreach, public performances, and the Lotus Blossoms World Bazaar. A full list of Lotus Blossoms public events is available at <http://www.lotusfest.org/events/>

### **Educational Outreach**

Lotus Blossoms is the cornerstone of Lotus Education & Arts Foundation's year-round educational outreach and a key component of its mission to create opportunities to experience, celebrate, and explore the diversity of the world's cultures through music and the arts.

Lotus Blossoms' focus on K-12 programming bridges cultural differences between children and artists through engaging, informative, and often interactive learning experiences in schools and community organizations. This year, Lotus Blossoms will impact and inspire children during nearly 50 scheduled school visits and events in south-central Indiana, including in Bartholomew, Brown, Greene, Lawrence, Marion, Monroe, and Owen counties.

Through a new partnership with the regional juvenile-detention system, Lotus Blossoms will also bring together artists and incarcerated youth for the first time in recognition of the ample evidence supporting the value of arts programming in correctional environments.

Blossoms educational outreach also reaches into higher-education settings with artist visits to IU classrooms and engagements across several schools, departments, and student organizations.

### **Public Performances**

Lotus Blossoms also offers adults – and music-lovers of all ages – multiple opportunities catch visiting artists' performances and take a "deeper dive" with performers who augment their concerts with stories, demonstrations, and conversation. With 12 public Blossoms events scheduled in March and April, audiences will be treated to the same world-class artistry that Lotus World Music & Arts Festival patrons have come to expect from Lotus.

Compared to prior years, the 2018 calendar offers the community nearly twice as many concerts and workshops, and the vast majority of the events are free and open to the public. Venues for public Blossoms concerts range from the Buskirk-Chumley Theater and Monroe County Public Library, to Vibe Yoga, Meadowood Retirement Community, "house concerts" in private homes, and venues on Indiana University's campus – including IU's increasingly popular "First Thursday" events. Through an ongoing partnership with the IU Arts & Humanities Council, Lotus will also contribute to the spring-semester "India Remixed" festival with April programming highlighting three artists who have been influenced by Indian culture and tradition.

Lotus Blossoms also extends into Indianapolis with multiple performances for patients, families, and the general public at the Sidney & Lois Eskenazi Hospital.

Public event information is available at <http://www.lotusfest.org/events/>.

## **Lotus Blossoms World Bazaar**

The Lotus Blossoms World Bazaar is a two-day “mini Lotus Festival” that gives children and families an opportunity to explore the world with more than 30 interactive stations. The Bazaar features activities such as international crafts; salsa, tango, and Middle-Eastern dance; language discovery; food from around the world; and music ranging from Japanese folk songs to Scottish bagpipes and African drumming.

On Friday, April 6, Lotus buses over 1,000 fourth-graders to Fairview Elementary School, serving a total of 16 Monroe County schools. On Saturday, April 7, the Lotus Blossoms World Bazaar Family Day continues at Fairview Elementary from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., free and open to all families interested in deepening their children’s knowledge and experiences of cultures from around the globe.

## **ARTIST INFO**

For full artist bios, links, and work/video samples, visit [www.lotusfest.org](http://www.lotusfest.org) .  
For a complete list of public events, visit <http://www.lotusfest.org/events/>

### **Crosspulse Duo (United States)**

Bending and blending traditional and contemporary music and dance to allow rhythm to forge connections in unexpected ways, Keith Terry and Evie Ladin bring together diverse influences – jazz, world music, Appalachian banjo, step dancing traditions, and Found Sound – with delightful humor and skill. Crosspulse Duo offers captivating, seamless performances that both entertain and educate young audiences by exploring the rhythmic possibilities in the world around us. From bells and banjos to body music, boxes, and balls, Crosspulse Duo makes music from anything and everything!

### **Dance of Hope (Uganda)**

Dance of Hope strives to restore dignity and self-confidence to Ugandan children through teaching life skills, music, and the arts. The group of children, aged 7 to 16 years old, delivers a rich cultural experience packed with passionate rhythms, sensational sounds, and exhilaratingly colorful choreography. Performances explore the transformational power of music and dance to raise awareness and improve the way of life for the many children that are orphaned, displaced, or living in poverty. This vibrant music and dance spectacular features Africa’s newest cast of young performers, whose triumphant and inspiring human turnaround stories showcase a resilience born of sounds that enhance creativity, persistence, and change. Dance of Hope’s artistic director and producer, Kinobe, performed at the 2009 & 2010 Lotus World Music & Arts Festivals, as well as Lotus Blossoms in 2015.

### **Giri & Uma Peters (United States)**

This brother-and-sister duo from Nashville, Tennessee, are award-winning multi-instrumentalists who astonish audiences with their refreshing, soulful blend of old-time, roots, and bluegrass music. Giri and Uma may be young, but their musicianship and vocal harmonies showcase a creativity and originality beyond their years. Their musicianship has attracted the attention of roots music star Rhiannon Giddens and banjo greats Abigail Washburn and Bela Fleck, among others. Lotus audiences know great Americana roots music when they hear it – and the Peters won’t disappoint.

### **Kardemimmit (Finland)**

The women of Kardemimmit sing and play the Finnish national instrument – the kantele, which is similar to a zither or dulcimer. The quartet has mastered both the 15-stringed and 38-stringed kantele, producing the distinctive sounds made by the plucked acoustic instrument that blends with delicate, tight vocal harmonies in a style of singing known as “reki.” The standout contemporary Nordic ensemble – composed of Maija Pokela, Jutta Rahmel, Anna Wegelius, and Leeni Wegelius – writes music for their voices and instruments, a new folk music rooted in Finnish tradition. Lotus fan tip: Listening to Kardemimmit on disk or in video is one thing; their powerful live performance is simply remarkable.

### **Madame Gandhi (United States / India)**

Los Angeles-based musician Kiran Gandhi performs as Madame Gandhi. The drummer, activist, producer, and music industry thinker has toured with M.I.A and Thievery Corporation. Gandhi’s “The Future is Female” climbed to #8 on the Viral US Top 50 Spotify Charts following the 2017 Women’s March, and her solo EP Voices has received critical acclaim from outlets like FADER, Paper Mag, Billboard, and Milk. Madame Gandhi’s mission is to elevate and celebrate the female voice. As she declares in a spoken-word breakdown on album closer “The Future Is Female”: “I want to live in a world that is collaborative/A world that is emotionally intelligent/A world in which we are linked and not ranked!” Madame Gandhi is brought to Lotus Blossoms in collaboration with the IU Arts & Humanities Council/India Remixed Festival.

### **Radha Lakshmi (India)**

An interdisciplinary artist, Radha Lakshmi’s contemporary works of art emerged from the ‘Feminine and Earth’ and women’s ritual arts from South of India. Her span of experience and content reaches from the Folklore traditions of Southern India to the Indigenous Art of Northern Territory of Australia and to traditional and contemporary printmaking. “In Chennai, Southern India, where I grew up, women rose before dawn. It was their quiet time with the universe; free from their hectic schedule that they face during the day, women clean and draw geometrical rice powdered patterns on the ground at the entrances of their home,” Lakshmi says. “This traditional ritual of creating sacred patterns with rice powder or paste on walls or the ground is a tradition that has been passed down from mother to daughter for over two thousand years.” Lakshmi currently lives in Cincinnati and teaches ‘Creating Sacred Spaces’ workshops through art and meditation for children and adults.

### **Victor Gama (Angola)**

Victor Gama is a critically acclaimed Angolan composer, musicologist, performer, and designer of contemporary musical instruments for new music. Concept design, the selection of materials, fabrication, and composition all become part of the rigorous way Gama creates inspiring new music for the 21st century, blending current fabrication technologies with ideas, materials, and traditions inspired by the natural world. Gama’s visit to Bloomington will focus on two of his instruments: the Acrux and the Toha. The Acrux is inspired by the shape of the star constellations of the Southern Cross. Its circular keys stacked vertically function similarly as those of the “thumb piano” (also called quissange, mbira, kalimba or other names across the African continent), and it is housed in a large hemispherical structure made of fiberglass. The Toha was inspired by the nest of the weaver bird, a nest which Gama has called “one of nature’s most astounding installations.” The harp-like instrument is meant to be played by two people, just like the many birds who would make a home in the nest. Victor Gama is brought to

Lotus Blossoms through a partnership with the IU African Studies Program, IU College Arts & Humanities Institute, and Lotus Education & Arts Foundation.

## **SPONSORS**

Lotus Blossoms is made possible by the generosity of individual donors and the following community sponsors and grantors:

Arts Midwest, Brown County Community Foundation, Daily Leadership Studio, Eskenazi Health Foundation, Indiana Arts Commission, IU African Studies Program, IU Arts & Humanities Council, IU Inner Asian & Uralic National Resource Center, IU Institute for European Studies, IU School of Education, Ivy Tech Community College, National Endowment for the Arts, Raymond Foundation, Sandra Clark Counseling + Consulting, and Vibe Yoga.

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## **About Lotus Education & Arts Foundation**

Established in 1994, the Lotus Education & Arts Foundation is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization based in Bloomington, Indiana, with a mission to create opportunities to experience, celebrate, and explore the diversity of the world's cultures, through music and the arts. Lotus offers the annual flagship Lotus World Music & Arts Festival, Lotus Blossoms Educational Outreach, a vibrant Visual Arts program, and special programming and events with community partners throughout the year.