

# I Am My Story *live!*

Four Musicians . Four Stories  
One Unforgettable Night



**Stories of Survival**

**September 11, 7:00 PM**

Alex L. Parks Performing Arts Center  
9000 SW Beaverton-Hillsdale Hwy  
Portland, OR 97225



*live!*



*The*  
IMMIGRANT  
**STORY**  
*live!*

*Stories have power. At the Immigrant Story, our goal is to combat historical erasure by bringing immigrant and refugee voices to public spaces, as well as recording and archiving them for the future. We believe that the stories told today become history tomorrow.*

*With that in mind, we welcome you to The Immigrant Story Live: a chance to experience the power of storytelling.*

# I Am My Story Live!

On this historic night, The Immigrant Story presents powerful voices of survival, along with musical accompaniment.

With storytellers from Burundi, Rwanda, Cambodia and Syria, the program focuses on first-person tales of courage and fortitude. These stories of resilience in the face of unimaginable atrocities of war and genocide offer hope and inspiration at a time when we need them the most.

Tonight's program begins with a performance by renowned viola player Dijana Ihas, a professor at Pacific University who is also a survivor of the war in Bosnia. Ihas was a member of the Sarajevo String Quartet, an ensemble that played more than 200 concerts during the longest assault on a capital city in the history of modern warfare, the Siege of Sarajevo, from 1992 - 1996. To simulate the Sarajevo String Quartet, Ihas will be joined by prominent Portland-area musicians.

From 8-9 p.m., four storytellers from across the globe will share the stories of the arduous journeys that brought them to the United States.

# ***The Storytellers***

# Emmanuel Turaturanye

*Saved Twice, Once in  
Body, Once in Spirit*




Emmanuel Turaturanye was born in Ngoma district in Rwanda in 1978. As a teenager, he survived the genocide there in 1994 and went on to earn degrees in agricultural engineering and economics and management. He worked as an agronomist advising farming communities in Rwanda, while maintaining an active life in his church. In 2013 he married a missionary from the US and the couple moved to Oregon in 2015. Turaturanye currently works as a driver for Amazon. Like his father, he is a committed preacher.

# Olive Bukuru

*Making Changes  
by Degrees*



Olive Bukuru was born in Makamba, Burundi in 1996. When she was only a few months old, her family fled the genocide there, traveling on foot and carrying their three small daughters. Bukuru grew up in Nduta Refugee Camp in Tanzania. With her family, she immigrated to Oregon in 2007. She graduated from Portland State University with a major in community health in 2019 and is now working towards an MA in public health at the University of Memphis.

A portrait of Rama Youssef, a young woman with long brown hair, wearing a patterned headband and a light-colored top, smiling warmly at the camera.

# Rama Youssef

*The Fourth Mistake:  
Another Daughter!*

Rama Youssef was born in Damascus, Syria, in 1999. She grew up in the midst of war. In 2011, when she was a young teenager, the Arab Spring turned Syria into a battleground between citizens and government. Gunfights and suicide bombings tore apart her childhood. To keep her safe, Youssef was sent to live with her older married sister, herself struggling as a recent immigrant to the U.S. Without strong family support, Youssef has found her way to academic success. Next stop: law school.

A portrait of Saron Khut, a man with short dark hair, wearing a blue t-shirt, looking slightly to the side with a neutral expression.

# Saron Khut

*The Heaven  
Between*

Kacna Saron Khut was born in 1970 in a small town in Cambodia. Although his father was killed by the Khmer Rouge, who controlled the country from 1975-1979, Saron, his mother and siblings survived, finally finding shelter in a refugee camp in Thailand and immigrating to the US in 1981. Saron graduated from Portland State University in 1996. He currently runs the Mekong Bistro, where he blends Southeast Asian food and music from around the world to create a nourishing community spirit.

# *Storytelling* *Coaches*

## **Andrea White**

Andrea White, a professional actor and director, is currently stage director for Oregon Children's Theater. She is a two-time Best Supporting Actress Drammy Award winner for her work in *Two Sisters and a Piano* (Artists Rep) and *Hell Cab* (Theatre Vertigo). White has been seen on many Portland stages over the past 20 years, including in *Radio Golf*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, and *Gem of the Ocean* (Portland Playhouse). She has worked as an associate artistic director and educator at the Portland Actors Conservatory.

## **Erin Briddick**

Erin Briddick is a communication studies instructor, storytelling coach, and performance artist. In addition to solo work, Erin has worked with various performance groups, including the Neo-Futurists, Spatula + Barcode, MadTheory, and ROOMS. She grew up near Chicago, surrounded by vibrant performances, visual art, music, and stories and finds storytelling to be "a lovely middle ground between art and communication." She is currently teaching at Portland Community College and working towards her doctorate in Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

# ***The Musicians***



# The Sarajevo String Quartet

*“Outside the monster raged with flaming nostrils. But inside there was tranquility. The melancholy notes of Albinoni’s adagio drifted into every corner of the room, and out through the windows where they were consumed by the thunder of the explosions echoing through the city. The concert was beautiful. The musicians might have been playing in New York, Paris or Rome. Serb shells were ripping apart their city and their lives, but their souls were their own. Dijana’s face was serene, her hands sure and strong on the gleaming body of the viola.”*

–From “Sarajevo Roses: War Memoir of a Peacekeeper,”  
by Anné Mariè du Preez Bezdrob

The siege in Sarajevo was three and a half years of persistent attack, the longest siege of a capital city in the history of modern warfare, three times longer than the Battle of Stalingrad in World War II. But even for the bomb blasts, even for the bloodshed, still they had music.

Again and again they played — 206 concerts in the years their city was effectively imprisoned: two violinists, a viola player and a cellist who made up the venerable Sarajevo String Quartet. They performed on the front lines, in bombed-out schools and hospitals, in civic buildings, theaters, concert halls and the ruins of houses of worship. Several times each week, they walked for miles to rehearse by candlelight.

Tonight we welcome Dijana Ihas, one of the quartet’s original members, who will be joined by three Portland musicians to form a reconstruction of this historic quartet.

# Dijana Ihas



Born in Sarajevo, Dijana Ihas was drawn to the viola because its mellow voice is the closest to the sound of the human voice. She holds a PhD in Music Education (University of Oregon) and is Associate Professor of Music Education at Pacific University. She is a Founding Director and Master Teacher of the Pacific University String Project, an after-school program that provides affordable, high quality string education to community students. In 2021 the Oregon Music Educator Association named Dr Ihas “Oregon Music Educator of the Year”.

# Inés Voglar Belgique



Violinist Inés Voglar Belgique was born in Caracas, Venezuela and came to the US when she won a scholarship to Duquesne University, later earning her MA at Carnegie Mellon. Since 2004, she has been Assistant Principal Second Violin with the Oregon Symphony. She conducts the Young String Ensemble of the Portland Youth Philharmonic and plays with fEARnoMUSIC and with Palatine Piano Trio. Voglar is part of Venezuela’s Voice in Oregon, a nonprofit group that sends food aid and basic medical supplies to Venezuela.

# Keiko Araki



A native of Vancouver, BC, Keiko Araki was inspired to begin violin lessons at age seven after seeing Itzhak Perlman on “Sesame Street.” She received her B.M. from the Vancouver Academy of Music and a Graduate Performance Diploma from the Peabody Institute in Baltimore. She joined the Oregon Symphony in 2004 and frequently plays in a variety of local musical events, exploring both classical and non-classical genres. A sampling of her collaborations: the Oregon Ballet Theatre, fEARnoMUSIC, Pink Martini and Portland Taiko.



# Heather Blackburn

Heather Blackburn teaches cello and directs chamber ensembles at George Fox University. She has helped develop outreach programs with the Oregon Symphony, conducted the Rose City Jr. Youth Orchestra and participates in an ensemble for fEARnoMUSIC’s Young Composers Project. She holds a BA from Peabody Institute and an MA from Washington State University. Blackburn has played with the Oregon Symphony and is a member and founder of the Arnica String Quartet. She has performed with the Oregon Ballet Theatre Orchestra, Pink Martini and Portland Cello Project, among others.

# Thank you to our sponsors...

This free event was made possible by the generous contribution of the presenting sponsor Zidell Family Foundation with additional grants from Oregon Humanities (OH), the National Endowment for the Humanities, Oregon Cultural Trust and the Cultural Coalition of Washington County. Additional funding for this event was provided by the City of Beaverton as a part of the Beaverton Welcoming Week.



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To produce this excellent content costs money for equipment and production expenses. The Immigrant Story is an all volunteer organization and any support you provide goes directly to producing quality events, exhibitions and other programming.

In other words, our events are made possible by direct support from our sponsors, and individual donors like you. Thank you!

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# Acknowledgements

Script Coaches:	Nancy E. Dollahite Lindsey Keefer
Rehearsal:	TS McCormick Beth Lewis Bag & Baggage Productions
Storytelling Consultant:	Marie Gettel-Gilmartin
Video:	Sam Gaty NW Documentary
Editing:	Nancy E Dollahite
Graphic & Social Media:	Kate McCallum Yalini Prabhakaran Jacqueline Pagano Jessy Ferrigno Jim Lommasson
Press & Media:	Lisa Cohn Julianna Robidoux
Executive Producer:	Sankar Raman



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"Rise Against Hate Live,"  
will be at the new  
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Friday May 6, 2022.*

*The*  
IMMIGRANT

STORY