



Tanbou Kache

Diana Golden, cello
Shawn Chang, piano

I became interested in Haitian music and culture in 2011, when I began working for Open Access to Music Education for Children, run by Youth and Family Enrichment Services. At this music center for Boston's Haitian community, many of my cello students had left Haiti after the 2010 earthquake. They found that learning music helped them to adjust to their new lives and deal with trauma they had experienced. As the students learned to play traditional Haitian folk songs for community performances, I began to research Haitian art music.

With the help of Janet Anthony, former cello professor of Lawrence University and Haitian music education guru of BLUME Haiti, I joined some colleagues to teach at the École de Musique Dessaix-Baptiste in Jacmel, Haiti, during the summer of 2012. Learning more about the music of Haiti and daily life there made a strong impression on me.

My interest in Haiti continued during my doctoral studies at Rutgers University, where I devoted my research to the history of Haitian art music. To access scores for research and performance, I visited the Société de recherche et de diffusion de la musique haïtienne, an archive in Montreal dedicated to the study and promotion of Haitian music.

Haiti has had a rich and fascinating tradition of art music creation for hundreds of years. Due to issues of preservation, publishing, and other factors, many works by Haitian composers are difficult to access and have not yet been performed or recorded. We created this album of Haitian music because we believe these compositional gems are worth hearing, these composers merit recognition, and because we hope that this album will further accessibility to this unique and fascinating repertoire, enabling exploration and enjoyment of it by scholars, performers, and listeners alike.

The album's title, *Tanbou Kache*, or "hidden drum," references Mary Procopio's description (in her PhD dissertation) of Jaegerhuber's treatment of the cello in his chamber music works, in which she claims that the Vodou drum part accompanying traditional folk songs is hidden within Jaegerhuber's cello parts through rhythmically driven material. Because Jaegerhuber inspired generations of Haitian composers, I was inspired to choose *Tanbou Kache* as the title for our album.

I am sincerely grateful to Shawn Chang for his invaluable collaborative partnership. I am also truly thankful for the extensive contributions of Ryan Streber, Jessica Slaven, Gina Samson, Julio Racine, Rudy Perrault, Claude Dauphin, Adele Golden, Gregory K. Williams, and the Société de recherche et de diffusion de la musique haïtienne. Many thanks also to Céline Boulben, Rebecca Wallen, Pierre Lidar, Subito Music Corporation, Carl Fischer, Jean-Claude Nazon, Françoise Forest, Stephen Sas, Linda Sinanian, Janet Anthony, Tom Clowes, and to the many other generous supporters of this album, without whom this recording would not be possible.

—Diana Golden



Liner Notes

With the exception of the composer Ludovic Lamothe (1882–1953), whose work is principally piano-based, *Tanbou Kache* showcases Haitian cello pieces and paints an ever-changing, historical picture of the leading composers of the Haitian national school of classical composition. The search for a national Haitian aesthetic, which began in the 19th century with Edmond Saintonge (1861–1907), really took off thanks to Justin Élie, who established it as a principle in 1905, and Ludovic Lamothe. The movement developed over the course of the 20th century through Werner Jaegerhuber, Frantz Casséus, and Carmen Brouard, who died in 2005. A second and then a third generation have since followed in the footsteps of these pioneers. This CD also features three contemporary composers from that third generation—Julio Racine, Daniel Bernard Roumain and Jean “Rudy” Perrault—to represent this fascinating repertoire of Haitian classical music.

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Justin Élie (1883–1931): *Légende créole*. Élie composed some piano works, but his orchestral works, especially, clearly demonstrate the ability of classical music to serve as a vessel for Haiti’s cultural specificities. Within this context, *Légende créole* is a delightful little chamber music masterpiece, originally composed for violin and piano. The transposition from violin to cello flows naturally since both instruments belong to the string family. The piece links two contiguous sections: one, melancholic and full, crowned with a pizzicato arpeggio from which a glissando springs forth, in the image of a shooting star seized by terrestrial gravity, showing the story is taking place in the evening; the other, on a folkloric children’s song, “*Zonbi bann mannan*,” represents a game of hide and seek subtly translated by a stretto between the cello and the piano. The end of the piece grows melancholic once again, as if this children’s game in the middle of the piece were only a fleeting evocation of lost innocence.

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Werner Jaegerhuber (1900–1953): *Petite Suite pour violoncelle*. Jaegerhuber’s very diverse body of work comprises symphonies, operas, oratorios, accompanied melodies, and chamber and solo works—including the *Petite Suite pour violoncelle*. This composer’s usual inspiration is Vodou; he cites its tunes and references its deities through related melodic motifs. And yet this is not the case in the *Petite Suite* in C minor, which is full of chromatic liberties which ring like an homage to Johann Sebastian Bach, the famous 18th century German composer. Unlike Bach’s suites which link a prelude to five court and peasant dances of that period, Jaegerhuber’s suite has four movements that are meditative in character without a predominant melody, with the exception of the fourth movement, in which the fugue’s subject is more clearly defined. As for the first movement, for which the Haitian composer had not given a title, it definitively plays the role of a “Prélude” to the three subsequent movements. These brief, contrapuntal meditations span the full range of the cello by means of fragments alternating between high and low pitches as if the cello, in dialogue with itself, were raising its own questions and providing its own replies. These works by Jaegerhuber in the German Baroque style were composed with pedagogical motivations.

Therefore, this *Suite pour violoncelle seul*, based on counterpoint and fugue, was without doubt written for Robert Durand, a cellist from Les Cayes who became a pioneer of Haitian chamber music.

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Frantz Casséus (1915–1993): *Suite haïtienne*. A renowned master of classical guitar in the last third of the 20th century, Frantz Casséus composed especially for his chosen instrument. However, some of his pieces were written for voice accompanied by guitar. As a composer, Casséus had a rare ease at creating his own folklore thanks to his perfect assimilation of Haiti's folkloric musical language. Several of his own melodies are today confused with traditional tunes. *Suite haïtienne*, originally composed for solo guitar, is arranged here for cello and piano by the composer Julio Racine. It contains some of these invented folk tunes while bringing together a large number of brief, pre-existing Haitian traditional motifs, pursuant to the compositional method known as centonization in musicological analysis. Composed in 1953, *Suite haïtienne* was played by Casséus himself for a Folkways Records recording in 1954, and then published as a musical score by the New York publisher Ricordi in 1956. It is composed of four movements entitled (in Racine's version) "*Petro*," "*Yanvalou*," "*Mascarón*," and "*Combite*." Movements 1 and 3 result from the combination of melodic motifs from the oral folk tradition. Movements 2 and 4 are based on invented folkloric melodies: "*Fi nan bwa*," taken from lyrics in another work by Casséus entitled *Haïtiennesques*; and "*Mèsi bon Dye*," which became a hit since its interpretation by Harry Belafonte accompanied by Casséus himself. In terms of rhythm, the third movement differentiates itself by the omnipresence of the *cinquillo*—five syncopated beats in a duple meter, the rhythm of the Haitian *méringue*—characteristic of the playing of the *mascarón* drum, a typical instrument of Rara dances, from which the movement takes its name.

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Carmen Brouard (1909–2005): *Duo Sentimental*. Born in Port-au-Prince, she died in Montreal, where she established herself after leaving Haiti in 1977. As a student of Justin Élie, then of Georges Hugon, a professor at the Conservatoire de Paris between 1956 and 1959, Brouard closes the period of the first generation of Haitian nationalist composers. She was inspired by modernist features that she picked up during her later training in Paris. Her Haitian period (1957–1976) was founded on the opposition between classical tonality and the pentatonic modes, the former representing Western culture and the latter symbolizing African heritage. Her Canadian period (1976–2005) was marked by an increasing usage of the whole tone scale enhanced by parallel chords of fourths and fifths, which evoke a sound of broken bells to counteract the harmonious, romantic and backward-looking influence of Chopin, which she found too dominant for her taste in representing Haitian classical music. *Duo Sentimental*, between dreamlike meditation and tempestuous turmoil, between exquisite languor and convulsive eruptions, is in this modernist vein. It was composed for one of her Canadian students, a cellist who studied the fundamentals of musical language and composition with her.

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Julio Racine (born in 1945): *Sonate à Cynthia*. Racine began his studies at the *Conservatoire national de musique d'Haïti* at the age of 15. There he was taught by Depestre Salnave (flute) and Solon Verret (piano and harmony) before going to further his education at the University of Louisville in Kentucky. Upon returning to Haiti, he conducted the *Orchestre philharmonique de Sainte Trinité* for nearly thirty years. This composer, among the most prolific and imaginative of contemporary Haitian art music, is represented twice on this CD: first, with the *Suite haïtienne* by Frantz Casséus which he arranged for cello and piano, and secondly, with his *Sonate à Cynthia pour violoncelle et piano*, a work dedicated to his musician daughter. His music is characterized by the use of modal scales, chords of ninths and thirteenths, and dissonances rendered appealing thanks to the use of syncopated rhythmic cells, as in jazz. These methods create an eclectic, modernist style in Racine's works. Composed in 2014, this *Sonate* incorporates three movements—1. Allegro Spirito; 2. Cantilena; 3. Allegro. They lend themselves to programmatic choreography evocative of Vodou rituals: the two allegros are marked by abrupt and frenetic rhythms, while the central cantilena, with its pentatonic motifs, suggests a state of exhaustion between two trances.

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Daniel Bernard Roumain (born in 1970): *Femièl*. In contrast to the other composers presented in *Tanbou Kache*, Daniel Bernard Roumain is the first composer from the national school of Haitian composition to be born in the diaspora, in the United States. He began his musical training with the violin at the age of 5. Holding a doctorate in composition from the University of Michigan, he adopts a postmodern musical voice, one of happening performance art and of eclecticism, while drawing on multiple sources of popular Afro-American music, the cybernetics of sound, and the Haitian imagination. *Femièl* comes from an immense 80-minute piece entitled *One Loss Plus* for electric violin and electric keyboard, from the pop-up recital genre that the composer-performer-installation artist practices. The meditative pace of this piece relies on minimalist, bimodal and bipartite musical material: 1. a hexachord (six first sounds of a scale in F minor) forming a succession of intervals played on the keyboard; and 2. a second hexachord in A flat major whose augmented 4th is reminiscent of Bartok's scale, forming the melodic material of the cello. The pizzicato execution of the second repeating theme, often syncopated, evokes here the playing of the drum, an imitation highlighted by the muted timbre of the cello, just as in the metaphorical title of this CD: *Tanbou Kache*. The piece finishes with a cello soliloquy played with the bow, finding its way in solitude.

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Jean “Rudy” Perrault (born in 1961): *Still Around; Brother Malcolm...* Rudy Perrault is a Professor at the University of Minnesota Duluth where he teaches violin, coaches chamber music, and conducts the orchestra. A composer within the Haitian tradition, Perrault also finds his inspiration in contemporary humanist movements. Thus, his *Brother Malcolm...* for cello and piano paraphrases an imaginary “conversation between Martin Luther King and Malcolm X” about Barack Obama's inauguration to the presidency. The piece explores some audacious polymodal trajectories enhanced by vigorous chromatic impulses. The arabesques of the

cello reveal an intimate understanding of compositional style for strings. The alternating tempestuous contrapuntal passages, homophonic progressions, and high, middle and low registers mark this “animated language between equally intelligent persons” that was referred to by Beethoven to describe the spirit of chamber music in general and string quartets in particular. Similar colorations of timbre are fortunately equally present in *Still Around*, a work dedicated to the cellist and composer Aleksander Tengesdal. In the form of a theme and variations, the piece paraphrases Ruth Schmidt-Bauemler’s poem, which proclaims the autonomy of being against defeatism without denying a providential presence. The predominant succession of the theme’s musical notes corresponds to their names—the French “Ré,” the Latin “Ut,” the German “H,” etc., forming a cryptogram spelling of the poet’s name: R-Ut-H, S-C-H, etc. The exposition of the theme is followed by six variations on progressively more elaborate rhythms. At the end of the journey, one returns to the atmosphere of the beginning, formulated by block chords followed by a coda with pizzicato arpeggiated chords. The cryptogram of *Still Around* is a nod to the spirit of the works on this CD which all incorporate a subtly hidden Haitian dimension.



Performers: Diana Golden, cello; Shawn Chang, piano

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Tanbou Kache

Justin Élie:

1. *Légende créole* transcribed for cello and piano 5:10

Werner Jaegerhuber: *Petite Suite* for solo cello

2. I. [Prélude] 4:31

3. II. Menuetto: Andante 3:30

4. III. Allegro 3:39

5. IV. Tema contrapunctistica 1:48

Frantz Casséus: *Suite haïtienne* arranged for cello and piano by Julio Racine

6. I. Petro 3:20

7. II. Yanvalou 2:54

8. III. Mascaron 5:08

9. IV. Combite 2:14

Carmen Brouard:

10. *Duo Sentimental* for cello and piano 5:06

Julio Racine: *Sonate à Cynthia* for cello and piano

11. I. Allegro Spirito 3:13

12. II. Cantilena 4:07

13. III. Allegro 3:19

Daniel Bernard Roumain:

14. *Femièl* from *One Loss Plus* transcribed for cello and piano 5:21

Jean “Rudy” Perrault:

15. *Still Around* for solo cello 5:22

16. *Brother Malcolm...* for cello and piano 7:47

Total time: 66:30



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