



MIDDLEBURY  
PERFORMING ARTS SERIES

P R E S E N T S

# *Dreamers' Circus*

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2023

7:30 PM ET

WILSON HALL, MCCULLOUGH STUDENT CENTER



# **dreamers' CIRCUS**

**Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen, Violin and other instruments  
Nikolaj Busk, Accordion, Piano, and Synthesizers  
Ale Carr, Cittern, Kannel and other instruments**

## *Program*

Please note that this evening's performance will be introduced from the stage by the performers. The nature of dreamers' circus music is essentially spontaneous, and the band prefers to change and vary their program from show to show.

*There will be one 15-minute intermission*

*This performance is made possible with generous support  
from the Paul Nelson Performance Endowment and the Rothrock Family Residency Fund.*

*Patrons are requested to turn off all electronic devices prior  
to the performance, and refrain from texting.  
Photography and the use of audio or video equipment are prohibited.*



## **A few words from Dreamers' Circus**

Hello and welcome to our performance as part of our fall 2023 series of concerts. We are excited to be back travelling and touring internationally after what has been a challenging time for all of us. It's been a while since we've been in the United States.... What will you, the audience, think of what we play? How will you react? Well, we're about to find out....

First, let us tell you a little about Dreamers' Circus, who we are, and what we do.

Our approach to music sees us challenge the norms of the traditional music we were brought up with and attempt to shape it into how we imagine Nordic music can sound in 2023. We certainly do not seek to turn our back on our folk music roots and, having grown up with traditional music, we value it as an important part of our musical make-up. But we also discovered early on that traditional music cannot stay static, that change is inevitable and even, we might argue, beneficial. So, in a sense, we view our roots in the rich traditions of Danish and Swedish folk music as a point of departure and refuse to accept tradition as a straitjacket. We investigate new angles and consciously seek to challenge not just ourselves as performers and composers but also the norms and sometimes even the structures of the music we play. With Dreamers' Circus, no two performances are quite the same, and we enjoy the fact that today's show can be quite different from yesterday's. We have learned to enjoy our curiosity about the music and have come to value the importance of listening. Close listening to what we each do is an important part of our engagement with the music and with each other. We hope that you, the audience, might also listen closely and join us as we react to one another's playing and spontaneously respond. Our name hints at the possibilities and magic of the imagination and we hope that you will open yourself up to the colors and images we seek to create with our soundscapes.

– Ale, Nikolaj, Rune

The three members of Dreamers' Circus first encountered each other at a late night, post-concert jam session in Denmark over ten years ago. They immediately hit it off both on a musical and a personal level. Since then, the band has toured all over the Nordic countries and Europe, they've played the Sydney Opera House in Australia, and have made a number of tours to Japan. Dreamers' Circus has shared stages with folk luminaries such as The Chieftains, Sharon Shannon, and Vasen, and have been invited to compose and perform music for stage and television shows in Denmark. A Danish critic observed that "playing violin, piano, accordion, and cittern, they display a playful inventiveness allied with a Nordic sensibility that is at once refined and cool."

Dreamers' Circus has issued 5 CDs:

'A Little Symphony' (2013) released on GoDanish GO0913

'Second Movement' (2015) released on GoDanish GO0315

'Rooftop Sessions' (2018) released on Vertical Records VERTCD112

'Blue White Gold' (2020) released on Vertical Records VERTCD122

'The Lost Swans' (2022) released on Vertical Records and GoDanish GO0322



## *Biographies*

### *Dreamers' Circus*

**Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen, Violin**

**Nikolaj Busk, Piano & Accordion**

**Ale Carr, Cittern**

A new driving force in Nordic world music is the young Danish trio Dreamers' Circus. Contemporary and endlessly innovative in their approach, they draw inspiration from the deep traditions of folk music in the region and reshape them into something bright, shiny and new. Dreamers' Circus are: Nikolaj Busk (DK) on piano and accordion, Ale Carr (SWE) on Nordic cittern, and Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen (DK), also of the Danish String Quartet, on violin.



Dreamers' Circus display inventiveness and talent in their approach to performances that include music from Denmark and Sweden as well as Finland, Norway, and the far reaches of the windswept Faroe Islands. The ensemble has won five prestigious Danish Music Awards and was named 2023 Artist of the Year by the Danish national classical radio channel P2, becoming the first non-classical group to earn that honor. The trio has toured throughout Europe and beyond, with performances in Japan and the Sydney Opera House in Australia. Their first US tour in 2019 opened ears, eyes, minds, and hearts. The trio collaborates regularly with the Danish String Quartet and the Copenhagen Philharmonic and performs with other orchestras.

In the 2023-2024 season, Dreamers' Circus is presented in the United States by the Middlebury College Performing Arts Series, Princeton University Concerts, Musical Instrument Museum in Phoenix, Cal Poly Arts, Philharmonic Society of Orange County, UCLA Center for the Art of Performance, Noe Music, and the Mondavi Center at UC Davis. Recent US highlights include performances presented by Celebrity Series of Boston, San Francisco Performances, Detroit Chamber Music, La Jolla Music Society, and Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, DC.

In 2020, Dreamers' Circus released their 5th album *Blue White Gold* on Vertical Records and was awarded Album of the Year by the Danish Music Awards 2020 and the 2021 Carl Prize for Composer of the Year (Roots music category). *Lost Swans* was released in 2022 and is available on vinyl as a double album alongside *Blue White Gold*. In May 2022, Dacapo Records released *Langt ud' i skoven*, a collaboration with Denmark's DR National Children's Choir, featuring old

Danish children's songs in new arrangements by Dreamers' Circus. In Fall 2022, the trio released *Handed On*, a published book of 58 of their own pieces of Nordic folk music, arranged for varying degrees of difficulty, along with professionally recorded videos to accompany each tune.

Dreamers' Circus views their traditional roots as a point of departure and knows tradition should not be a straitjacket. This adventurous attitude, coupled with their outstanding musicianship, has brought the band to the forefront of the Nordic folk and global music scene.

To contact Dreamers Circus, please visit [www.dreamerscircus.com](http://www.dreamerscircus.com) or their North American management, Kirshbaum Associates Inc. at [www.kirshbaumassociates.com](http://www.kirshbaumassociates.com)



### **Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen - violin and other instruments**

Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen is from Roskilde on the outskirts of Copenhagen in Denmark. He started playing violin when he was five years old. In 2001, he founded the Danish String Quartet, one of the leading chamber music quartets in Europe. This Grammy-nominated ensemble has won many prizes and awards. Rune's father is from the Faroe Islands that lie in the north Atlantic between the west coast of Norway and Iceland. His own upbringing was in a family that valued traditional music, song, and dance. Before he devoted his life to full-time touring with Dreamers' Circus and the Danish String Quartet, Rune was leader of the Copenhagen Philharmonic Orchestra while still in his early 20s.



Rune plays a Giovanni Baptista Guadagnini violin which is generously loaned to him by the Goof Foundation. His bow is by Eugene Sartory (1910).

### **Nikolaj Busk - accordion, piano, synthesizers**

Danish born Nikolaj Busk has been a significant figure on the Danish music scene for a number of years now and is in much demand as a composer and music arranger across a number of musical genres. He has won no less than 13 Danish Music Awards for his releases and collaborates with various artists. Nikolaj has written music for other ensembles, choirs, orchestras, and theater performances.



Nikolaj's accordion is by Pietro Mario.

**Ale Carr - cittern, kannel, and other instruments**

Hailing from the southern Swedish region of Skåne, Ale Carr was raised in a family of folk musicians and dancers. His own style incorporates a strongly developed rhythmic drive coupled with a sensitivity that always seeks to serve the music. He is recognized as one of Scandinavia's most talented folk musicians and leading innovators on plucked string instruments. Also a highly respected composer, he was presented with a Danish Music Award as Composer of the Year in 2015. Apart from his work as a member of Dreamers' Circus, he also toured with the folk music group Basco.



Ale plays a Nordic Cittern, designed by the Swedish luthier Christer Ådin. He uses Thomastik-Infeld strings.



*Photos pages 5-6 by Aaron Kimball, in Middlebury's Robison Hall, March 2020.  
Photos pages 1 and 4 by Joel Poulsen and Søren Lynggaard Andersen respectively.*



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of the Performing Arts Series Society (PASS)  
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Sign language interpretation or real-time captioning available at select shows.



Large-print programs are available at most performances.



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### **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

*Middlebury College sits on land which has served as a site of meeting and exchange among indigenous peoples since time immemorial. The Western Abenaki are the traditional caretakers of these Vermont lands and waters, which they call Ndaकिनna, or "homeland."*

*We remember their connection to this region and the hardships they continue to endure.*

*We give thanks for the opportunity to share in the bounty of this place and to protect it.*