

“The InStep Quartet presents consistently high-quality, audience-pleasing music from a wide variety of genres with professionalism and flair.”



Julian Smedley's musical career began in London, England as a contract artist for the Decca recording label. During that time he recorded with Viv Stanshall, Stevie Winwood and Neil Innes, appeared on European TV and was a regular on BBC Radio and in TV orchestras. Re-locating at first to Washington State, he played with guitarist Scott Nygaard & taught jazz violin at Cornish Institute where he played with resident artists Art Lande, Carl Berger, Ralph Towner, Gary Peacock & Gil Evans. A resident of California since 1985, Julian has collaborated with Paul Horn, David Grisman, played with Dan Hicks recorded with gypsy jazz groups The Hot Club of San Francisco, Duo Gadjo and Vive Le Jazz. In 2006 his group The Magnetic Poets appeared at the Turin Winter Olympics with Chico Freeman and Stephen Kent. Recent projects include arrangements for the San Francisco Symphony, CD's 'Meeting Like This' made with his wife Alison Odell, and 'A Common Language' with guitarist and bike-riding buddy Mike Wollenberg.



Benito Cortez started violin at 8 years old. Largely self-taught as a youngster, he pursued more formal violin and chamber music training with Dale King while attending Santa Clara University, from which he graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in electrical engineering. Benito's creative life has been a balance between engineering and music. While he was engineering audio test equipment, designing sound for stage theatre, and devising software and prototype electronics for high tech children's toys, Benito was also a recording session sideman, orchestra concertmaster, chamber musician, and jazz musician. He designed the sound for 1996 holiday hit toy "Tickle Me Elmo." Benito resides and teaches violin in San Francisco and plays gypsy swing jazz and salsa with several San Francisco Bay Area ensembles, including Panique!, the Topsy Gypsy Trio, and Oriente Salsa.



Katrina Wreede, composer and violist, has been a professional symphony musician, a jazz violist, a member of the ground-breaking Turtle Island String Quartet, a concert soloist, a belly dancer, a police fingerprinter, a rhinestone-studded continental violinist for royalty, celebrities, and politicians, a non-denominational wedding officiant, a player of Tango Nuevo, Persian, and Central European music and a composer for soloists, chamber ensembles, orchestras, film, and dance, sometimes collaborating with other artists to create works about social injustice. She also created and performs with her Living Wind Chimes, an audience-interactive set of brass chimes that she sets up in unusual indoor and outdoor venues including Berkeley Botanical Gardens, Oakland Federal Building, and the Mendocino Headlands. Her works are published by Vlazville Music and performed internationally, including Mr. Twittys Chair, performed regularly by the Ahn Trio and the David Parsons Dance Group. Her most recent recorded works appear on two Vox Novus 60 x 60 CDs and the Pegasus Quartets Healing Heart CD.

Former Cirque du Soleil cellist **Marcie Brown** enjoys musical exploration. While earning a Master's Degree from Manhattan School of Music in classical cello, she frequented New York City jazz clubs and played on the streets with musicians from many countries. She worked on a second Master's Degree in improvisation and composition from the University of Massachusetts, where she toured and recorded with Dr. Yusef Lateef.



From 2002-2004, she performed over 600 shows with Cirque de Soleil's "O", and in 2005, she joined the Tucson Symphony Orchestra for a season. Ms. Brown has shared the stage with many notable musicians: Ray Charles, Luciano Pavarotti, Andreas Bocelli, Dizzy Gillespie and Itzak Perlman. She played with the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the Houston Pops Orchestra and the Florida Symphony. She teaches workshops in improvisation for string players, and also privately in her Alameda home, where she lives with her husband and seven year old daughter.

Ms. Brown's new CD, "Butterfly Girl," is an eclectic compilation of original compositions and improvisations influenced by the music of India, Africa, Brazil and Ireland. It was released in March 2009 on Classical Gypsy Records.