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**UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY ANNOUNCES FIVE NEW  
ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE FOR 2015-2016 SEASON**

ANN ARBOR, MI (August 19, 2015) — The **University Musical Society (UMS)** is proud to announce the 2015-2016 **UMS Artists in Residence**. Full bios for each artist start on page 2 of this release.

2015-2016 UMS Artists in Residence

- Literature: Russell Brakefield
- Visual Arts: Siobhan McBride
- Literature: Helena Mesa
- Performing Arts/Literature: Andrew Morton
- Performing Arts/Music: Ben Willis

The UMS Artists in Residence program is a public engagement project whereby applications were solicited from regional artists wanting to take “residence” at UMS performances. The program first launched during the 2014-2015 season.

Five artists (including visual, literary, and performing artists) have been selected to take “residence” at UMS performances, using these experiences as a resource to support the creation of new work or to fuel an artistic journey. Residents will receive complimentary tickets to select UMS performances; a \$500 stipend; gatherings with fellow residents; and behind-the-scenes access to UMS staff and artists, when available. In return, UMS asks that artists share their artistic journeys via residency entrance and exit interviews and on the [umslobby.org](http://umslobby.org) blog; participate in select UMS Education & Community Engagement events; and share artistic work generated during the residency when possible. Rights to all artistic work produced as a result of the residency will remain entirely with the artists.

“While UMS brings incredible performing artists from around the globe to Ann Arbor, we’re also deeply committed to the creative community right here in Michigan,” said Ken Fischer, UMS President. “The UMS Artists in Residence program ensures that artists creating work right here in our own backyard have access to everything they need to inspire, fuel, and inform their projects. Artists play a vital role in our communities — they inspire us, they challenge us, they provide alternate perspectives. We’re just doing our part to ensure that Ann Arbor and Southeast Michigan continues to be a place where artists are supported and can happily call home.”

### **2015-2016 UMS Artists in Residence Bios**

#### **RUSSELL BRAKEFIELD – Literature**

Russell Brakefield received his MFA in poetry from the University of Michigan’s Helen Zell Writers’ Program. He lives in Ann Arbor where he teaches writing at the University of Michigan and works as a bookseller and as the managing editor for Canarium Books. His most recent work appears in *The Southern Indiana Review*, *Hobart*, and *Language Lessons: An Anthology* by Third Man Records.

Learn more: <http://www.russellbrakefield.com/>

#### **SIOBHAN McBRIDE – Visual Arts**

Siobhan McBride was born in Seoul, South Korea and currently lives in Ann Arbor. She received her MFA in painting from the University of Pennsylvania in 2005. She was an artist in residence at Yaddo, Jentel, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council’s Workspace Program, Roswell Artist-in-Residence Program, and the Vermont Studio Center. Her work has been exhibited at NURTUREart, the Pelham Art Center, Eight Modern, and this past winter at Miami Project with DC Moore.

Learn more: <http://www.siobhanmcbride.com/>

#### **HELENA MESA – Literature**

Helena Mesa is the author of *Horse Dance Underwater* and a co-editor for *Mentor & Muse: Essays from Poets to Poets*. Her poems have appeared in various literary journals, including *Indiana Review*, *Pleiades*, *Third Coast*, and *Puerto del Sol*. She has been a fellow at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Hambidge Center for the Creative Arts & Sciences, and Writers in the Heartland. She lives in Ann Arbor and teaches at Albion College.

Learn more: <http://helenamesa.com/>

### **ANDREW MORTON – Performing Arts / Literature**

Andrew Morton's plays include *Bloom* (a winner at the 2013 Write Now Festival and winner of the 2013 Aurand Harris Memorial Playwriting Award), which received its world premiere at Flint Youth Theatre in May 2014 and was subsequently published by Dramatic Publishing, Inc. Other works include: *February* (shortlisted for the 2007 Royal Court Young Writers Festival), *Drive-Thru Nativity*, and the collaborative projects *State of Emergency*, *EMBERS: The Flint Fires Verbatim Theatre Project*, and the upcoming *The Most [Blank] City in America*, premiering at Flint Youth Theatre in April 2016. As a community artist and educator, Morton has worked with a range of organizations across the globe, including working alongside Salvation Army community counselors in Kenya to incorporate participatory theatre into their work with people living with HIV/AIDS. While based in the UK, he worked with several educational theatre companies and was the Education Officer at the Blue Elephant Theatre where he ran the Young People's Theatre and the Speak Out! Forum Theatre projects. Morton is currently based in Flint, Michigan where he teaches at the University of Michigan-Flint and is Playwright-in-Residence at Flint Youth Theatre.

Learn more: <http://www.andrewmortonplaywright.com/>

### **BEN WILLIS – Performing Arts/Music**

Ben Willis is a bassist, improviser, and composer whose affinities lie in collaborative projects, new music, improvisation, and the merging of cross-disciplinary elements. He released an album of solo double bass compositions, *Egret/Flatlander*, in summer of 2015. His jazz-rock band, *Lovely Socialite*, will be releasing their second album, *Toxic Consonance*, in fall of 2015. He lives in Ypsilanti, MI, and performs often throughout the Midwest.

Learn more: <http://www.benwillis.us/>

*The University Musical Society is an independent non-profit affiliated with the University of Michigan, presenting over 70 music, theater, and dance performances by professional touring artists each season. One of the oldest performing arts presenters in the country, UMS is committed to connecting audiences with performing artists from around the world in uncommon and engaging experiences. With a program steeped in music, dance, and theater, UMS contributes to a vibrant cultural community by presenting approximately 60-75 performances and*

*over 100 free educational activities each season. UMS also commissions new work, sponsors artist residencies, and organizes collaborative projects with local, national, and international partners.*

For more information, please visit **[ums.org](http://ums.org)** or **[umslobby.org](http://umslobby.org)**.

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