

10 MOSS  
ARTS  
CENTER

10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY SEASON



**VT** VIRGINIA  
TECH.

## *SMALL ISLAND, BIG SONG*

Wednesday, April 17, 2024, 7:30 PM

Street and Davis Performance Hall, Anne and Ellen Fife Theatre



#LiveWhereYouLove



**Skip Slocum & Peg Warren**

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# SMALL ISLAND, BIG SONG

## PERFORMERS

**Putad**, vocals, tapelik, kabosy bass, garamut, kundu, ravanne, and dance

**Emlyn**, vocals, ravanne, calabash, marravan, triangle, and dance

**Mathieu Joseph**, vocals, ravanne, calabash, marravan, triangle, and dance

**Sammy**, vocals, kabosy, jejy, valiha, sodina, garamut, shakers, and dance

**Airileke Ingram**, vocals, garamut, kundu, kulaps, warup, conch, and kwakunba

**Mea Joy Ingram**, vocals, garamut, kundu, kulaps, warup, and ukulele

**Yuma Pawang**, vocals, jawharp, and flute

## CREATIVE AND PRODUCTION TEAM

**BaoBao Chen**, co-founder, producer, manager,  
cinematography, and stage manager

**Tim Cole**, co-founder, artistic director, visual design, cinematography,  
front-of-house sound engineer, and VJ

**Putad, Emlyn, Sammy, Airileke Ingram, Mea Joy Ingram,  
Yuma Pawang, Mathieu Joseph, and Tim Cole**, songwriters

**Kui Taruzaljum**, stage sound engineer

**Nini Liu**, tour manager

Support for this performance is provided by the  
Charles and Dorothy Lambert Endowment for the Arts.



This engagement of *Small Island, Big Song* is made possible through the ArtsCONNECT program of Mid Atlantic Arts with support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

# PROGRAM NOTES

*Small Island, Big Song* is a music, film, and performing arts project uniting the islands of the Pacific and Indian Ocean through artistic collaboration, a contemporary and relevant musical statement from a region that shares an ancient seafaring heritage and the impact of our changing sea.

Be prepared to have your view of islander music shattered as leading artists of the blue continent, the Pacific and Indian Oceans, unite in a powerful and timely cultural statement, a voice for our changing seas — Our Island.

*Small Island, Big Song* is a collaboration between artists of island nations, drawing from their shared seafaring heritage to unite the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The performance brings together some of the most prominent artists of Taiwan, Madagascar, Mauritius, Papua New Guinea, and Tahiti, who have made a choice to maintain the cultural voice of their people, to sing in the language, and to play the instruments of their land. These unique lineages mixed with their diverse contemporary styles — roots reggae, beats, folk, and spoken word — establish a contemporary musical dialogue between cultures, drawing on their ancestral lineage to confront contemporary issues with a hope-driven vision of the future. Live visuals filmed across 16 island nations on a three-year field trip by the project's co-founders creates "Beautiful cinematography and incredible music [...] one coherent, jaw-dropping piece," as described by Rob Schwartz of *Billboard*.

Motivated by their concerns for the ocean, one couple — Taiwanese theatre producer BaoBao Chen and Australian music producer and filmmaker Tim Cole — quit their jobs after hearing the predicted effects of climate change to the oceanic nations and spent the following eight years recording and filming with over 100 artists on 16 island nations, layering up songs from island to island. Outcomes include two award-winning albums, a feature film, an impact program, and two world-touring productions.

Music critic Tom Orr noted in the *RootsWorld* review, “*Small Island, Big Song* sound like one very big, very happy family doing what they do best while helping get the word out on a most serious issue.”

## REFLECTING ON PLANET EARTH

Welcome to the Moss Arts Center. A series of events within our 2023-2024 season has been curated to invite consideration of our environmental landscapes and the impacts of climate change. To date, more than 6,450 participants in the New River Valley have engaged with the following artists:

**Winona LaDuke**

October 9, 2023

**Cirque Mechanics**

January 31, 2024

**Elizabeth Kolbert**

February 27, 2024

**Sō Percussion with Caroline Shaw and Shodekeh**

March 20, 2024

We hope tonight’s performance, the final of this series, creates an opportunity to continue to think deeply about our world.

**Ruth Waalkes**

Associate Provost for the Arts

Executive Director, Moss Arts Center

# CO-FOUNDERS' NOTES

“How can we respond to the issue of our era, our planet’s future as theatre and music creators?”

Culture is the framework through which we understand our relationship to our social and physical environments. It is our shared patterns of behavior, interactions, and beliefs. Fluid, ever-evolving — whether we are aware of it or not, it is the core of our guiding personal narratives, our sense of self.

Our dominant global culture is failing us. Our planet’s natural ecosystem, on which we depend for our very survival, is collapsing around us. The evidence is tangible, lived, and indisputable. Yet we fail to respond with the resolve and urgency that nature, that our future generations demand.

Those of the ocean have maintained successful communities on fragile islands for countless generations, and their cultural lineage embodies this. *Small Island, Big Song* is an ensemble of such people; artists who against the mainstream have made a choice to sing foremost in the language and maintain the musical sensibilities of their heritage. They are the songkeepers continuing an unbroken cultural lineage back to their first ancestors to step, sleep, die, and be born on their homelands. Their music embodies this knowledge, and as with music itself, it is only revealed through movement as it is shared. Through your listening, it lives.

Some of us will lose our island homes to rising sea levels, and all of us are witnessing the death of our reefs and disappearing sea life. It’s soul-destroying. Our response is to share that loss in song, supporting each other and you, the listener, but also to celebrate nature and our cultures. We do live in extraordinarily beautiful places and we want to share that, too. We have to, for our island we all share.

— *Small Island, Big Song* co-founders *BaoBao Chen*  
and *Tim Cole*





# UNPACKING ONE SONG

## *GASIKARA* (SMALL ISLAND MIX)

Back in 2012 when we were in Vanuatu filming *Vanuatu Women's Water Music*, we discovered an incredible heritage they shared with island communities spread across the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Most of these communities were established by the ancient seafarers who originally set sail from Taiwan thousands of years ago.

We're not anthropologists but theatre and music producers — our focus is creating contemporary and creative collaboration across this region.

One of the songs born of this collaborative process is *Gasikara*, which began when we visited the Gabagaba (Drumdrum) village on the southern coastline of Papua New Guinea. Responding to the loss of fish due to coral bleaching, master drummer Airileke Ingram recorded a driving rhythm using his village's *kundu* and *garamut* drums.

Other coastal villages we visited were experiencing the same loss of their vital coral reefs, one of which was Madagascar's west coast. Sammy, a world music legend and dedicated multi-instrumentalist, contributed musical backing using a rare and threatened instrument, the *jeju*. In Taiwan, Indigenous Paiwanese singer Sauljaljui sung a powerful chant, and for Australia's Great Barrier Reef, Torres Strait Islander songman Mau Power rapped of the wisdom to protect the reef through maintaining custom practice.

The song traveled with us to many other islands before the version you now see on YouTube and our album, but on stage, you'll see the live version, featuring Airileke Ingram, Sammy, and Emlyn.



Watch the *Gasikara* (Small Island Mix) music video on the *Small Island, Big Song* YouTube channel.





## SONGWRITER'S NOTE

"My approach to music is that it comes from the beat first. Like the heartbeat, the first rhythm, the first sign of life. The first drum I heard was the *gaba* from my grandfathers, then came the log drum, the *garamut*, from my neighbors. At a grassroots level we use it for communication, for ceremonies, not for entertainment. Now we communicate on a world wide scale... to connect, to reconnect and reunite.

Rhythm reminds me of family, even though we are separated by oceans the rhythm is like home. It speaks of youth and ancestry, history and future. To keep us connected in our daily life to the heart ... family."

— *Airileke Ingram*

*This is the first performance of Small Island, Big Song at the Moss Arts Center.*



## GUEST ESSAY

*This essay is part of a series of writings by Virginia Tech faculty, staff, and community members that contextualize Moss Arts Center visiting artist performances.*

The sea is rising around the globe. It is increasing faster in some places due to local conditions like land sinking and low elevation. Higher sea levels lead to bigger tides and storm surges from tropical storms and hurricanes, further eroding the beaches and causing land loss and property damage. These impacts tend to exacerbate preexisting socioenvironmental issues such as economic and housing inequality, loss of wetlands, and public health issues. In some places, they lead to secondary consequences such as higher insurance rates, financial losses, supply chain interruptions, infrastructure damages, and commute disruptions. In other areas, such impacts might be more profound, causing social disarticulation and loss of culture, heritage, social values, and livelihoods. The extent and types of impacts depend on the geographic location and numerous local factors, with urban locations often faring better in adaptation and resilience efforts than remote, isolated rural places.

In urban areas, coastal changes manifest themselves differently than in rural places. For example, research in Hampton Roads, Virginia has documented extensive flooding from “the sea, from the sky, and the stormwater system,” stressing a highly built environment with fewer porous surfaces that would otherwise allow for water infiltration.<sup>1</sup> There is too much water everywhere, making “the reality of a long-term existence very questionable.” Local stories collected from residents often include homeowners paying high taxes and insurance premiums for properties that are losing value and cannot sell. They also mention flood-induced neighborhood decline due to abandoned properties, neglected open spaces, and damaged infrastructure. Similarly, in Maryland’s rural communities on the Eastern Shore, residents spoke about more water everywhere: in their yards and on the roads, parking lots, and fields. However, problems there receive less visibility and assistance, often absorbed by vast, natural, sparsely populated spaces. Many older homes in fishing villages sit right on the water, some already being “half in water and half out” with “every second or third home [with a] ‘for sale’ sign.” Such homes often end up abandoned once residents can no longer cope with flooding.

In remote coastal Alaska, coastal changes permeate all segments of remote Indigenous societies, changing their ways of life. The words Indigenous people have used to describe environmental changes in research focus groups are simple but powerful:

“We cannot go anymore on the ice [from fear of falling through].”

“The ocean used to be way down there. Now it’s close to the houses. The ocean is washing up the houses.”

<sup>1</sup> Quotations and content in this essay are obtained from the authors’ research and primary data collection described in Bukvic and Harrald (2019) and Garland, Bukvic, and Maton (2022).

# GUEST ESSAY, cont.

“Things are different than what I remember when I was a child. We used to go [on the ice] the first week of October, but now we don’t have ice in October. It rained last year in October.”

Changes in weather patterns and temperature cause more flooding, sea ice and permafrost melt, erosion, and tundra fires, affecting boating, fishing, hunting, and whaling, all at the core of Indigenous people’s subsistence living and traditions. People are noticing more mud everywhere due to more precipitation and permafrost thawing, trapping kids and vehicles in otherwise permanently frozen ground. Still, some community members are more concerned with sociocultural changes eroding traditional ways of life than climate change, just like the sea erodes the shoreline. Dependency on imported food, improved housing, electricity, modern fishing and hunting tools, gasoline-powered vehicles, and communication technology is already profoundly changing the culture and values in these remote coastal places. It is unclear how climate change will continue contributing to these existing cultural shifts.

Coastal communities have three options to respond to more frequent and severe coastal flooding. They can protect their communities by hardening the shore with seawalls and levees or installing green features such as wetlands and living shorelines. They can learn how to live in synergy with flooding but stay safe by elevating homes, roads, and infrastructure and using flood-proof construction materials. Or, they can decide to permanently relocate if options to prevent flooding seem ineffective, too expensive, or difficult to implement. This last option is the most difficult and controversial, especially for communities with a strong sense of place, culture, and heritage. The decision to move depends on many deeply personal factors, such as place attachment, local mentality, connection to water, and coastal culture. Many coastal

places assert their right to stay to preserve their social cohesion, values, and traditional way of life. Remote or historic communities where residents have been deeply embedded into the local culture and environment might be unable to replicate their way of life anywhere else, “even just a few miles away.” Others might be willing to relocate, especially after experiencing repetitive flood damages, resulting in emotional trauma and financial loss. Even the most self-sufficient communities that expect little help from outsiders “still eventually need water and power.” And sometimes, when challenged by profound shocks, they quickly learn “they are [a] much more divided community” when it comes to a collective response to a problem of this scale. Or, flooding might end up being “the final straw that breaks the camel’s back” in the decision to move, alongside the preexisting pull of being closer to family, better job opportunities, or health and education services.

These examples in Virginia, Maryland, and Alaska are unified by their attachment to the major landmass of North America, of course. What then for the tiny nations in the Indo-Pacific foregrounded in *Small Island, Big Song*? What tradeoffs must the people of Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, and Taiwan, among others, consider as they similarly face the effects of sea level rise in radically different geographic contexts? As you experience tonight’s performance, I encourage you to consider these questions and the roles we all can play in responding to this universal challenge.

*Anamaria Bukvic is an assistant professor in the Department of Geography and an associate director of the Center for Coastal Studies at Virginia Tech. Bukvic uses qualitative and quantitative mixed-method approaches to study adaptation, resilience, security, population displacement, and relocation in coastal rural and urban settings prone to flooding. Her projects have been funded by the National Science Foundation, the National Center for Atmospheric*

# GUEST ESSAY, cont.

*Research, and the Commonwealth of Virginia, resulting in 27 peer-reviewed publications over nine years. She is a recipient of the 2023 Faculty Research Honors Award by the Southeastern Division of the American Association of Geographers.*

## BIOGRAPHIES

### **EMLYN (CREOLE HERITAGE, MAURITIUS), SONGWRITER AND PERFORMER**

Featured on CNN, Emlyn is leading a wave of performers across the Indian Ocean who are proudly reclaiming their unique rhythms and cultural mix. Written with a reactive pen and sung in Mauritian Creole, her songs express her concerns for her island's environment. Emlyn brings the infectious grooves of *Sega* with the sounds of her traditional frame drum, *ravann*, which originated from the rhythms of African/Madagascan people during the slave trade.

*Small Island, Big Song* fell in love with *Sega* music during field trips to Mauritius in 2016 and 2017, finally collaborating with Emlyn in 2020. She has been part of the album since and never misses a show!

### **PUTAD (AMIS HERITAGE, TAIWAN), SONGWRITER AND PERFORMER**

Powerful, entrancing, unapologetic — all words used to describe Putad's engaging stage presence. In the proud spirit of her Indigenous Amis heritage, Putad unites ancient vocal traditions

with the raw energy of grunge, rock, and punk, as heard in her and her brothers Wusang and Linken's band, Outlet Drift. In the *Small Island, Big Song* ensemble, she brings this energy, her soaring voice, and rock bass together with her coastal Amis ancestry and love for the ocean!

*Small Island, Big Song* met Putad through the online project Global Music Match in 2020. She has since become one of the featured artists on the album *Our Island*, touring across four continents.

## **SAMMY (MERINA HERITAGE, MADAGASCAR) SONGWRITER AND PERFORMER**

Sammy followed his passion for Madagascar's musical heritage by mastering and learning how to make most of the island's instruments. His efforts came to the notice of the U.K.'s world music scene as his band, Tarika Sammy, gained international recognition, becoming a regular on major festival stages and being acknowledged as one of the world's Best Ten Bands, alongside U2, by *Time Magazine*.

*Small Island, Big Song* met Sammy at his house during its inspiring field trips to Madagascar in 2016 and 2017. He has been featured in both albums and concert tours around the world since 2018.

## **YUMA PAWANG (ATAYAL HERITAGE, TAIWAN), SONGWRITER AND PERFORMER**

Yuma Pawang, a member of the Atayal tribe of Taiwan, is a multidisciplinary artist expressing her thoughts on Atayal, cultural preservation, transformation, essence, and social equity in film, music, painting, and performance. With Taiwan's respected Minang



# BIOGRAPHIES, cont.

performance group, Pawang was invited by Indigenous nations of Northern Europe for a cultural exchange. This experience, along with studying film performance, made her aware of the significance of cultural practice in the context of Atayal life, where written language was historically limited. *Small Island, Big Song* first met Yuma as a special guest at a concert in Taiwan in 2023, and she is now part of the family.

## **AIRILEKE INGRAM (MOTU HERITAGE, PAPUA NEW GUINEA), SONGWRITER AND PERFORMER**

Airileke Ingram grew up between the shores of both Papua New Guinea and the Top End, Australia. Ingram is a musical pioneer and a sonic fighter for freedom, traversing a timeless sonic globe without frontiers. He is a percussionist, producer, composer, activist, and, in the words of Britain's *Songlines* magazine, "cause for celebration." Ingram is a master drummer with one foot in the world of traditional drumming of Melanesia and his other in the modern world of beat production and hip-hop.

*Small Island, Big Song* co-founder Tim Cole and Ingram have been long-time collaborators; they met up again during *Small Island, Big Song*'s field trip to Papua New Guinea in 2016. Ingram's driving beats are featured in both *Small Island, Big Song* albums.

## **MEA JOY INGRAM (MOTU HERITAGE, PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND AUSTRALIA), SONGWRITER AND PERFORMER**

Mea Joy Ingram comes from a long line of drummers and dancers. Ingram was taught by her father, master percussionist Airileke Ingram, in the tradition of Manu's garamut, Cook Island pate,

and Gabagaba Motu mavaru. The garamut drumming of Papua New Guinea was traditionally an artform dominated by men; however Mea Joy Ingram, having just turned 18, represents the new generation of female log drummers emerging from Oceania.

## **MATHIEU JOSEPH (CREOLE HERITAGE, MAURITIUS), CHOREOGRAPHER AND PERFORMER**

Mathieu Joseph has been a professional dancer and choreographer since the age of 14, when he was discovered breakdancing on the suburban streets of Port Louis, Mauritius, by renowned choreographer Stephen Bongarçon. Quickly embedding himself in Bongarçon's SRDance, Joseph's dedication earned him the gold medal for dance at Les Jeux de la Francophonie in 2009. This led to a succession of shows and companies, including choreographing *Di Sel*, a tribute to the salt workers of Mauritius, which won the Les Jeux de la Francophonie in France in 2017.

## **TIM COLE (AUSTRALIA), DIRECTOR, MUSIC PRODUCER, AND FILMMAKER**

Tim Cole is an Australian music producer and filmmaker who is passionate about cross-cultural arts projects. Cole has produced numerous albums, films, and concerts for Australian Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, and Pacifica artists, including Archie Roach, Telek, and Shellie Morris. He has also toured internationally with Circus Oz for 8 years as theatre and sound designer with seasons on Broadway in New York City and West End in London. He was a senior music producer at Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) before beginning *Small Island, Big Song*. Cole has received a Churchill fellowship and invitations to speak

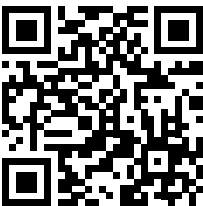
# BIOGRAPHIES, cont.

at the United Nations headquarters, the Association of Performing Arts Professionals conference in New York City, and WOMEX.

## BAOBAO CHEN (TAIWAN), PRODUCER AND MANAGER

Having produced and managed *Small Island*, *Big Song*'s two multimedia concert productions, two award-winning albums, and documentary — as well as curating world tours across 18 countries in Europe, the U.S., Asia, and Oceania — BaoBao Chen is one of Taiwan's most prominent producers of cross-cultural arts projects and an ISPA (International Society for the Performing Arts) fellow 2023-25. A vivid storyteller and fluent in English and Mandarin, she has a social media following of 130K+, and has been invited to speak at TEDx, WOMEX, the Association of Performing Arts Professionals conference in New York City, Stanford Live, and numerous arts festivals.

## TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!



We'd love your feedback on this performance. If you complete the short survey, you can enter for a chance to win two tickets to *Celebrating 20 Years of the Crooked Road* on Friday, July 12, 2024. [bit.ly/small-island-feedback](https://bit.ly/small-island-feedback)

# ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

**MONDAY, APRIL 15, 2024**

**LEARNING LUNCH SERIES**

Members of *Small Island, Big Song* spoke about their artistic journeys with students at the APIDA + Center.

**WORKSHOP: TRASH TO MUSIC**

In conjunction with our Jamming with Junk campaign, this workshop with Pulaski County Public Schools coached children in how to create musical instruments from recyclable materials.

**UNIVERSITY CLASS VISIT: CLIMATE CHANGE SOCIAL IMPACTS**

This geography class engaged with the guest artists in a conversation on adaptation, resilience, and arts-based activism in response to climate change.

**TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2024**

**UNIVERSITY CLASS VISIT: MUSIC AS GLOBAL CULTURE**

*Small Island, Big Song* artists spoke about their cultures' distinct musical traditions.

**PANEL: CLIMATE CHANGE: OUR RESPONSE AS ARTISTS AND SCIENTISTS**

Virginia Tech geographer Eranga Galippathi, geoscientist Leonard Ohenhen, and *Small Island, Big Song* producer BaoBao Chen discussed how they are shedding light on sea level rise and offering paths to address it.

# ENGAGEMENT EVENTS, cont.

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2024**

## **SCHOOL-DAY PERFORMANCE**

Students in grades 3-7 — largely from Montgomery and Floyd counties and Roanoke City — attended this free performance tailored for youth by *Small Island, Big Song*.

## **POST-PERFORMANCE Q&A**

Hear from the musicians in *Small Island, Big Song* in this open discussion.

*Special thanks to the APIDA + Center, Ati: Wa:oki Indigenous Community Center, Anamaria Bukvic, Chris Campo-Bowen, Melissa Faircloth, Eranga Galippaththi, Ann Goette, Nina Ha, Mae Hey, Carrie Kroehler, Kathryn Miller, Thomas Miller, Leonard Ohenhen, Patty Raun, Victoria Reichard, and Desiree Shelley*

## **GO DEEPER**

BaoBao Chen and Tim Cole created *Small Island, Big Song* to connect Pacific and Indian Ocean island nations, which they see as “part of one big, 5,000-year-old diaspora” (*Afropop Worldwide*). What do you perceive to be similarities and differences among the Indigenous cultures foregrounded in the performance?

# We are conducting a survey, and we want to hear from YOU!

Whether you visit all the time or this event is your first time, your opinions matter.

Everyone who completes the survey will have a chance to be selected for one of 10 \$50 Amazon Gift Cards.



Take the survey online at  
[bit.ly/moss-survey-2024](https://bit.ly/moss-survey-2024)  
or scan the QR code.

*If you have questions and would like more information, please contact Katie Gehrt at [kgehart@vt.edu](mailto:kgehart@vt.edu).*







# IN THE GALLERIES

*Through Sunday, April 21*

## **MESSENGERS**

**Leslie Hewitt**

**Tarrah Krajnak**

**Rodrigo Valenzuela**

All galleries

*Messengers* explores the use of photography to communicate — not only through visual aesthetics, but to transmit more profound personal, cultural, and societal messages. Photography acts as a conduit for the artists' hybrid interdisciplinary approaches, enabling them to convey rich and multifaceted narratives, evolving through their formal and material languages.

*Tarrah Krajnak; Self-Portrait as Weston/as Charis Wilson, 1934/2020, 1925/2020, 2020 (detail); from Master Rituals II: Weston's Nudes series; silver gelatin print; 10 x 8 inches; ed. of 5, 2 AP; exhibition copy on view; © Tarrah Krajnak, courtesy Zander Galerie*



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# K-12 PROGRAMS AT THE MOSS ARTS CENTER

At the Moss Arts Center, we believe that arts experiences are a crucial part of a child's education. We've been dedicated to providing opportunities for children at no cost since we opened in 2013. A wide array of Moss programming and experiences inspire, engage, and empower students of all ages and backgrounds. This season, we're offering five school-day matinee programs, in-school workshops and performances, and gallery tours with professional artists for learners of all ages.

**Learn more at [bit.ly/moss-K12](http://bit.ly/moss-K12).**

## DID YOU KNOW?

Founded in 2014 as a project of Moss Arts Center, the Itraab Arabic Music Ensemble (whose name translates as "enchantment through music") explores traditional and contemporary repertoire from the Middle East, North and East Africa, and Gulf regions. The community ensemble performs vocal and instrumental music representing art, folk and popular musical styles, and occasionally original compositions by Itraab members. The ensemble also engages locally with community groups, including the Blacksburg Refugee Partnership, the YMCA, and various cultural groups and centers on campus. Join us here at the Moss Arts Center tomorrow, Thursday, April 18, at 7:00 p.m. for the ensemble's free spring concert.

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Virginia Tech acknowledges that we live and work on the Tutelo/Monacan People's homeland, and we recognize their continued relationships with their lands and waterways. We further acknowledge that the Morrill Land-Grant College Act (1862) enabled the commonwealth of Virginia to finance and found Virginia Tech through the forced removal of Native Nations from their lands in California and other areas in the West.

# LABOR RECOGNITION

Virginia Tech acknowledges that its Blacksburg campus sits partly on land that was previously the site of the Smithfield and Solitude Plantations, owned by members of the Preston family. Between the 1770s and the 1860s, the Prestons and other local White families that owned parcels of what became Virginia Tech also owned hundreds of enslaved people. Enslaved Black people generated resources that financed Virginia Tech's predecessor institution, the Preston and Olin Institute, and they also worked on the construction of its building.

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**CJ Jessie**, *senior technician*

**Jackson Stitzer**, *senior technician*

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