



## NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Yvonne Mendez at 413-545-4161 or [yvonne@admin.umass.edu](mailto:yvonne@admin.umass.edu)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 15, 2015**

**WHAT:** **JAZZ LEGENDS SERIES honoring trombonist CURTIS FULLER.**  
**Moderator: JAVON JACKSON (Hartt School of Music)**

**WHEN:** **Wednesday, May 6, 2015 at 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.**

**WHERE:** **Fine Arts Center Atrium Lobby**

**TICKETS:** **Free Admission**

**IMAGES:** Hi-res photos available for download: <https://fac.umass.edu/Online/PressRoom>

**WEBSITE:** [www.umass.edu/fineartscenter](http://www.umass.edu/fineartscenter)

### ***VJN'S JAZZ LEGENDS SERIES: A CONVERSATION WITH FAMED TROMBONIST CURTIS FULLER***

The Valley Jazz Network began the Jazz Legends Series as a way to recognize the achievements of distinguished masters of jazz. These are musicians that made a definite mark on jazz but often their contributions go unnoticed by contemporary audiences. The details of their lives, the memorable anecdotes, their stories are often a valuable historical resource for jazz. The relaxed format is designed to feel like a conversation at home, learning more about the musician and about jazz. Last year we enjoyed a charismatic conversation/performance with pianist Emery Smith. This year, we honor trombonist **CURTIS FULLER**.

In a career that has spanned over 60 years, dozens of recordings and countless performances, Blue Note Records' artist Curtis Fuller is widely acknowledged as one of the most influential and respected trombonists in the history of jazz, playing with jazz greats like Yusef Lateef, Miles Davis, Sonny Clark, John Coltrane, Donald Byrd, Paul Chambers, Cannonball and Nat Adderley, Dizzie Gillespie, Count Basie, Art Blakey and more. He is a founding member of Jazztet and played many years with the Jazz Messengers. He is a recipient of the NEA Jazz Masters Award.

Javon Jackson, saxophonist and Director of Jackie McLean Institute of Jazz at the Hartt School of Music, will conduct a lively conversation with Curtis Fuller, as well as show historical film footage. Come ready to marvel at the world of jazz and the life of Mr. Curtis Fuller. The Fine Arts Center will honor him with a Distinguished Achievement Award. Light refreshments will be served. The event takes place at 7:30 p.m. in the Fine Arts Center Atrium Lobby.

#### **ABOUT CURTIS FULLER**

Curtis Fuller studied music in high school and while living in Detroit, was a friend of Paul Chambers and Donald Byrd, and also knew Tommy Flanagan, Thad Jones and Milt Jackson. After army service between 1953 and 1955 (when he played in a band with Chambers and brothers Cannonball and Nat Adderley), Fuller joined the quintet of Yusef Lateef, another Detroit musician. In 1957 the quintet moved to New York, and Fuller recorded his first sessions as a leader for Prestige Records.

Alfred Lion of Blue Note Records first heard Fuller playing with Miles Davis in the late 1950s, and featured him as a sideman on record dates led by Sonny Clark and John Coltrane; Fuller's work on Coltrane's Blue Train album is one of his best-known recorded performance. Fuller led four dates for Blue Note, though one of these,

an album with Slide Hampton, was not issued for many years. Other sideman appearances over the next decade included work on albums under the leadership of Bud Powell, Jimmy Smith, Wayne Shorter, Lee Morgan and Joe Henderson (a former room mate at Wayne State University in 1956). Fuller was also the first trombonist to be a member of the Art Farmer-Benny Golson Jazztet, later becoming the sixth man in Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers in 1961, staying with Blakey until 1965. In the early 1960s, Fuller recorded two albums as a leader for Impulse! Records, having also recorded for Savoy Records and Epic after his obligations to Blue Note had ended. In the late 1960s, he was part of Dizzy Gillespie's band that also featured Foster Elliott. Fuller also went on to tour with Count Basie.

He co-led the quintet Giant Bones with Winding in 1979 and 1980, and played with Art Blakey, Cedar Walton, and Benny Golson in the late '70s and early '80s. During the '80s, Fuller toured Europe regularly with the Timeless All-Stars, and performed and recorded with the revamped Jazztet in addition to leading a fine session for Savoy in 1993.

Fuller continues to perform and record, and is a faculty member of the New York State Summer School of the Arts (NYSSSA) School of Jazz Studies (SJS). He is a recipient of the NEA Jazz Masters Award.

### **ABOUT JAVON JACKSON**

Javon Jackson came into international prominence as a member of Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers. As a member of Blakey's Jazz Messengers, Javon toured and made many recordings with the legendary drummer. In addition to Blakey, Jackson has toured and recorded with Elvin Jones, Freddie Hubbard, Betty Carter, Cedar Walton, Ron Carter, Donald Byrd, Dr. Lonnie Smith, Richard Davis, Bobby Hutcherson, Curtis Fuller and Stanley Turrentine.

As a recording artist, Jackson has appeared on over 125 recordings. Additionally, he has developed a formidable career as a leader, recording and touring throughout the world. Javon's current musical group, The Javon Jackson Band, incorporates many styles including jazz, funk, R&B and rock.

*Lucky 13*, Javon Jackson's thirteenth recording as leader, is a combination of five recently composed originals, one cover from the songbook of Stevie Wonder and three selections with the iconic soul jazz pianist, vocalist and composer Les McCann. Jackson and McCann have been touring together for the past five years and quoting Jackson, "Les is a living legend and it is a blessing to have him on tour with the Javon Jackson Band." Their live experience is captured beautifully from a performance of "Compared to What" in Washington, DC at the Kennedy Center in 2008 included on *Lucky 13*. The trio for this recording are three young lions that as Jackson puts it emphatically, "All three have dynamic careers ahead of them." This trio consists of Joel Holmes-piano, Corcoran Holt-bass and McClenty Hunter-drums.

Recently commissioned by the Syracuse International Film Festival, Javon composed a full length score for the Alfred Hitchcock film, "The Lodger". An early outing by the master of suspense, "The Lodger" is a silent film based on the story of the hunt for Jack the Ripper. Javon debuted his original score at the festival and one composition from that score, "Sun Up", is performed on *Lucky 13* by Jackson and the trio.

### **ABOUT VALLEY JAZZ NETWORK (VJN)**

The VJN is an outreach arm of the Fine Arts Center, focused on preserving the legacy of jazz. The VJN achieves this through its online presence (the VJN Facebook page is a virtual listing of jazz events throughout the Pioneer Valley!) small concerts called "informances", educational programs, and listening parties in various community venues in Amherst, Greenfield, Holyoke and Springfield. A listening party is a small and intimate event, where attendees have a chance to talk with jazz musicians, and listen to the music that has inspired them. VJN sponsored listening parties and intimate receptions with Tia Fuller, Jane Monheit, Grace Kelly, Regina Carter and most recently, vibraphonist Warren Wolf.

### **ABOUT THE FAC**

The Fine Arts Center, located on the UMass Amherst campus, is a presenter of music, dance, theater and the visual arts, bringing hundreds of outstanding and provocative artists to the Pioneer Valley for over 35 years.