

THE 2016 SOLOS & DUOS SERIES PRESENTS:

Vijay Iyer/Wadada Leo Smith Duo

The Solos & Duos Series, produced by the Fine Arts Center at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, begins its 15th season with a concert by **Wadada Leo Smith** and **Vijay Iyer, Tuesday, September 27, 8:30 pm, Bezanson Recital Hall**. Tickets are \$15 and \$7 (students), and are available through the FAC box office, 413-545-2511 and on line at www.fineartscenter.com.

a cosmic rhythm with each stroke, recently released on ECM Records, features pianist Vijay Iyer and the musician he has described as his “hero, friend and teacher”, trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith. Iyer has previously played in Smith’s Golden Quartet, but the present album is the first documentation of their duo work. The centerpiece of the album is the spellbinding title suite, dedicated to the innovative Indian artist, Nasreen Mohamedi (1937-1990). Iyer and Smith premiered the work at New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art in March 2016 during a major exhibition dedicated to Mohamedi’s art and writings.

Born in Leland, Mississippi in 1941, Wadada Leo Smith's early musical life began in high school concert and marching bands and the Delta blues and jazz music traditions. Since *Creative Music-1*, his 1972 album on his own Kabell label, he has released 50 recordings as a leader. He belongs to the first generation of players to come out of Chicago’s hugely influential Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians and has played with virtually every important jazz innovator of the last 40 years. He recently received an honorary Doctor of Arts degree from California Institute of the Arts, where he taught from 1993 until 2014.

“Smith has such a commanding mastery of delicate forms that the organic waves of sound he created turned everyone's heads inside out,” wrote Byron Coley in *The Wire* about a solo performance. “During his two sets, the big room took on the feel of a religious retreat, and rivers of karmic goodness flowed like the purest honey.”

Born in 1971, composer and pianist Vijay Iyer has been described by Pitchfork as “one of the most interesting and vital young pianists in jazz today.” He was named *DownBeat* magazine’s 2015 Artist of the Year and 2014 Pianist of the Year, and in 2013 was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship. In 2014 he began a permanent appointment as the Franklin D. and Florence Rosenblatt Professor of the Arts in the music department at Harvard University.

“There’s probably no frame wide enough to encompass the creative output of the pianist Vijay Iyer,” writes Nate Chinen.

He has released 20 albums covering remarkably diverse terrain, including *Break Stuff* (2015), featuring his Trio with Marcus Gilmore on drums and Stephan Crump on bass. The group, hailed by *PopMatters* as “the best band in jazz,” was also recognized as the 2015 Jazz Group of the year in the *Down Beat* International Critics Poll. A polymath whose career has spanned the sciences, the humanities and the arts, Iyer received an interdisciplinary PhD in the cognitive science of music from the University of California, Berkeley; his writing has appeared in a wide range of publications, both popular and academic.