



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 4, 2015

WHAT: **Informance on Contemporary Jazz**
WHEN: **Wednesday, March 25, 2015 at 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.**
WHERE: **The newly-renovated Unitarian Universalist Society, 121 North Pleasant Street, Amherst, MA**
TICKETS: **\$15 Suggested Donation at the door**
IMAGES: Hi-res photos available for download: <https://fac.umass.edu/Online/PressRoom>
WEBSITE: www.umass.edu/fineartscenter

INFORMANCE ON CONTEMPORARY JAZZ WITH THE JASON ROBINSON QUARTET

The **Valley Jazz Network** has created its own unique format called *informances* that focus on sharing information equally through lecture and performance/demonstration. Our past *informances* have included sessions on African Rhythms in Jazz, Latin Jazz and now Contemporary Jazz.

The music of American saxophonist and scholar **Jason Robinson** thrives in the fertile overlaps between improvisation and composition, acoustic music and electronics, tradition and experimentalism. Initially a devotee of post-1960s jazz and creative music, Robinson's music is a modern amalgam of cutting-edge trends in jazz practice and electroacoustic music. Robinson is a critically-acclaimed, distinct voice in a new generation of creative musicians in equal dialogue with jazz, popular music, experimental music, and electronic music. Arlene Avakian, a member of the VJN Steering Committee comments, "Art does not remain static and great artists move it forward. Those on the cutting edge develop new languages that take us beyond the familiar, out of our comfort zone, pushing us where we may not want to go. Jazz, like all great art forms, has always changed but our ears are not always ready for the new sounds. Through this *informance* the VJN hopes to demystify contemporary jazz music and make it more accessible to jazz listeners."

During the *informance* Jason Robinson and his quartet will perform and field questions from the audience about *contemporary jazz*. Robinson's quartet consists of: Jason Robinson, tenor sax; Liberty Ellman, guitar; Devin Hoff, bass; George Schuller, drums

ABOUT JASON ROBINSON

"Robinson's compositions manage to draw a straight line through bop, Duke Ellington, Ornette Coleman and Eric Dolphy straight into the modern day with acute-angle swing, blues bluster and memorable themes that seem to scratch at the back of the mind with familiarity without resorting to quotation or imitation."

- Shaun Brady, DownBeat Magazine

Saxophonist, composer and scholar Jason Robinson is a leader in the field of eclectic, innovative jazz. He performs regularly as a soloist (acoustically and with electronics), with his group the Janus Ensemble, and in a variety of collaborative contexts. He has performed at festivals and prominent venues in the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Europe and/or recorded with many artists including Peter Kowald, George Lewis, Anthony Davis, Drew Gress, Rudresh Mahanthappa, Marty Ehrlich, Eugene Chadbourne, Earl Howard, Toots and the Maytals, Groundation, J.D. Parran, Contemporary Jazz Orchestra (at Pearl's, San Francisco), the La Jolla Symphony, the San Francisco Mime Troupe, among others.

In 2002, Robinson released his second album as a leader, *Tandem (Accretions)*. A conceptual “duo” album, *Tandem* features Robinson in a variety of settings with a stellar cast of experimentalists including George Lewis, Anthony Davis, the late German bassist Peter Kowald, and others. Garnering much praise, *Tandem* was chosen as a “critic’s pick” for 2002 in *JazzTimes Magazine*.

Fall 2010 marked a watershed in Robinson’s output as a leader. He released three concurrent albums showcasing an enormous breadth of creative work, including *The Two Faces of Janus (Cuneiform)*, featuring a New York-based ensemble that includes Drew Gress, Liberty Ellman, George Schuller, Marty Ehrlich and Rudresh Mahanthappa; *Cerulean Landscape (Clean Feed)*, featuring the long time collaboration of Robinson and acclaimed pianist and composer Anthony Davis; and *Cerberus Reigning (Accretions)*, the much anticipated second installment of the “Cerberus” trilogy, featuring Robinson’s solo electroacoustic music.

As a scholar, Robinson’s work unpacks the relationship between improvised and popular musics, experimentalism, and cultural identity. He has published articles and reviews in *Ethnomusicology*, *Jazz Perspectives*, and *Critical Studies in Improvisation/ Études critiques en improvisation*. Robinson is an Assistant Professor of Music at Amherst College and holds a Ph.D. in Music from the University of California, San Diego. While in San Diego, Robinson was a founding member of Trummerflora, a musician collective dedicated to supporting creative music in and beyond Southern California. Robinson’s work in Trummerflora resonates with his broader interest in presenting experimental music to new listener and musician communities. He believes that the commercially-driven conservatism of the mainstream music industry marginalizes musical practices that fall outside of the “mainstream”. These pressures and processes leave very little room for experimental music in local communities; Trummerflora is devoted to creating a space within local communities to enable people to hear and enjoy different music.

A West Coast transplant now living in New England, Robinson is married to Stephanie Robinson, an acclaimed performer, composer, and electronic musician.

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.