

UMass**Amherst**

Fine Arts Center

**THE GOLDEN THREAD: A SONIC LOVE LETTER TO BROTHER YUSEF
LATEEF in Five Movements**

Yusef Lateef: A Centennial Celebration

Friday, October 9, 7:30 p.m. ET

Live Virtual Performance



The UMass Fine Arts Center is supported by the New England Foundation for the Arts through the New England Arts Resilience Fund, part of the United States Regional Arts Resilience Fund, an initiative of the U.S. Regional Arts Organizations and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, with major funding from the federal CARES Act from the National Endowment for the Arts.

UMass Amherst occupies the traditional land of the Nonotuck tribe. We would also like to acknowledge our neighboring Indigenous nations: the Nipmuc and the Wampanoag to the East, the Mohegan and Pequot to the South, the Mohican to the West, and the Abenaki to the North.

Alexis Marcelo lives in the Bronx, NY on the traditional land of the Munsee Lenape and Wappinger.

Gwen Laster lives in Brooklyn, NY on the traditional land of the Munsee Lenape and Canarsie.

Fay Victor lives in Brooklyn, NY on the traditional land of the Munsee Lenape and Canarsie.

Adam Rudolph lives in Cherry Hill, NJ on the traditional land of the Lenni-Lenape.

Douglas Ewart lives in Minneapolis, MN on the traditional land of the Wahpekute and Sioux.

ABOUT YUSEF LATEEF

Born on October 9, 1920, Yusef Lateef was a Grammy Award winner and NEA Jazz Master, who released over 80 recordings as a leader. Lateef played tenor saxophone, flute, oboe, bassoon, and wind instruments from around the world, and composed for orchestra, string quartet and film. In 1975 he earned his Ed.D. from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and taught at UMass and Hampshire College for many years. In 1992, he established his own record company, YAL Records, and published novellas, plays, poems, an autobiography as well as books on music. He was an exhibited visual artist and is the subject of two films, "Brother Yusef," and another in production. Yusef Lateef died on Dec. 23, 2013, at the age of 93, having impacted generations of artists and leaving a rich legacy of creative work.

To mark the centenary of Yusef Lateef's birth, the UMass Fine Arts Center celebrates his life with a multi-faceted, online project that includes: a live virtual concert, an exhibit of his visual art, a photo gallery of images, readings of scholarly papers relating to Lateef, dramatic readings of his fiction, film excerpts about Lateef, and 100 short video responses to Lateef by a cross-section of musicians, writers, former students, friends, colleagues and family.

Five improvisers each play short solo pieces to launch the exhibition: 1) Alexis Marcelo (piano); 2) Gwen Laster (violin); 3) Fay Victor (voice); 4) Adam Rudolph (percussion); 5) Douglas Ewart (reeds).

Alexis Marcelo (piano) is a pianist who creates a soulful New York City sound. He instinctively delivers a sound representative of a wide range of influences. Alexis's training began when he began studying with JD Parran (AACM) at the Harlem School of the Arts and continued at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst where he studied composition with Yusef Lateef. Alexis has performed nationally and abroad at various festivals and prestigious venues, including the North Sea Jazz Festival (Yusef Lateef), the Detroit Jazz Festival (Yusef Lateef), Etnafest (Italy-Yusef Lateef), Mediawave Festival (Hungary-The Hub), and Alice Tully Hall in New York City. Alexis has also recorded multiple albums with former professor and mentor Yusef Lateef. Recently Alexis recorded his first album and can be heard on current recordings of Adam Rudolph's Go Orchestra & Moving Pictures, and a new recording with Malcolm Mooney (Can). Alexis Marcelo is a very unique pianist who looks to provide a soulful experience.

Gwen Laster (violin) is a nationally acclaimed musician who has been the recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts, Jubilation foundation, Puffin foundation, Arts Mid-Hudson, Lila Wallace and the Cognac Hennessy 1st place Jazz Search. She's a native Detroiter whose creative influences come from the Motor City's exciting urban and classical music culture. Gwen started improvising and composing because of her parents' love of jazz, blues, soul and classical music and her inspiring music teachers from Detroit's public schools.

Laster relocated to NYC after earning two music degrees from the University of Michigan. She began collaborating, performing and recording with internationally-known creative and commercial artists, that include Anthony Braxton, Nona Hendryx, Aretha Franklin, Wadada Leo Smith, William Parker, Danny Elfman, Sun Ra Arkestra, Tyler the Creator, Gladys Knight, Emeline Michel, Andrea Bocelli, David Foster, Alicia Keys, Rhianna, Shaggy, Andrew Baba Lamb, Natalie Cole, Solange, Mark Anthony, J Lo and Shakira at President Obama's Inaugural Neighborhood Ball. She's the visionary founder

of the Creative Strings Improvisers Orchestra (CSIO), a music education ensemble rooted in teaching young strings players improvisation, composition and global ensemble music.

Fay Victor (voice) is an improvising vocalist, composer, lyricist and educator riding all the chasms and seams of musics that are improvisational and conversational in nature. The Brooklyn, NY (USA) based sound artist/composer hones a unique vision for the vocalist's role in jazz and improvised music. Victor encompasses a distinctive vocalizing, language and performing approach with the foundation of the jazz vocal idiom, now encompassing an "everything is everything" aesthetic bringing in references that span the globe. Victor sees the vocal instrument in itself as full of possibilities of sound exploration, the voice is a direct and powerful conduit for language and messages in an improvising context. All of these ideas aim to push the vocal envelope to forge greater expressive possibilities. In Victor's 10 critically acclaimed albums one can hear the through line of expansive expression leading up to Victor's most recent release, BARN SONGS (Northern Spy Records) with her Chamber Trio featuring Darius Jones (alto saxophone) & Marika Hughes (cello) that was released in November 2019.

Victor's work has been featured in media outlets such as The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, The San Francisco Chronicle, Rolling Stone Magazine, TimeOut New York & The Huffington Post; she has worked with luminaries William Parker, Roswell Rudd, Nicole Mitchell, Archie Shepp, Marc Ribot & Tyshawn Sorey; highlights of her performances include The Whitney Museum & The Museum of Modern Art (NYC), The Hammer Museum (LA), The Kolner Philharmonie (Germany), De Young Museum (SF), Symphony Space (NY), The Earshot Jazz Festival (Seattle), The Winter Jazz Festival (NY) and the Bimhuis (Netherlands). Victor was the 2017 Herb Albert/Yaddo Fellow in Music Composition and a 2018 recipient of a month-long Headlands Center for the Arts residency. Victor is currently on the Faculty at the New School of Jazz & Contemporary Music and gives master classes, workshops and clinics on Creative Improvisation, Songwriting for Improvisers; Lectures and talks on subjects such as Confidence Building, My Cultural Lens and Experiments in Communicating Message as well as private lessons for the serious vocal student and improviser.

Adam Rudolph (percussion) has performed extensively in concert throughout North & South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia for the past four decades. A composer, improviser and percussionist Rudolph has been hailed as "a pioneer in world music" by the NY Times and "a master percussionist" by Musician magazine. He has released over 25 recordings under his own name, featuring his compositions and percussion work. Rudolph composes for his ensembles Adam Rudolph's Moving Pictures, Hu: Vibrational percussion group, and Go: Organic Orchestra, an 18 to 54 piece group for which he has developed an original music notation and conducting system

Rudolph has performed with Don Cherry, Jon Hassell, Sam Rivers, Pharaoh Sanders, L. Shankar, A.A.C.M co-founders Fred Anderson and Muhal Richard Abrams, Wadada Leo Smith, and Omar Sosa. In 1988 Rudolph began his association with Yusef Lateef, with whom he has recorded over 15 albums including several of their large ensemble collaborations. Lateef introduced Rudolph to the inspirational practice of Autophysiopsychic Music – "that which comes from one's spiritual, physical and emotional self".

Douglas Ewart's (reeds) kaleidoscopic talent has expressed itself in so many forms - instruments that double as sculptures, music that combines the traditions of four continents with fresh inventions, masks and costumes fit for rituals ominous or joyous, death-defying improvisations combining master musicianship and acting-that the whole might be mistaken for the work of a small culture rather than one man.

Ewart is known as a performer of original music with Muhal Richard Abrams, George Lewis, Anthony Braxton, and as a lecturer and workshop director throughout the United States.

Douglas Ewart was born in Kingston, Jamaica in 1946. At ten he started to experiment with sound and designed musical instruments-tin cans were altered to become hand drums and pieces of wood were fashioned into rattles. When his family bought a rug rolled around a large piece of bamboo, he seized on the bamboo as a potential flute. Thus began what has become today a high art practiced by Ewart alone - the construction of sonorous "totem flutes" colorful as bamboo rainbows, adorned with wood burned designs and haunting images.

Ewart immigrated to the United States in June 1963 and in 1967, plunged back into the musical world. studying theory, composition, saxophone, and clarinet at the AACM School of Music. His teachers, pianist Muhal Richard Abrams and reed players Roscoe Mitchell and Joseph Jarman, inspired him with their creative drive and their view that "music was a life-or-death matter." Having become a master himself, Ewart is now in demand as a teacher. The interest his AACM instructors inspire Ewart now in his own teaching. He has served on advisory boards and panels for various cultural organizations such as the National Endowment for the Arts, Meet the Composer (New York City), and the Arts Midwest Meet the Composer program.

Upcoming events in the Magic Triangle series include:



DREAMSTRUCK: Marilyn Crispell, Joe Fonda, Harvey Sorge

Thursday, October 29, 2020, 7:30 p.m. ET

Broadcast and streamed by Amherst Media

For ten years, Crispell was a member of the Anthony Braxton Quartet and the Reggie Workman Ensemble, and has recorded as a leader for ECM, Intakt and Leo Records with Gary Peacock, Paul Motian, Mark Helias, Gerry Hemmingway and Mark Dresser. Featuring Marilyn Crispell, piano, Joe Fonda, bass, Harvey Sorgen, drums.



James Brandon Lewis Quartet

Thursday, November 12, 2020, 7:30 p.m., ET

Broadcast and streamed by Amherst Media

James Brandon Lewis is a critically acclaimed saxophonist, composer, recording artist and educator. Featuring James Brandon Lewis, tenor saxophone, Angelica Sanchez, piano, Max Johnson, bass, Chad Taylor, drums.

Tickets for all **Magic Triangle** and **Fine Arts Center Fall 2020** events are free. For more information about these and all UMass Fine Arts Center Events and to get your ticketing link please visit:

fineartscenter.com