Christian Sands
Randolph W. Bromery Center for the Arts
Frederick C. Tillis Performance Hall

Thursday, November 18, 7:30 p.m.

Christian Sands – Piano
Ryan Sands – Percussion
Phil Norris – Bass

Sponsored by Daily Hampshire Gazette, Florence Bank, Applewood Loomis, WEIB, UMass Auxiliary Enterprises and Hotel UMass
Land acknowledgement

In a year-long consultative and deeply collaborative process with respected advisors from local Tribal Nations, the UMass Native Advisory Council co-developed this campus Land Acknowledgement. This Acknowledgement affirms our campus connection and relationship to the land the campus is built upon and our continued connection to the Nations who were the original inhabitants and caretakers of this land. The University of Massachusetts Amherst acknowledges that it was founded and built on the unceded homelands of the Pocumtuc Nation on the land of the Norrwutuck community.

We begin with gratitude for nearby waters and lands, including the Kwinitekw – the southern portion of what’s now called the Connecticut River. We recognize these lands and waters as important Relations with which we are all interconnected and depend on to sustain life and wellbeing.

The Norrwutuck community was one of many Pocumtuc Indian towns, including the Tribal seat at Pocumtuc (in present day Deerfield), Agawam (Springfield), and Woronoco (Westfield) to name just a few. The Pocumtuc, who had connections with these lands for millennia, are part of a vast expanse of Algonquian relations. Over 400 years of colonization, Pocumtuc Peoples were displaced. Many joined their Algonquian relatives to the east, south, west and north—extant communities of Wampanoag, including Aquinnah, Herring Pond, and Mashpee, Massachusetts; the Nipmuc with a reservation at Grafton/Hassanamisco, Massachusetts; the Narragansett in Kingstown, Rhode Island; Schaghticoke, Mohegan and Pequot Peoples in Connecticut; the Abenaki and other Nations of the Wabanaki Confederacy extending northward into Canada; and the Stockbridge Munsee Mohican of New York and Massachusetts, who were removed to Wisconsin in the 19th century. Over hundreds of years of removal, members of Southern New England Tribes would make the journey home to tend important places and renew their connections to their ancestral lands. Such care and connection to land and waters continues to the present day.

Today, Indigenous Nations in southern New England continue to employ diverse strategies to resist ongoing colonization, genocide, and erasure begun by the English, French, Dutch, Portuguese and other European Nations, and that continued when Tribal homelands became part of the United States. Native Americans from Tribal Nations across the U.S. and Indigenous peoples from around the world also travel into these Pocumtuc homelands to live and work. This land has always been and always will be, Native Land.

We also acknowledge that the University of Massachusetts Amherst is a Land Grant University. As part of the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862, Tribal lands from 84 Native Nations west of the Mississippi were sold to provide the resources to found and build this university.

This Land Acknowledgement is the first step in the university’s commitment to practice intellectual humility whilst working with Tribal Nations toward a better shared future on Turtle Island. We aim to foster understanding, deep respect, and honor for sovereign Tribal Nations; to develop relationships of reciprocity; and to be inclusive of Native perspectives and thriving Native Nations far into the future. Members of Massachusetts-based Tribal Nations who are kin to the historic Pocumtuc contributed their insights in composing this acknowledgement -- namely Tribal representatives from Mashpee, Aquinnah, and Stockbridge Munsee. As an active first step toward decolonization, we encourage you to learn more about the Indigenous peoples on whose homelands UMass Amherst now resides on and the Indigenous homelands on which you live and work.
About the artist

Christian Sands, a Steinway Artist and five-time Grammy nominee, is an emerging jazz force. His piano technique perfectly matches his conception to accomplish a much deeper musical goal: a fresh look at the language of jazz. Christian says, “My music is about teaching the way of jazz and keeping it alive.” Sands’ music develops from the past while providing an unusual and stimulating vehicle for the present and future by paying homage to the multiple jazz stylings of stride, swing, bebop, progressive, fusion, Brazilian and Afro-Cuban. He expresses himself through an extensive vocabulary of musical patterns, textures and structures, while his skilled technique maintains a strong sense of understatement, sensitivity, and taste. On his stunning new album, Be Water (his third for Mack Avenue Records), Sands takes inspiration from water’s tranquility and power. His playing muses on the possibilities offered by echoing water’s fluidity and malleability. Through ten gorgeous and thrilling pieces, Sands alternately conjures the serenity of a sun-dappled lake and the drama of a relentless thunderstorm.

Christian Sands has shared the stage with jazz luminaries Wynton Marsalis, Diane Reeves, Shelia E, Warren Wolf, Tia Fuller, Gary Burton, Stefan Harris, Teri Lynne Carrington, Jason Moran, Geri Allen, Avery Sharpe, James Moody, Bill Evans (sax), Terrance Blanchard, and Wycliffe Gordon. The power and prowess of his playing has taken him from the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., to the world renowned Newport Jazz Festival, Monterey Jazz Festival, and the Detroit Jazz Festival. Sands has played the celebrated New York jazz clubs of the Village Vanguard, Jazz Standard, Blue Note and Dizzy’s Club, as well as jazz clubs all over the world.

From a very early age, Christian possessed an insatiable appetite for music. Enrolled in music classes at age 4, he wrote his first composition at age 5. Sands started playing professionally at the age of 10, and studied at the Neighborhood Music School and the Educational Center for the Arts in New Haven, Connecticut. He received his bachelor of arts and master’s degrees from the Manhattan School of Music. For his participation on the MSM Kenya Revisited album, Sands received a Grammy nomination for Best Latin Piano Solo.

Sands meteoric rise in the jazz world has included performances with the legendary Oscar Peterson and Dr. Billy Taylor. Christian Sands met Dr. Billy Taylor at the University of Massachusetts Fine Arts Center Jazz in July program in 2006. They formed an immediate connection. Dr. Taylor dubbed him his protégé, and Christian followed his mentor’s example by encouraging, inspiring and advocating for the preservation and history of jazz. He teaches and promotes the passion and richness of jazz to both young people and mature audiences. In 2015, he started the Jazz Kids of Montmartre in Copenhagen, Denmark. Sands continues to teach at Jazz in July.

A deeply rich and soulful sound is heard in Christian’s music, that is characterized by his infectious energy and spirit. That spirit caught the attention of Grammy award winning bassist, Christian McBride, who asked Sands, at the age of 20, to sit in at the Village Vanguard with McBride’s big band, Inside Straight. The appearance led to Sands becoming a member of the Christian McBride Trio, which continues to tour throughout the world. Their 2013 CD release, Out Here, received a Grammy nomination for Best Jazz Instrumental Album.
Christian provides a soulful melodic touch on the soundtrack of S. Epatha Merkerson’s documentary, *Contradictions of Fairhope*. In *Jet* magazine, Sands was named one of the future rising stars by Wynton Marsalis. *Vanity Fair*’s “Jazz Youth-Quake” also named him as a future jazz star. Sands was a finalist for the 2015 Cole Porter Jazz Fellowship Award sponsored by the America Pianist Association.

As a much in demand composer and arranger, Sands appeared on six albums in 2015 as well as two live recordings: Christian McBride Trio, *Live at the Vanguard* and Sands’ own debut recording, *Take One*, recorded live at Jazzhus Montmartre Copenhagen Denmark with drummer Alex Reil and bassist Thomas Fonnesbaek. *Take One* has received rave reviews from national and international media.

“When I first met Christian in 2009, it marked a seminal moment in my career as a bandleader. He was the first young musician I had met who had the drive, passion and skill of my peers like Roy Hargrove, Eric Reed, Greg Hutchinson and Antonio Hart. He is only worried about being the best musician he can possibly be. He is the ultimate professional.” — Christian McBride

**Upcoming Events:**

**Acrobuffos: Air Play**  
Saturday, December 4, 2021 - 6:00 p.m.  
Randolph W. Bromery Center for the Arts  
Fred C. Tillis Performance Hall

For more information on all Fine Arts Center events and for tickets please visit:  
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