

UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA
MCINTIRE DEPARTMENT of **music**

Jazz4Justice

&

THE UVA JAZZ ENSEMBLE

present

Brother From a Sister City!

Directed by John D'earth

featuring

**Special Guest Pianist/Composer
Damien Groleau**

Sunday, April 23, 2023

8:00 pm

Old Cabell Hall

University of Virginia

Program

Set I

Daahoud	Comp. Clifford Brown Arr. Michael McNulty
African Skies	Comp. Michael Brecker Arr. Rob Lussier
Composition/TBA	Damien Groleau
She's Gone	Damien Groleau
Basile Mon Ile	Damien Groleau
Back Bone	Thad Jones

Set II

Boy Meets Horn	Duke Ellington
Fox Hunt	Mike Abene
Ephemera — <i>Three Poems by Paul Smyth</i> Part I - The House Part II - A Girl at Dawn Part III - A Blade of Dune Grass Tina Hashemi, <i>guest vocalist</i>	John D'earth
Trilogues	Damien Groleau
The Way Is Through	John D'earth

co-sponsored by Jazz4Justice



The UVA Jazz Ensemble

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Saxophones

Nick Wu, alto sax
Connor Rose, alto sax
Jack Peacock, tenor sax
Andrew Wittman, tenor sax
Tucker Benton, baritone sax

Trumpets

Grant GianGrasso
Will Novak
Jared Levenson
Alice Pandaleon
Johnny Willey
Samuel Manford

Trombones

Lauren Vaillancourt
Will Rimicci
Olivia Hadley
Martha Cassidy (special guest)

Rhythm Section

Ben Berry, piano
Alex Halpern, piano
Michael McNulty, guitar
Tyler Burkhardt, guitar
Joseph Kerrigan, bass
Alexander Shaefer, drums

Flute

Cole Smith

Guest Vocalist

Tina Hashemi

A Note from the Director

Tonight's concert has been close to five years in the making. In September of 2018, I was part of a delegation that visited Charlottesville's sister city of Besancon, France. The trip was organized by the *Charlottesville Sister City Commission*. There I met a fantastic musician who generously invited me into his performances for a local Arts Festival. We hit it off musically and started a friendship that resulted in my asking him to be our guest artist here at the University. Covid intervened. We have cancelled his appearance with us three different times, I think. Tonight, he finally joins us - pianist, composer, flautist extraordinaire, Monsieur Damien Groleau, our brother from a Sister City!

Damien is a consummate jazz artist. In his distinctive piano trio recordings, one hears echoes of Bill Evans in the trio's interactivity and in the classical background the two pianists so obviously share. In his work with Latin and world music, where he plays both piano and flute, Damien is an exuberant improviser and ensemble member. In both settings he puts his considerable virtuosity at the service of sensitive interaction, and delicate self-expression, never virtuosity for its own sake. His compositions are at times introspective or deceptively simple, but they are always carefully crafted (craftily!) and present wonderful opportunities for improvisation. The band is delighted to have this chance to meet Damien and learn his music.

We welcome many old and new musicians to the bandstand tonight, and you will meet them all as we proceed. I have been directing the UVA Jazz Ensemble for about three decades. This particular band is notable for its camaraderie and creativity...and its legacy of having survived Covid by making recordings and posting them on a website: virginiajazz.org

We begin tonight's concert with an arrangement of Clifford Brown's *Daahoud* by fourth year guitarist, Michael McNulty. This is, I think, Michael's sixth chart for the band. It was first heard in his recently completed Distinguished Major Project, a two-set recital of his jazz compositions/arrangements for large and small ensembles and original songs for his working rock band. We will also feature a plethora of fine soloists. You will meet them as they play. And we welcome back to the stage a UVA graduate who, for several years, was the beloved singer for this band, and, tonight, our esteemed guest vocalist, Tina Hashemi.

Tina will be recreating my composition, *Ephemera*, which premiered in 2011 as a commission for the Charlottesville Youth Orchestra and, later, as a big band piece commissioned by Greg Thomas' jazz band at Albemarle High School. Both iterations featured fifteen-year-old vocalist Veronica Swift O'Brian, C-ville homegirl, recent jazz phenom, (Wynton Marsalis, Chris Bhodi, Jazz Times cover) and daughter of local and international jazz royalty Stephanie Nakasian and Hod O'Brian.

Ephemera is based on three short poems by my late brother, Paul Smyth. The poet John Berryman said, "Writing poetry is a funny kind of jazz. You don't get anything out of it. It's just something you *do*." Despite Berryman's Pulitzer, it sounds strangely true. I know that Paul's main interest in crafting his poems was to have people read them. He wrote for the reader. He wanted the reader to "get it." The desire to write these jazz settings of his formalistic poetry came from feeling the potential jazz rhythms embedded in the verse and the hope that, as song lyrics, listeners would be invited to reflect more deeply on the poems. Paul loved Billie Holiday so I didn't worry too much about trashing his formalist sensibility with jazz and improvisation. Tina, as always, nails it, and though the piece is jazz music, it is a strict vocal part with very specific word placement. Her phrasing, swing, and sense of melody are, as usual, spectacular. She has many fans among us tonight!

We must, once again, thank our partner, *Jazz4Justice*, a group from the legal community that supports University Jazz Concerts to raise money (and awareness) for music scholarships and Legal Aid. Legal Aid is an organization that provides free civil legal assistance to low-income individuals in 5 cities and 15 counties in central Virginia. Partnering with *J4J* is becoming a UVA Jazz Ensemble tradition.

Tonight, you will hear original compositions and arrangements alongside classics from Duke Ellington, Thad Jones, Michael Brecker, and Maynard Ferguson. We can't wait for the music we will make tonight with our illustrious guests!

Enjoy!

—John D'earth

About Our Performers

Damien Groleau

Damien Groleau is a pianist, flautist, and French composer, born in 1983. Familiar from early childhood with the keyboard and improvisation, he studied, alongside the improvised piano, the classical piano with Igor Blagodatov in Besançon. At 16 years old, he won the national contest of Jeunesses musicales de France, as well as the Jeunes Talents contest of L'Illiade in Strasbourg, with his first trio of compositions and improvisations "Sunjazz". His career on stage began as a teenager with numerous engagements in jazz groups and Cuban music in France and Switzerland (Festival Rencontres et Racines, Montreux Jazz festival).

After two years of training in Paris at the Didier Lockwood school in 2002-2003, he completed his training as an improviser pianist and composer with François Couturier at the Montbéliard conservatory.

Damien Groleau also studied the flute with the great Cuban flutist Orlando Maraca Valle in Paris and with the Brazilian choro flutist Antonio Rocha in Rio de Janeiro. In addition to his emerging career as a pianist, he leads, as a flute player, groups playing choro - popular music from Brazil (with Zé Barbeiro, Verioca), and Cuban music (with Matanzas, El Cartel) as well as music from the Antilles and Reunion (Mala'ka, René & Marco Lacaille).

Since 2004, Damien Groleau has been practicing his profession as a stage and studio musician, drawing a furrow made of very personal artistic projects, meetings, and fruitful sharing. He released six albums of compositions in his name, and fifteen as a sideman. He also lends himself, as a pianist performer, flautist and composer, to various collaborations for theater (Cie Bacchus, Cie Keishad, National Theatre), international dance performances (Difékako), and cinema (with Coline Serreau and Charles Gassot, Valerie Donzelli), or for documentaries (productions from France 3 national and the LCP channel).

Tina Hashemi

Tina Hashemi is a gifted jazz singer who recently graduated from the University of Virginia, where she studied jazz vocal performance under Stephanie Nakasian, and John D'earth. She also studied, separately, with

Danielle Wertz. In her final year at UVA, as part of her Distinguished Major Project, for which she received “Highest Distinction,” she completed an album of originals and standards entitled Nobody’s Heart. Tina continues to perform regularly with her own band throughout Virginia at a variety of venues. Her pure, unaffected tone, her sense of swing, and her creativity as an improviser with big ears and stores of imagination has made her a favorite with some of the most advanced musicians in the Virginia/D.C. area. Paul Langosch, who played with Tony Bennet for decades, Daniel Clarke, who was KD Lang’s pianist, and tenor saxophonist Charles Owens are now colleagues and fans of the sweet sensibility she brings to classic jazz standards and the Great American Songbook.

Tina is in the process of recording a new album with some old and new-found musical friends. Her growth as an emerging artist continues as she explores her own unique voice in jazz music.

The Sister Cities Commission

The Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission seeks to foster international partnerships among individuals, their communities, and their greater municipalities as a result of shared cultural, economic, educational, and humanitarian activities. Through our sponsored exchanges, special events, and grants program, Charlottesville residents connect with citizens in our three sister cities and one friendship city – exchanging ideas, collaborating on projects, and building lifelong relationships that promote global understanding and make the world a smaller place.

About Jazz4Justice™

In 2000, Fairfax attorney Ed Weiner attended a student jazz recital. He was impressed by the music but distressed by the small audience. As the President of the Fairfax Law Foundation, he saw an opportunity for a new partnership – universities would provide the musical talent and the local legal community would provide the audience and sponsors. Today, Jazz4Justice concerts are held throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. Thus far, Jazz4Justice has raised over \$500,000 for music scholarships and an array of educational and charitable legal services benefiting Virginia’s local communities. Jazz4Justice has received awards from the American Bar Association and the Virginia State Bar. Jazz4Justice is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

Visit us at www.jazz4justice.com. We are supported in part by a grant from the Virginia Law Foundation. The VLF's mission is to promote, through philanthropy, the Rule of Law, access to justice, and law-related education.

About Central Virginia Legal Aid Society

Central Virginia Legal Aid Society (CVLAS) provides free civil legal assistance to low-income individuals in 5 cities and 15 counties in central Virginia. Our Charlottesville office is located at the C.B. Holt Rock House on Preston Avenue. We believe in the enormous power of lawyers to make a tangible difference in the lives of individuals and communities. Through the compassionate and crucial work of our dedicated attorneys, CVLAS ensures justice is not out of reach for those who cannot afford it and who are too often left behind. Visit our website, <https://www.cvlas.org> for more information about seeking services, getting involved or supporting our cause.

Acknowledgements

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