



A Tribute to the Jazz Epistles

Abdullah Ibrahim & Ekaya

Abdullah Ibrahim / *Piano*

Cleave Guyton / *Alto Saxophone, Flute, Clarinet*

Lance Bryant / *Tenor Saxophone*

Marshall McDonald / *Baritone Saxophone*

Andrae Murchison / *Trombone, Trumpet*

Noah Jackson / *Cello, Bass*

Will Terrill / *Drums*

featuring

Freddie Hendrix / *Trumpet, Flugelhorn*

Friday Evening, April 13, 2018 at 8:00

Michigan Theater

Ann Arbor

84th Performance of the 139th Annual Season

24th Annual Jazz Series

Traditions and Crosscurrents

This evening's performance is supported by Gary Boren and by Louise Taylor.

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Abdullah Ibrahim & Ekaya appear by arrangement with Maurice Montoya Music Agency.

In consideration of the artists and the audience, please refrain from the use of electronic devices during the performance.

The photography, sound recording, or videotaping of this performance is prohibited.

PROGRAM

A Tribute to the Jazz Epistles

This evening's concert is performed in memory of South African trumpeter Hugh Masekela, a founding member of The Jazz Epistles, who passed away in January. Tonight's program will be announced by the artists from the stage and is performed without intermission.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

South African jazz legend Abdullah Ibrahim, previously known as Dollar Brand, first heard the call of modern jazz in the late 1950s, and along with saxophonist Kippie Moeketsi, trumpeter Hugh Masekela, trombonist Jonas Gwangwa, bassist Johnny Gertze, and Early Mabuza and Makaya Ntshoko on drums, founded the pioneering Jazz Epistles — a hard-bop ensemble modeled on Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers that was the first black jazz combo to record in South Africa.

On June 15–16, 2016 at the Emperors Palace in Johannesburg, for the first time in over 50 years, Abdullah Ibrahim and Hugh Masekela reunited for two sold-out concerts honoring the Jazz Epistles, making a profound impact on the audiences and the artists themselves. Following the success of these concerts, international tours were booked through 2017 and 2018.

Sadly, on January 23, 2018 in Johannesburg, after a long battle with prostate cancer, Hugh Masekela passed away at the age of 78.

Abdullah Ibrahim & Ekaya, along with special guest Freddie Hendrix in the trumpet chair, will perform tonight's concert in tribute to the legendary Jazz Epistles and the recently departed and beloved Hugh Masekela. This evening's repertoire will feature Abdullah Ibrahim's classic compositions, plus new arrangements of the Jazz Epistles' compositions from their 1959 recording, *Jazz Epistle, Verse 1*.

ARTISTS

Abdullah Ibrahim, South Africa's most distinguished pianist and a world-respected master musician, was born in 1934 in Cape Town and baptized Adolph Johannes Brand. His early musical memories were of traditional African Khoi-san songs and the Christian hymns, gospel tunes, and spirituals that he heard from his grandmother, who was pianist for the local African Methodist Episcopal church, and his mother, who led the choir. The Cape Town of his childhood was a melting pot of cultural influences, and the young Dollar Brand, as he became known, was exposed to American jazz, township jive, Cape Malay music, as well as to classical music. Out of this blend of the secular and the religious, the traditional and the modern, developed the distinctive style, harmonies, and musical vocabulary that are inimitably his own.

He began piano lessons at the age of seven and made his professional debut at 15, playing and later recording with such local groups as the Tuxedo Slickers. He was in the forefront of playing bebop with a Cape Town flavor and 1958 saw the formation of the Dollar Brand Trio. His groundbreaking septet the Jazz Epistles, formed in 1959 (with saxophonist Kippie Moeketsi, trumpeter Hugh Masekela, trombonist Jonas Gwanga, bassist Johnny Gertze, and drummer Makaya Ntshoko), recorded the first jazz album by South African musicians. That same year, he met and first performed with vocalist Sathima Bea Benjamin; they married six years later.

After the notorious Sharpeville massacre of 1960, mixed-race bands and audiences were defying the increasingly strict apartheid laws, and jazz symbolized resistance, so the government closed a number of clubs and harassed the musicians. Some members of the Jazz Epistles went to England with the musical *King Kong* and stayed in exile. These were difficult times in which to sustain musical development in South Africa. In 1962, with Nelson Mandela imprisoned and the ANC banned, Dollar Brand and Sathima Bea Benjamin left the country, joined later by the other trio members Gertze and Ntshoko, and took up a three-year contract at the Club Africana in Zürich. There, in 1963, Sathima persuaded Duke Ellington to listen to them play, which led to a recording session in Paris — *Duke Ellington Presents the Dollar Brand Trio* — and invitations to perform at key European festivals, and on television and radio during the next two years.

In 1965, the now-married couple moved to New York. After appearing that year at the Newport Jazz Festival and Carnegie Hall, Dollar Brand was called upon in 1966 to substitute as leader of the Ellington Orchestra in five concerts. Then followed a six-month tour with the Elvin Jones Quartet. In 1967 he received a Rockefeller Foundation grant to attend the Juilliard School of Music. Being in the US also afforded him the opportunity to interact with many progressive musicians, including Don Cherry, Ornette Coleman, John Coltrane, Pharaoh Sanders, Cecil

Taylor, and Archie Shepp.

The year 1968 was a turning point. Searching for spiritual harmony in an increasingly fractured life, Dollar Brand went back to Cape Town, where he converted to Islam, taking the name Abdullah Ibrahim, and in 1970 he made a pilgrimage to Mecca. Music and martial arts further reinforced the spiritual discipline he found. After a couple of years based in Swaziland, where he founded a music school, Mr. Ibrahim and his young family returned in 1973 to Cape Town, though he still toured internationally with his own large and small groups. In 1974 he recorded *Mannenberg* — ‘*Is Where It’s Happening*,’ which soon became an unofficial national anthem for black South Africans. After the Soweto student uprising, in 1976, he organized an illegal ANC benefit concert; before long, he and his family left for America, to settle once again in New York.

Determined to manage his own affairs in America, he founded the record company Ekapa in 1981 with Sathima. The 1980s saw him involved with a range of artistic projects that depended on his music: Garth Fagan’s ballet *Prelude* (first performed 1981), the Kalahari Liberation Opera (Vienna, 1982), and in 1983 a musical, *Cape Town, South Africa*, featuring the septet he formed that year, Ekaya. In 1987, he played a memorial concert for Marcus Garvey in London’s Westminster Cathedral, and the following year he played at the concert in Central Park, New York, commemorating the 70th birthday of Nelson Mandela.

In 1990 Mandela, freed from prison, invited him to come home to South

Africa. The fraught emotions of reacclimatizing there are reflected in *Mantra Modes* (1991), the first recording with South African musicians since 1976, and in *Knysna Blue* (1993). He memorably performed at Mandela’s inauguration in 1994.

Mr. Ibrahim has been the subject of several documentaries, including Chris Austin’s 1986 BBC film *A Brother with Perfect Timing* and *A Struggle for Love* by Ciro Cappellari (2004). He has also composed scores for film, including the award-winning soundtrack for Claire Denis’s *Chocolat* (1988), as well as for *No Fear, No Die* (1990) and Idrissa Ouedraogo’s *Tilai* (1990), and he was featured in the 2002 production *Amandla: A Revolution in Four-Part Harmony*.

For more than a quarter-century he has toured the world extensively, appearing at major concert halls, clubs, and festivals, giving sold-out performances as a solo artist or with other renowned artists (notably, Max Roach, Carlos Ward, and Randy Weston). His collaborations with classical orchestras have resulted in acclaimed recordings, such as *African Suite* (1999, with members of the European Union Youth Orchestra) and the Munich Radio Philharmonic Orchestra symphonic version, *African Symphony* (2001), which also featured the trio and the NDR Jazz Big Band.

Mr. Ibrahim celebrated his 70th birthday in October 2004, which was marked by the release of two CDs by Enja Records (the Munich-based label with whom he has recorded for three decades): the compilation *A Celebration*, and *Re:Brahim*, his music remixed. His

discography runs to well over 100 album credits.

When not touring, he now divides his time between Cape Town and New York. In addition to composing and performing, he has started a South African production company, Masingita (Miracle), and established a music academy, M7, offering courses in seven disciplines to educate young minds and bodies. In 2006, he spearheaded the historic creation (backed by the South African Ministry of Arts and Culture) of the Cape Town Jazz Orchestra, an 18-piece big band, which is set to further strengthen the standing of South African music on the global stage.

A martial arts Black Belt with a lifelong interest in Zen philosophy, he takes every opportunity to visit his master in private trips to Japan. In 2003 he performed charity concerts at temples in Kyoto and Shizuoka, the proceeds going to the M7 academy. Mr. Ibrahim remains at his zenith, as a musician and a tireless initiator of new projects. In his own words: “some do it because they have to do it, we do it because we want to...so we do not require much sleep...so we have to do it.”

Over the past two decades, **Freddie Hendrix** has become one of the most in-demand trumpeters in jazz and beyond. Also an accomplished composer, arranger, and educator, the Teaneck, New Jersey native’s skill and versatility has resulted in him working with a wide array of performers that range from the Count Basie Orchestra and the Christian McBride Big Band, to Aretha Franklin, Stevie Wonder, and Alicia Keys.

With the release of his first recording as a leader, *Jersey Cat*, Mr. Hendrix is serving notice that now is his time. He has forged his own sure-footed, full-toned sound, out of the tradition of Freddie Hubbard, Woody Shaw, Lee Morgan, and Clifford Brown. A product of the esteemed jazz program at William Paterson University, with a master’s in jazz studies and performance from New Jersey City University, Mr. Hendrix also shares his knowledge and passion for the music by serving as a faculty member at the Hartt School of Music at the University of Hartford (CT), the New School in New York, and Jazz House Kids in Montclair, New Jersey.

UMS ARCHIVES

Tonight marks **Abdullah Ibrahim & Ekaya**’s second UMS appearance, following their UMS debuts in October 2015 in the Michigan Theater. This evening’s concert marks **Freddie Hendrix**’s second appearance under UMS auspices, following his UMS debut in March 2009 in Hill Auditorium with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and Wynton Marsalis.

TONIGHT'S VICTORS FOR UMS:



Gary Boren

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JazzNet Endowment Fund

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Louise Taylor

Supporters of this evening's performance by Abdullah Ibrahim & Ekaya.

MAY WE ALSO RECOMMEND...

- 4/14 Colin Stetson: *Sorrow*
- 4/19–21 *Cold Blood*
- 4/22 Emanuel Ax

Tickets available at www.ums.org.

ON THE EDUCATION HORIZON...

- 4/15 UMS 101, Classical Music: Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, Apollo's Fire
(Hill Auditorium Mezzanine Lobby, 2:00 pm)
Paid registration required; please visit bit.ly/UMSClasses to register.
- 4/19 UMS 101 Dance/Theater: *Cold Blood*
(Power Center Green Room, 5:30 pm)
Paid registration required; please visit bit.ly/UMSClasses to register.
- 4/19 Post-Performance Q&A: *Cold Blood*
(Power Center, 121 Fletcher Street)
Must have a ticket to that evening's performance to attend

Educational events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.