

THE CHICAGO | JAZZ | ENSEMBLE

in residence at Columbia College Chicago since 1965

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THE CHICAGO JAZZ ENSEMBLE WITH ARTISTIC DIRECTOR DANA HALL PRESENTS ITS INAUGURAL SMALL ENSEMBLE CONCERT DECEMBER 15 WITH SPECIAL GUESTS AND THE MUSIC OF ART BLAKEY

CHICAGO, IL - The [Chicago Jazz Ensemble](#) (CJE) with **Artistic Director Dana Hall** kicks off its inaugural Small Ensemble Concert series with *Buhaina's Delight: Art Blakey and the Message of Jazz* on **Thursday, December 15 at 7:30 pm** at the Harold Washington Public Library's Cindy Pritzker Auditorium. Curated by Hall, this series complements the CJE's Harris Theater series with a more intimate concert experience featuring smaller quintet and sextet programs.

The December 15 concert will explore hard bop jazz and the genius of drummer [Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers](#). It will also include a historic overview of hard bop, its significant figures, and the conceptual foundations, so central to Blakey's musical aesthetic. Guest musicians on the program include saxophonist **Geof Bradfield**, pianist **Dan Trudell**, bassist **Rodney Whitaker**, and trumpeter **Derrick Gardner**.

The Small Ensemble Concert series launches a new programming framework developed by Artistic Director Dana Hall to explore the breadth of ensemble music. The design illuminates the elasticity and depth of CJE band members and will feature local and visiting guest musicians. Hall will also invite CJE and guest artists to participate in the curating of the programs and many will feature arrangements created by CJE musicians.

"As part of our role as a vital participant in the Chicago jazz community, I believe we have a responsibility not only to do our part in moving this music forward and contributing to the evolving definition of '21st century large ensemble improvised music,' but also to do our part in illuminating jazz music's colorful history," explains Hall. "A significant part of that story unfolded through smaller ensembles. To that end, I have created a series of programs to work in tandem with our large ensemble efforts that will allow us to engage with this music in a broader way, and on a more dynamic scale, than we have previously attempted or achieved."

In addition to the December small ensemble program, the CJE will present *Jazz and Literature* in April, exploring the intersection of jazz and the spoken and written word. This program takes inspiration from historical and contemporary collaborations between word and sound.

Arthur "Art" Blakey (1919 –1990), later known as Abdullah Ibn Buhaina, was a Grammy award-winning jazz percussionist and bandleader. Along with Kenny Clarke and Max Roach, he was one of the inventors of the modern bebop style of drumming. His brand of bluesy, funky hard bop continues to be profoundly

influential on mainstream jazz. For more than 30 years his band, **Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers**, included many young musicians who went on to become prominent names in jazz. Blakey was inducted into the Jazz Hall of Fame in 1982 and the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2001, and in 2005 he was awarded the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award.

Remaining concerts in the CJE's 2011-12 performance season include ***Beneath the Underdog: The Musical World of Charles Mingus*** on Friday, January 20 at 7:30 pm at the Harris Theater, featuring bassist Christian McBride and Grammy-nominated vocalist/bassist Meshell Ndegeocello. ***Ornithology: The Music of Charlie "Bird" Parker*** will be presented on Friday, February 24 at 7:30 pm at the Harris Theater, featuring Grammy-nominated Puerto Rican saxophonist Miguel Zenón and a guest string ensemble. Finally, the second and final Small Ensemble Concert of the season, ***Jazz and Literature***, takes place Friday, April 6 at 7:30 pm at the Cindy Pritzker Auditorium.

Single tickets for the CJE's Small Ensemble Concert series at the Cindy Pritzker Auditorium are \$25 and available exclusively through Brown Paper Tickets (NOT via the Harris Theater). Full-time student tickets are \$5. Call 800-838-3006 or buy online at brownpapertickets.com.

Two-concert mini subscriptions for the CJE's remaining Harris Theater series are available and offer an impressive benefit package and 25% savings on tickets. Subscriptions must be purchased by phone via the Harris Theater Box Office at 312.334.7777. Single tickets for the Harris Theater shows are \$18 - \$48, with discounts for senior citizens and groups. Full-time student tickets are \$5. Purchase single tickets at 312.334.7777 or at harristheaterchicago.org. More information on the CJE is available at chicagojazzensemble.com.

CJE ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

The Chicago Jazz Ensemble is **Dana Hall**, Artistic Director and drums; **Dan Nicholson** and **Jarrard Harris**, alto saxophone; **Pat Mallinger** and **Rob Denty**, tenor saxophone and clarinet; **Tim McNamara**, baritone saxophone; **Andy Baker**, **Tim Coffman**, **Tom Garling**, and **Thomas Matta**, trombone; **Mark Olen**, **Larry Bowen**, **Art Hoyle**, and **Pharez Whitted**, trumpet; **Jeremy Kahn**, piano; **Jeff Parker**, guitar; **Dan Anderson**, bass; and **Bobbi Wilsyn**, vocals.

The CJE is proud to have been in residence at Columbia College Chicago since 1965. Its 2011-12 performance season is made possible in part by grants from the MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince, the Fanny R. Wurlitzer Foundation, and the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency. The Chicago Jazz Ensemble's educational programs, including the Louis Armstrong Legacy Program and Celebration, are supported in part by the Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation, Citi Foundation, the Crown Family, the Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust, and the Polk Bros. Foundation. The CJE is also sponsored by Downbeat Magazine and media sponsor 90.9fm WDCB Public Radio.

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