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EMORY JAZZ FEST

GARY MOTLEY, DIRECTOR OF JAZZ STUDIES

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2019, 8:00 P.M.

VANESSA RUBIN, JAZZ VOCALIST
WITH THE GARY MOTLEY TRIO

Kenny Davis, bass,
Winard Harper, drums,
and Gary Motley, piano

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2019, 8:00 P.M.

EMORY BIG BAND NIGHT

**EMERSON CONCERT HALL
SCHWARTZ CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS**

FRIDAY PROGRAM

Tonight's selections will be announced from the stage.



Vanessa Rubin, jazz vocalist

Revered as both a torchbearer and a storyteller, jazz vocalist Vanessa Rubin possesses a voice hailed for crystalline clarity, hearth-like warmth, and playful lioness sass. The Cleveland native brings a wealth of diverse influences to her vocal performance from both the Trinidadian/Caribbean roots of her mother and traditional jazz by way of her Louisiana-born father. Additional homespun influences include the melodic bell-tone clarity of a young Capital Records recording artist, Nancy Wilson; the fire of Lambert, Hendricks & Ross; and the sweet sounds of trumpeter Blue Mitchell; as well as her love of the Motown Sound . . . especially girl groups like the Supremes.

Rubin's passion for rich musical stories is evidenced throughout her eight albums thus far plus numerous guest appearances. Highlights include the evocative *Voyager II* from the pen of Teri Thornton, *Inside a Silent Tear* written by Blossom Dearie, a refashioned waltz version of John Coltrane's *Giant Steps* lyricized by New York Voices, and an arrangement of *Superwoman* by Stevie Wonder inspired by the Ahmad Jamal recording of *Poinciana*. So while she has one foot planted in tradition—sticking close to timeless melodies and exquisite vocal forms—Rubin waxes adventurous, embracing stories lesser told while employing lessons of acclaimed storytellers in song such as Carmen McRae, Shirley Horn, and Freddy Cole. “They mastered the art of believability,” Rubin asserts. Additionally, Rubin continues to back her way into the blues with an urgent appreciation for soulful mentors like Etta Jones and Irene Reid. Also among her current endeavors is highlighting and interpreting well-known, obscure, and new lyrical works of composer/arranger/pianist Tadd Dameron. “I hope to do for Tadd’s music what Carmen McRae did for Monk’s music,” Rubin explained.

Rubin's journey to becoming a jazz singer could be said to have begun at an early age. She was characterized by her mother as always being “a very vocal child,” and knew she would “do something with that big ol’ mouth of hers.” Coming from parents who valued academia, discipline, and hard work, that “something” was meant to be law school. Attaining a BA from the the Ohio State School of Journalism in 1979 was not a disappointment. However, her decision to pursue a career jazz singing did come as a surprise. Rubin's fascination with language coupled with her passion for music, especially jazz, pointed her on a collision course toward jazz performance.

Her “a-ha” moment came during a college beauty pageant at which Rubin was accompanied by a very young, and even then, a very capable Bobby Floyd of Columbus, Ohio. Her first performance of a jazz evergreen, the Billie Holiday original *God Bless the Child*, garnered both rousing applause and the winning

talent award. Most importantly though, it awakened what Rubin describes as “her calling.” “I fell in love with the moment, the music, the audience, and the effect it had on them and me,” Rubin remembers.

Rubin’s first gigs began around 1980 in small clubs around Cleveland such as Tucker’s Place, Bob’s Toast of the Town, Lancer’s Steak House, Club Isabella, the Native Son, and the Teal Lounge. Some early band mates included Wynn Bibbs, Skip Gibson, saxophonist and arranger Willie Smith, Neal Crique, Matthew “Chink” Stevenson, and later, the uniquely soulful organ quartet of the Blackshaw Brothers with Cecil Rucker on vibes. “We worked eight days a week all over Cleveland catching the tail-end of what was left over from the good old days,” Rubin recalls. After two years, Rubin was anxious to set her sights on New York where she earnestly and humbly soaked up the tutelage of many veterans like Pharaoh Sanders, Frank Foster, and Barry Harris.

In 1992, Rubin signed to Novus/RCA Records recording five albums, three of which reached number one at radio. Her debut recording *Soul Eyes* (1992) was produced by the venerable Onaje Allen Gumbs. Her sophomore recording, *Pastiche* (1993) showed off her horn-like abilities interacting with an all-star sextet that included jazz legends Frank Foster and Cecil Bridgewater. *I’m Glad There is You, A Tribute to Carmen McRae* (1994) followed, finding Rubin couched in beautiful string arrangements with jazz luminaries Kenny Burrell and Grover Washington. Her fourth release, *Vanessa Rubin Sings* (1995), was intimately guitar based. It was easy to see Rubin flourished on Novus with the muscle of parent company RCA Records behind her. However, when the Novus label folded between her fourth and fifth recording option, Rubin was invited to stay on at RCA to record her fifth album, *New Horizons* (1997)—a new more contemporary sound. This move, predictably, was not heralded by her jazz base, but it gained her a new audience with smooth jazz/NAC fans. She next recorded two mainstream CDs for Telarc Jazz: *Language of Love* (1999) and *Girl Talk* (2001). *Full Circle* (Creative Perspective Music, 2013), her most recent release, is a joint project of Rubin and saxophonist Don Braden, both of whom are from the Midwest and share a deep appreciation for the Hammond B3.

Rubin has also grown to recognize the importance and advantage of writing. “When it comes to finding your style and sound, it helps to have your own stories. And in order to do that, you just have to live! I’ve always been conscientious about my choice of repertoire. Even more so now. I need something substantive and honest to sing,” she explains. A turning point was composing her first original, *No Strings Attached*. Other originals by Rubin featured on her recordings are *Once Was Not Enough*, *If You Ever Go Away*, and *Are You Ready For Me?* She also penned the first set of lyrics to Frank Foster’s *Simone*, Wayne Shorter’s *Speak No Evil*, (vocally retitled *All For One*) and Tadd Dameron’s *The Dream Is You* (vocally retitled *Reveries Do Come True*).

Rubin continues to be a favorite at jazz clubs and festivals in the United States and abroad. Her work as a producer and educator/clinician with youth in communities, as well as in educational institutions worldwide, is ongoing.



Kenny Davis, bass

Kenny Davis's career began with listening to R & B artists such as Earth Wind & Fire, Brothers Johnson, and the Temptations. Davis taught himself to play guitar and then went on to study music theory with David Holder Sr. and earn a bachelor of arts degree in music education at Northeastern Illinois University. At Northeastern University, Davis discovered jazz music and became part of the Chicago music scene, playing with Von Freedman, Ari Brown, and Fred Anderson.

Later, he studied classical bass with Warren Benfield of the Chicago Symphony and also with Jeffrey Bradetich. His jazz influences include Ray Brown, Paul Chambers, Ron Carter, Jaco Pastorius, and Verdine White.

Davis moved to New York in 1986, where he played with Out of the Blue (OTB). In addition to working as a studio musician, he began appearing with artists including Freddie Hubbard, Cassandra Wilson, Abbey Lincoln, Diane Reeves, and Art Farmer, while studying with bassist Ron Carter. Davis showcased his skills as an arranger on the Grammy Award-winning CD, *Blue Light Till Dawn*, by vocalist Cassandra Wilson. In 2009, Davis released his first CD as a leader, *Kenny Davis*, on Daken Records.

Davis's touring roster has included performances with Herbie Hancock, Dianne Reeves, and Art Farmer. Davis was the bassist for *The Tonight Show* band from September 1999 through March 2002.

Committed to jazz education, Davis received his master of music degree in 2006 from the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University, where he currently serves as professor of jazz bass.



Winard Harper, drums

Drummer Winard Harper is passionate about jazz. "This music is powerful," he says. "It can do a lot of good for people. If they'd spend some time each day listening to it, we would see many changes in the world."

Inspired by the musicianship of greats such as Clifford Brown, Max Roach, Jackie McLean, Cannonball Adderley, Billy Taylor, Art Blakey, and Billy Higgins, Harper has been the leader and musical inspiration for a vibrant sextet for almost a decade. The group

appears regularly all over the United States from the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. to Yoshi's—the legendary West Coast jazz club. Although clearly the dominant force behind this extraordinarily gifted ensemble, Harper has surrounded himself with superbly talented young guardians of the jazz tradition (including Lawrence Clark, Ameen Saleem, Josh Evans, Stacy Dillard, and Alioune Faye), who are as entertaining to watch as they are to listen to.

Born in Baltimore in 1962, Harper had a natural affinity for drumming. He was encouraged to play the drums by his father, who noticed him beating on cans when he was just three or four years old. At age five, Harper was developing his skills and making guest appearances with his older brother's nightclub band. A turning point was reached when Harper heard a recording of Clifford Brown and Max Roach. It was then that he was irreversibly inspired to play jazz. "I was fascinated hearing Max do the things he did playing with mallets and everything," he remembers.

"Early on," Harper continues, "I transcribed a couple of Max solos, but I really just loved listening to him. He was a big influence as well as Art Blakey, and more so than anybody, Billy Higgins. The joy and the passion and his love of playing really made an impact on me. I could see similarities between myself and him, and then we became such great friends. A lot of the concept of my band was inspired by Billy. A lot of the African influences and different instruments I use in the band, Billy was always exploring as well."

Piadium recording artist Harper is one of the hardest working drummers in jazz today, not only leading his very exciting and hard-swinging sextet, but also continuing as an in-demand sideman. When not touring with his band, Harper continues to work and record with such artists such as Joe Lovano, Avery Sharpe, Steve Turre, Wycliffe Gordon, Frank Wess, Ray Bryant, and Jimmy Heath. His newest CD, *Make It Happen*, goes further than any of his previous six releases to highlight his talent as drummer, composer, and bandleader.

And now the Winard Harper Sextet moves to a new level of success. Not only is the band gaining increased air play around the globe, it regularly appears in festivals, on jazz cruises, in concert halls, and in top jazz clubs. The Winard Harper Sextet is doing its part to bring the power of jazz to audiences everywhere. The response has been nothing short of remarkable.



Gary Motley, piano, professor of performance, and director of jazz studies

Gary Motley is a pianist, composer, arranger, and educator. He has received awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Great American Jazz Piano Competition, and the American Composers Forum. Motley has also been featured on National Public Radio's *Piano Jazz* with Marian McPartland.

Motley began studying the piano as a young child in Alabama and would later be exposed to jazz as a teenager. While attending the University of Montevallo, Motley honed his skills as a jazz pianist, playing with numerous regional bands. It was soon thereafter that he would decide to make music his life's endeavor. During his career, Motley has established a professional association with many of today's leaders in jazz. He has worked with artists ranging from Dave Brubeck to Clarke Terry. His recording credits range from his

premier CD *Peaceful Moments* (1994) to his latest recording, *No Reservation Required* (2017).

In 2000, Motley collaborated with actress Debbie Allen and director Kenny Leon for the Alliance Theater's production of *Blues in the Night* and the premiere of *Soul Possessed*. Motley can also be heard on the Debbie Allen–Phylicia Rashad documentary *The Old Settler* on PBS. He also recorded music with Whoopi Goldberg for the Broadway production of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* and collaborated with Kenny Leon, providing music for Sean Combs's 2004 Broadway Production of *A Raisin in the Sun*.

Notable performances include the premiere of Motley's first orchestral work titled *The Artist and the Visionary*; duo performances with pianists Dave Brubeck and Kenny Baron; and concerts with Jon Faddis, Eddie Daniels, and Benny Golson. Motley's recordings include *Compassion* (2001), *The Gary Motley Trio featuring Veronica Tate* (2001), *Keypers* (2004), *Everything I Love* (2005), *Renaissance* (2009), *Seasoning* (2012), and *Departure* (2014). He is the recipient of *Creative Loafing* magazine's Critics Choice Award for Best Jazz Artist and was selected by the American Composers Forum to serve as an artist in residence resulting in his second composition for string orchestra and jazz trio titled *The Resolution of a Dream*. Motley's *Highland Summit: A Suite for String Quartet and Jazz Quartet* was premiered at the Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival with the Vega String Quartet in 2006. Motley also performed his work *Suite Odyssey* with the Vega String Quartet at Carnegie Hall in 2007. He returned to Carnegie Hall in 2008, performing with clarinetists Andy Firth and Buddy DeFranco. In 2010, a composition based on the work of Toni Morrison premiered at the Sixth Biennial Tony Morrison Conference in Paris. Motley's arranging skills can also be heard on the title track of Jennifer Holiday's 2014 album *The Song Is You*.

Other engagements include the 2014 National Black Arts Festival salute to Wynton Marsalis with Marcus Belgrave, and the annual Emory University Jazz Festival with violinist Regina Carter (2015) and Anat Cohen (2016) with bassist Rodney Whitaker and drummer Carl Allen. Motley recently returned from Colombia, South America, where he participated in a jazz education outreach initiative for the Centro Colombo Americano, and he also traveled to Havana, Cuba, with the Victor Goines Sextet as a part of the Horns to Havana Education Exchange Project.

In addition to his work as an artist, Motley is committed to jazz education and awareness. As professor of performance and director of jazz studies at Emory, Motley has developed the Robert Strickland Jazz Studio—an innovative interactive teaching facility that integrates the rich heritage of American jazz with today's technology practices. Motley is also a member of the Jazz Education Network and the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.

SATURDAY PROGRAM

EMORY BIG BAND

<i>Doozy</i>	by Benny Carter
<i>Love for Sale</i>	by Cole Porter arr. Pete Meyers
<i>Checkpoint Charlie</i>	by Oliver Nelson arr. Bob Curnow
<i>The Very Best of Times</i>	by Gordon Goodwin
<i>Children of the Night</i>	by Wayne Shorter arr. Mark Taylor

Special appearances by Kenny Davis and Winard Harper.
Additional selections will be announced from the stage.

Gary Motley, ensemble director
Randy Hunter, ensemble assistant
Xavier Sayeed, student assistant

Kiran Sundar, alto saxophone
Noah Greenfield, alto saxophone
Randy Hunter, tenor saxophone*
Robert LaTerza, tenor saxophone
Wiley Clements, baritone saxophone

Max Inman, trombone
Bob Devine, trombone
Nathaniel Addicks, trombone
Richard Filmore, trombone

Brandon Schettler, trumpet
Carlos Jones, trumpet
Bob Lewis, trumpet*

Jian Li, piano
Neil Reddy, guitar
Chris Batterman, bass
Justin Chesarek, drums*

*denotes artist affiliate
**denotes contracted musician

EMORY JAZZ ARTIST AFFILIATES

Dan Baraszu, guitar, combo instructor

Detroit-born, guitarist-composer Dan Baraszu started playing guitar at age nine. Early on, he explored many different styles of music. However, when he first heard the genius of jazz guitarist Wes Montgomery, Baraszu devoted himself to becoming a die-hard jazz artist. His major influences include guitarists Joe Pass, Pat Martino, Pat Metheny, and John Scofield as well as other instrumentalists like Bill Evans, Horace Silver, John Coltrane, Sonny Rollins, and Charlie Parker. In addition to studying the works of the “masters of the jazz idiom,” Baraszu has a formal education in music. He has a bachelor’s degree from the renowned Berklee College of Music, where he majored in jazz composition and arranging. In addition, Baraszu has a master’s degree from the University of Miami with a major in jazz pedagogy. Baraszu lives in Atlanta and works as a freelance guitarist.

Justin Chesarek, drums

Justin Chesarek of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, has been studying and performing music since a young age. While earning a bachelor’s degree in music education at Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, Chesarek traveled abroad and performed at the Montreux and North Sea Jazz Festivals in Europe. A graduate of Georgia State University with a master of music degree, Chesarek teaches as an artist affiliate at Emory. He has had the opportunity to perform with Wynton Marsalis, Christian McBride, John Faddis, Dave Samuels, Gary Smulyan, Michael Mossman, and Jerry Bergonzi. Chesarek performs throughout the Atlanta area, and you can hear him weekly at Atlanta’s premiere jazz club, Churchill Grounds.

Randy Hunter, saxophone

Randy Hunter is a professional saxophonist, educational author, and private instructor from the Atlanta area. He studied music education with an emphasis in jazz pedagogy at Valdosta State College. With a focus on generating educational jazz material, Hunter’s endeavors are best represented by his series of etude, duet, and combo method books under the title *Complete Jazz Styles*. Several of the books have received endorsements from well-known jazz artists including Joe Lovano, Jerry Bergonzi, Randy Brecker, Bobby Shew, and John Fedchock. Hunter performs regularly in Atlanta, and he has an extensive performance, recording, and arranging history, including work with Duffy Jackson, Chubby Jackson, Cab Calloway, the Glenn Miller Band, and others.

Bob Lewis, trombone and trumpet

One of the most in-demand brass players in the Atlanta area, Bob Lewis has performed with many jazz icons from Lionel Hampton to Tony Bennett. He has recorded with artists including Matchbox 20 and the Four Freshmen (Grammy nomination). Lewis has also shared his musical skills on the soundtracks of several projects for the History Channel, the Weather Channel, PBS, and *Good Day Atlanta*. A graduate of Berry College, Lewis studied trombone with Harry Maddox, former principal trombonist with the Atlanta Symphony.

Chris Riggenbach, double bass and electric bass

Originally from the Atlanta area, bassist Chris Riggenbach has been a professional musician for more than fifteen years. He has a bachelor's degree in jazz studies from Georgia State University. For ten years, he played in show bands and jazz trios for Carnival Cruise Lines. Later, Riggenbach moved to Poland with his wife. In 2010, Riggenbach toured internationally with the Josh Lawrence Jazz 3 featuring trumpeter Josh Lawrence and drummer Mike DeCastro. The group performed at the Sopot Molo Jazz Festival, Piwnica pod Baranami in Krakow, and several other jazz festivals in Poland. Riggenbach has also performed with the Gavin Ahearn Trio, Larry Camp Quartet, Jazz Legacy Big Band, Gold Sparkle Band, Kenny Drew Jr., Matt Bokulic, Bill Van Dyke, Gwen Hughes, and Wild Rice.

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