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BAM and World Music Institute present

The Jazz Epistles

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House

Apr 18 & 19 at 8pm

Running time: approx. one hour & 30 mins, no intermission

Featuring Abdullah Ibrahim & Ekaya

With special guests

Ravi Coltrane (Apr 19)

& Freddie Hendrix

Season Sponsor:

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EKAYA

Abdullah Ibrahim piano

Noah Jackson cello, bass

Will Terrill drums

Cleave Guyton alto saxophone, flute, clarinet

Lance Bryant tenor saxophone

Andrae Murchison trombone, trumpet

Marshall McDonald baritone saxophone

GUESTS

Freddie Hendrix trumpet, flugelhorn

Ravi Coltrane tenor saxophone (Apr 19)

South African jazz legend Abdullah Ibrahim, then known as Dollar Brand, first heard the call of modern jazz in the late 1950s, and along with saxophonist Kippie Moeketsi, trumpeter Hugh Masekela, Jonas Gwangwa, Johnny Gertze on bass, and Early Mabuza and/or 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, after a long battle with prostate cancer, at the age of 78, Hugh Masekela passed away in Johannesburg. Ibrahim and his band Ekaya, with special guest Freddie Hendrix in the trumpet chair, plus Ravi Coltrane on April 19, will perform this concert in tribute to the legendary Jazz Epistles and Masekela.

This concert's repertoire will feature Abdullah Ibrahim's classic compositions plus new arrangements of the Jazz Epistles' compositions from the 1959 recording, *Jazz Epistle, Verse 1*.



ABDULLAH IBRAHIM

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, and Cape Malay music, as well as 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 Ibrahim's 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 at 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 would marry 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, Benjamin persuaded Duke Ellington to hear 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. A six-month tour with the Elvin Jones Quartet followed. In 1967 Ibrahim received a Rockefeller Foundation grant to attend The Juilliard School of Music. Being in the US afforded him the opportunity to interact with many progressive musicians, including Don Cherry, Ornette Coleman, John Coltrane, Pharoah 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, 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 *Mannenber ~ '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, with Sathima he founded the record company Ekapa in 1981. 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 New York City's Central Park, commemorating the 70th birthday of Nelson Mandela.

In 1990 Mandela, freed from prison, invited him home to South Africa. The fraught emotions of reacquainting there are reflected in *Mantra Modes* (1991), the first recording with South African musicians since 1976, and in *Krystna Blue* (1993). He memorably performed at Mandela's inauguration in 1994.

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' *Chocolat* (1988); *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.

Ibrahim celebrated his 70th birthday in October 2004, an occasion marked by the release of two CDs by Enja Records (the Munich-based label with which 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. The recipient of many awards and honorary doctorates, spiritually strong as both teacher and disciple, Ibrahim inherited the ancestral name SENZO. abdullahibrahim.co.za



Abdullah Ibrahim . Photo: Drum Social Network

ABDULLAH IBRAHIM

Select Discography	1988	<i>Mindif</i>
	1988	<i>Round Midnight at the Montmartre</i>
	1986	<i>South Africa</i>
2014	1985	<i>Water From an Ancient Well</i>
2013	1983	<i>Zimbabwe</i>
2010	1983	<i>Ekaya (Home)</i>
2009	1983	<i>Live at Sweet Basil (with Carlos Ward)</i>
2008	1982	<i>African Dawn</i>
2005	1981	<i>Duke's Memories</i>
	1980	<i>African Marketplace</i>
2004	1980	<i>Dollar Brand at Montreux</i>
2003	1980	<i>South African Sunshine</i>
2002	1980	<i>Piano Solo</i>
2001	1980	<i>Matsidiso</i>
2001	1979	<i>African Marketplace</i>
	1979	<i>Africa—Tears and Laughter</i>
2000	1979	<i>Echoes from Africa</i>
	1978	<i>Autobiography</i>
1999	1978	<i>Anthem for the New Nations</i>
1998	1977	<i>Streams of Consciousness</i>
	1977	<i>The Journey</i>
1997	1976	<i>Banyana—The Children of Africa</i>
1997	1973	<i>African Space Program</i>
1997	1973	<i>Ancient Africa</i>
1995	1973	<i>Good News from Africa</i>
1993	1973	<i>Fats, Duke & the Monk</i>
1991	1973	<i>African Portraits</i>
1991	1973	<i>Sangoma</i>
1991	1969	<i>African Piano</i>
1990	1969	<i>African Sketchbook</i>
1989	1965	<i>Anatomy of a South African Villa</i>
1989	1963	<i>The Dream 1960: Jazz Epistle, Verse 1</i>
1989		





The Jazz Epistles. Hugh Masekela holding trumpet.
Photo: Africa Media Online



Ravi Coltrane. Photo: Michael Weintrob

RAVI COLTRANE

Ravi Coltrane is a critically acclaimed Grammy nominated saxophonist, bandleader, and composer. In the course of a 20 plus-year career, Coltrane has worked as a sideman to many, recorded noteworthy albums for himself and others and founded a prominent independent record label, RKM.

Born in Long Island, the second son of John Coltrane and Alice Coltrane, Ravi was named after Indian sitar legend Ravi Shankar. He was raised in Los Angeles where his family moved after his father's death in 1967. His mother, Alice Coltrane, was a significant influence on Ravi and it was he who encouraged Alice to return to performance and the recording studio after a long absence. Subsequently, Ravi produced and played on Alice Coltrane's powerful, *Translinear Light*, which was released in 2004.

Coltrane has released six albums as a leader. His latest, *Spirit Fiction*, was released in June of 2012 for the Blue Note label. Additional credits include performances as well as recordings with Elvin Jones, Terence Blanchard, Kenny Baron, Steve Coleman, McCoy Tyner, Jack DeJohnette, Matt Garrison, Jeff "Tain" Watts, Geri Allen, Joanne Brackeem, and The Blue Note 7, among others.

Coltrane lives in Brooklyn and maintains a fast paced touring, recording, composing, and performance schedule. He leads the effort to restore the John Coltrane Home in Dix Hills, Long Island (thecoltranehome.org) and presides over important reissues of his parents' recordings.

FREDDIE HENDRIX

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, NJ native's skill and versatility has resulted in him working with a wide array of performers ranging from the Count Basie Orchestra and the Christian McBride Big Band, to Aretha Franklin, Stevie Wonder, and Alicia Keys.

Jersey Cat, his first recording as a leader, was recently released. In it, Hendrix has forged his own full-toned sound out of the tradition of Freddie Hubbard, Woody Shaw, Lee Morgan, and Clifford Brown. A powerful septet recording, *Jersey Cat* makes an impression from the opening bars of the powerful first track, "St. Peter's Walk." Equally at home on fiery, uptempo tracks, or on ballads like "You Don't Know What Love Is," Hendrix shows his range. And on originals like "On the Rise" (one of his first

compositions), "Madeira Nights," (inspired by his first trip to Europe), and "Whims of a Waltz," Hendrix's composing and arranging talents are on full display. Among the other selections on this well-rounded project is a performance of the Horace Silver classic "Peace" and a swinging rendition of Freddie Hubbard's "Hubtones."

A product of the esteemed jazz program at William Paterson University, with a masters in jazz studies and performance from New Jersey City University, 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, NJ. Whether leading his own groups, or lending his talents as a lead or section player in larger ensembles, Hendrix has flourished as one of the most exciting trumpet voices on the music scene.



Freddie Hendrix. Photo courtesy of the artist

WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE

Founded in 1985 as a not-for-profit, World Music Institute (WMI) has served as one of the leading presenters of world music and dance within the United States. WMI is committed to presenting the finest in traditional and contemporary music and dance from around the world with the goal of inspiring wonder for world cultures through music and dance. WMI aims to enrich the lives of people living in New York by promoting awareness of other cultures and their traditions. WMI collaborates with community organizations and academic institutions in fostering greater understanding and appreciation of the world's cultural traditions and presents at venues throughout the city.

Under new leadership since 2015, its 30th anniversary season, World Music Institute has introduced an ambitious expansion of concert offerings that include contemporary, experimental and avant-garde presentations, as well as the traditional music that WMI has long been known and admired for. In addition, the institution is thrilled to have launched new partnerships with BAM, 92nd Street Y, SummerStage, Merkin Concert Hall, National Sawdust, Storm King Art Center, Le Poisson Rouge, Littlefield, and Drom—while continuing partnerships with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Town Hall, Symphony Space, French Institute Alliance Française, and Apollo Theater (the annual Africa Now festival).

WMI has presented more than 1,500 concerts and events featuring artists from more than 100 countries across all continents. Through powerful programming, WMI is creating a movement that promotes awareness and engagement of other cultures, helping to encourage deeper understanding of communities around the globe.

worldmusicinstitute.org