

Jewish Museum

BANG ON ▶ CAN



**The Jewish Museum and Bang on a Can Present
Bang on a Can: From the Margins
Featuring Recent MacArthur Recipient Steve Coleman & Friends**

**November 6 Performance Tied to Exhibition of Abstract Expressionism
*From the Margins: Lee Krasner | Norman Lewis, 1945-1952***

New York, NY – **Bang on a Can: From the Margins**, a concert featuring recent MacArthur “Genius” Fellowship recipient Steve Coleman & Friends, will take place at the Jewish Museum on Thursday, November 6 at 7:30pm. Tied to the Museum exhibition *From the Margins: Lee Krasner | Norman Lewis, 1945-1952*, which features innovative works by two powerful abstract painters, the performance will highlight the relationship between Abstract Expressionism and jazz in mid-century New York City. This program is the second concert of the Jewish Museum and Bang on a Can’s partnership to produce a series of dynamic musical performances at the Museum from June 2014 to May 2015, inspired by the Jewish Museum’s diverse slate of exhibitions.

The collision between Abstract Expressionism and jazz began in the galleries and clubs of New York in the 1940s, as avant-garde artists from each world learned more about each other’s artforms. This connection pushed jazz in a more formal, intellectual direction exemplified by a number of thoughtful composer/performers. An heir to this great tradition is the Chicago composer, saxophone player and bandleader Steve Coleman, who has performed with the big bands of Thad Jones and Mel Lewis, Cecil Taylor, and Sam Rivers, released more than 25 records, and is a 2014 recipient of a prestigious MacArthur Fellowship. Coleman is joined by musicians and frequent collaborators **Jonathan Finlayson** (trumpet) and **Anthony Tidd** (bass).

The November 6 performance will feature Steve Coleman in a rare appearance without percussion accompaniment. Normally the drums are an important element in his music, however, in this case, the audience will hear the rhythm being accentuated by the melodic instruments: alto saxophone, trumpet, and bass. The musicians will interpret the paintings of Lee Krasner and Norman Lewis, spontaneously composing and improvising with each other live on stage. Spontaneous composition has been at the forefront of Coleman’s work throughout his career. The musical language, or syntax, between these three musicians has been developed over the course of many years, and moves through space and levels of intensity similar to the works of Lee Krasner and Norman Lewis.

About *From the Margins: Lee Krasner | Norman Lewis, 1945-1952*

From the Margins: Lee Krasner | Norman Lewis, 1945-1952, on view through February 1, 2015, features key 1940s and 1950s works by two powerful painters during a transformative period in American art when both artists were experimenting with innovative approaches joining

abstraction and culturally-specific references. Lee Krasner (1908–1984) and Norman Lewis (1909–1979) were major contributors to Abstract Expressionism but as a woman and as an African American, respectively, they were often overlooked in mainstream criticism of the time. The work of Krasner and Lewis has intriguing formal similarities while reflecting each artist's personal background. Krasner's Little Image pictures relate to her childhood upbringing and study of Hebrew, and are today considered significant contributions to Abstract Expressionism. Lewis's Little Figure paintings reference African American cultural heritage, including urban life, Harlem, jazz, and textiles. Beneath the formal elegance of Lewis's paintings runs a characteristically subtle inflection of his lifelong social activism and humanitarian concerns. Both artists' work of this formative period embodied the all-over approach characteristic of the style. Yet, rather than the bold, gestural strokes of their peers they focused on smaller, repeated images with self-reflective cultural references. Their paintings—brimming with gesture, image, and incident—are dynamic yet modest in scale compared with the canvases of many of their contemporaries.

Public programs are made possible by endowment support from the William Petschek Family, the Trustees of the Salo W. and Jeannette M. Baron Foundation, William Halo, Benjamin Zucker, the Marshall M. Weinberg Fund, with additional support from Marshall M. Weinberg, the Rita J. and Stanley H. Kaplan Foundation, the Saul and Harriet M. Rothkopf Family Foundation and Ellen Liman. Public support is provided by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

The partnership launched in June with a free, outdoor, kick-off performance by Asphalt Orchestra as part of the Museum Mile Festival, and a July concert in conjunction with the exhibition, *Other Primary Structures*. Upcoming events include:

Bang on a Can: Beauty Is Power, featuring Maya Beiser on January 29, 2015, in conjunction with *Helena Rubinstein: Beauty Is Power*.

Bang on a Can: Revolution Of The Eye featuring the Bang on a Can All-Stars, on May 14, 2015 in conjunction with *Revolution of the Eye: Modern Art and the Birth of American Television*.

Tickets for the November 6 program are \$18 general public; \$15 students and senior citizens; and \$12 for Jewish Museum members and Bang on a Can list members, and include exhibition admission prior to the performance. Further program and ticket information is available by calling 212.423.3337 or at TheJewishMuseum.org/calendar. The Jewish Museum is located at Fifth Avenue and 92nd Street, Manhattan.

About the Artists

Raised on Chicago's South Side, **Steve Coleman** began his relationship with the saxophone at age thirteen, and soon discovered the music of Charlie Parker, a favorite of his father's. During his college years, the saxophonist received the guidance of Chicago veterans like Von Freeman and Bunky Green and gained an education only possible through listening to the greats and trial by fire on the bandstand. Before long, Steve moved to New York and began performing with the big bands of Thad Jones and Mel Lewis, Cecil Taylor, and Sam Rivers. A band that Steve put together with the cornetist Graham Haynes to hone their craft while busking in New York's busy streets evolved into Five Elements, Steve's flagship ensemble. A concept known as M-Base has bound the group's many explorations, which are informed by Steve's travels and studies of African diasporic traditions from around the globe. These

collaborative explorations have informed the conceptions of some of the most innovative minds in our music, including Greg Osby, Cassandra Wilson, Geri Allen, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, Dave Holland, Robin Eubanks, Vijay Iyer, Ambrose Akinmusire, and countless others. Steve's work is documented on over twenty five releases. In addition, he presented acclaimed weekly workshops at The Jazz Gallery in New York City almost every season from 2004-2013, where anyone with a thirst for knowledge could go to absorb the infinitude he has to offer. Steve likes to think of himself "like a [West African] griot"; he hopes to function "like a person that's documenting something in music, telling a story and passing information down."

Jonathan Finlayson has been recognized by *The New York Times* as "...an incisive and often surprising trumpeter," who is "...fascinated with composition." Born in 1982 in Berkeley, CA, Finlayson began playing the trumpet at the age of ten in the Oakland public school system. He came under the tutelage of Bay Area legend Robert Porter, a veteran trumpeter from the bebop era who took Finlayson under his wing; he was often seen accompanying Porter on his gigs about town and sitting in on the popular Sunday nights jam session at the Bird Cage. He subsequently attended the New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music where he studied with Eddie Henderson, Jimmy Owens and Cecil Bridgewater.

Finlayson is a disciple of the saxophonist/composer/conceptualist Steve Coleman, having joined his band Five Elements in 2000 at the age of 18. He is widely admired for his ability to tackle cutting-edge musical concepts with aplomb. Finlayson has performed and recorded in groups led by Steve Lehman, Mary Halvorson, Craig Taborn, Henry Threadgill and played alongside notables such as Von Freeman, Jason Moran, Dafnis Prieto and Vijay Iyer.

Anthony Tidd is a Philly transplant, originally born and raised in London. A well-known name on the jazz scene and veteran touring bass player, he has graced stages alongside many staple names including Steve Coleman, The Roots, Rudresh Mahanthappa, Wayne Krantz, Meshell N'degeocello, Common, and Jill Scott, to name a few.

Anthony has also made a name for himself in the music production world, producing records for well-known artists such as The Roots, Macy Grey, Zap Mama, The Black Eyed Peas, Jill Scott, and Ursula Rucker, as well as composing scores for major film and television projects over the years. As creator and Director of the Creative Music Program, Jazz Camp of Philadelphia and curator of the popular concert series Sittin' In, at the prestigious Kimmel Center, Anthony now divides his time between all of the above, as well saving some to educate the next generation of musical talent.

About Bang on a Can

Bang on a Can is dedicated to making music new. Founded by composers Michael Gordon, David Lang, and Julia Wolfe, who curated the first Marathon concert in 1987 and remain co-Artistic Directors to this day, Bang on a Can has been creating an international community dedicated to innovative music, wherever it is found. With adventurous programs, it commissions new composers; performs, presents, and records new work; develops new audiences; and educates the musicians of the future. "Bang on a Can plays "a central role in fostering a new kind of audience that doesn't concern itself with boundaries. If music is made with originality and integrity, these listeners will come" (*The New York Times*). Current projects include the annual Bang on a Can Marathon; The People's Commissioning Fund, a membership program to commission emerging composers; the Bang on a Can All-Stars, who

tour to major festivals and concert venues around the world; the Bang on a Can Summer Music Festival at MASS MoCA, a professional development program for young musicians; Asphalt Orchestra, Bang on a Can's extreme street band; and Found Sound Nation, a musical outreach program partnering with the U.S. State Department to create OneBeat, a program that bridges the gulf between young American musicians and young musicians from developing countries. For more information, visit www.bangonacan.org.

About the Jewish Museum

Located on Museum Mile at Fifth Avenue and 92nd Street, the Jewish Museum is one of the world's preeminent institutions devoted to exploring art and Jewish culture from ancient to contemporary, offering intellectually engaging, educational, and provocative exhibitions and programs for people of all ages and backgrounds. The Museum was established in 1904, when Judge Mayer Sulzberger donated 26 ceremonial objects to The Jewish Theological Seminary as the core of a museum collection. Today, the Museum maintains a collection of over 30,000 works of art, artifacts, and broadcast media reflecting global Jewish identity, and presents a diverse schedule of internationally acclaimed temporary exhibitions.

The Jewish Museum is located at 1109 Fifth Avenue at 92nd Street, New York City. Museum hours are Saturday, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, 11am to 5:45pm; Thursday, 11am to 8pm; and Friday, 11am to 4pm. Museum admission is \$15.00 for adults, \$12.00 for senior citizens, \$7.50 for students, free for visitors 18 and under and Jewish Museum members. Admission is Pay What You Wish on Thursdays from 5pm to 8pm and free on Saturdays. For information on the Jewish Museum, the public may call 212.423.3200 or visit the website at www.thejewishmuseum.org.

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