Guest Artist Recital

2016–17 Season
5th Concert

Sunday 11 September 2016
Dalton Center Recital Hall
7:30 p.m.

AFINIDAD
Edward Simon, Piano
David Binney, Saxophone
Scott Colley, Bass
Brian Blade, Drums

IMANI WINDS
Valerie Coleman, Flute
Toyin Spellman-Diaz, Oboe
Mark Dover, Clarinet
Monica Ellis, Bassoon
Jeff Scott, Horn

“House of Numbers”

Simon Shaheen
arr. Jeff Scott
Dance Mediterranea

David Binney
Where Worlds Collide

Edward Simon/Afinidad
House of Numbers

Chamber Music America

House of Numbers by Edward Simon and Afinidad has been made possible with support from Chamber Music America’s 2014 New Jazz Works: Commissioning and Ensemble Development program funded through the generosity of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

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**PROGRAM NOTES**

*Dance Mediterranea* is one of Simon Shaheen’s classic compositions. The essence of traditional Middle Eastern sounds met with virtuosic compositional technique is more than apparent in this multi-dimensional, multi-metered piece. It mixes improvisation with block ensemble writing concluding with a fiery finish. This arrangement stems from the collaboration Imani Winds has established with master oud player, Shaheen.

Pianist and composer Edward Simon’s *House of Numbers* is a 40 minute suite in four movements exploring the cross-cultural meanings of numbers and the possibilities offered by bringing jazz and classical musicians together. The work incorporates musical traditions from Europe, Africa, North and South America in composed structures with improvised sections. Simon’s own jazz quartet Afinidad and the classical chamber ensemble Imani Winds will give the premiere performance in September 2016 at the Brubeck Institute in Stockton, Calif.

*House of Numbers* brings together the distinct and often exclusive worlds of jazz and classical music, challenging chamber musicians to stretch their improvising and interpretive skills, while inviting jazz musicians into the formal structures of classical music. The numbers 3, 4, 5, and 7, and their cultural and musical implications, form the basis of the new work, with one movement in the suite devoted to each.

The movements delve into all the formal and emotional possibilities generated by a given number. The number 3, for example, can suggest triple meters such as 3/4, 6/4 or 6/8, which in turn could suggest certain grooves or genres, especially the music of South America. It can also point to the use of triads and three-bar phrases. “To me, however, the number 3 suggests balance,” says the Venezuelan born composer. “The even distribution of forces into three equal parts, which in turn suggests equilibrium.” Simon’s creative approach focuses on allowing all musical and cultural facets of a number to manifest and evolve into a musical composition. The Afinidad quartet and Imani Winds represent the jazz and classical worlds, respectively, executing Simon’s mission of integrating orchestral instruments into a jazz setting. His band mates in Afinidad, saxophonist David Binney, bassist Scott Colley, and drummer Brian Blade, are versatile jazz players whose musicality, openness and breadth allow him the greatest freedom as a composer. Their musical bond of trust, built over many years, underpin and encourage the explorations taking place in *House of Numbers*. Imani Winds are Valerie Coleman, flute; Toyin Spellman-Diaz, oboe; Mark Dover, clarinet; Monica Ellis, bassoon, and Jeff Scott, horn. They were chosen for their musical adventurousness and history of cross-genre collaborations, as well as their improvising skills and proficient ensemble playing.

Beyond his extensive jazz background, Simon reports an affinity for the Western classical tradition, especially minimalist composers, and their way of expanding a simple idea to its fullest realization. “In my compositions, I endeavor to develop a sound that strikes a balance between the structural clarity of classical music and the moment-to-moment interaction of jazz,” he says of his own creative process. “Aesthetically, I’m concerned with simplicity and economy. I strive to get to the essence of the message I wish to communicate by making every note count, just as every word counts in a good story.”

Drawing upon and structuring source material from four continents – Europe, Africa, North America, and South America – and examining the relationships of numbers to many cultures, will speak to Simon’s own experience as a United States immigrant and the challenges of adaptation and identity faced by all multiracial individuals, particularly artists. The result will combine ethnic rhythms, jazz harmony, and improvisation organized around each number. The idea behind *House of Numbers* is to hear the story numbers want to tell. For more information, please visit edwardsimon.com.