Guest Artist Recital

Tuesday 12 November 2019
Dalton Center Recital Hall
7:30 p.m.

PERSONA
Caroline Davis, Saxophone
Rob Clearfield, Piano
Sam Weber, Bass
Jay Sawyer, Drums

Program to be selected from the following:

Caroline Davis
Anthem

John Stubblefield
Baby Man

Caroline Davis
Bots

Caroline Davis
Constructs

Rob Clearfield
Fields

Rob Clearfield
Green

Rob Clearfield
Life Imitates Art

Caroline Davis
Lithe

Caroline Davis
Loss

Rob Clearfield
Maybe Next Time

Eric Dolphy
Miss Ann

Caroline Davis
People Look Like Tanks

Cecil Taylor
Port of Call

Rob Clearfield
Secrets

Rob Clearfield
A Soothing, Melancholy Breeze

Thelonious Monk
Trinkle, Tinkle

Building emergencies will be indicated by flashing lights and spoken announcement within the seating area. If the notification is for fire, please exit the building immediately. The tornado safe area in Dalton Center is along the lockers in the brick hallway to your left as you exit to the lobby behind you. In any emergency, walk—do not run—to the nearest exit. Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices during the performance. Because of legal issues, any video or audio recording of this performance is forbidden without prior consent from the School of Music. Thank you for your cooperation.
Mobile since her birth in Singapore, composer, and saxophonist CAROLINE DAVIS lives in Brooklyn, New York. Her debut album, Live Work & Play, was featured on All About Jazz’s best releases, and she was named one of JazzTimes’ Best New Artists in 2012. Her second album, Doors: Chicago Storylines, is an audio documentary that uniquely sets stories from Chicago’s jazz scene from the 80s and 90s alongside her original music. In 2018, she won the Downbeat Critic’s Poll “rising star” in the alto saxophone category.

Davis has shared musical moments with a diverse group of musicians, from jazz to improvised and composed music, recently including Lee Konitz, Angelica Sanchez, Matt Mitchell, Miles Okazaki, Matt Wilson, and Billy Kaye. Her regular collaborations include Maitri, Whirlpool, and Persona (with Rob Clearfield). In March of 2019, she was a composer-in-residence at the esteemed MacDowell Colony, and was awarded the Jerome Hill Artist Fellowship for her work for 2019-20.

As an educator, Davis brings her unique knowledge of music and psychology to her teaching, as she acquired a Ph.D. in Music Cognition at Northwestern University in 2010. She has been on the faculty at Litchfield Jazz Camp for the past 10 years, Stanford Jazz Institute for the past 3 years, and has been a guest educator at Northwestern University, University of Colorado at Boulder, St. Xavier University, Columbia College, DePaul University, University of Texas at Arlington, Loyola University, Texas Tech, New Trier High School, Evanston Township High School, Denver School of the Arts, Newman Smith High School, and Jazz at Lincoln Center. She has also participated in several jazz mentorship programs, including IAJE’s Sisters in Jazz and the Kennedy Center’s Betty Carter Jazz Ahead Program.

Born in Grand Rapids, MI, JAY SAWYER is one of the most in-demand rising star drummers in New York City. He has shared the stage with artists such as Freddy Cole, John McNeil, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Stefon Harris, Donny McCaslin, Benito Gonzalez, and Shai Maestro among others. Sawyer is also a first call drummer for many up-and-coming musicians in New York including Itamar Borochov, Caroline Davis, Tomoko Omura, John Raymond and many more. He has toured extensively in the USA and Europe, including performances at the Montreal, Detroit and Chicago Jazz Festivals, Festival Eclats d’E mail in Limoges, France and more.

While attending Western Michigan University and the University of Illinois, respectively, Sawyer studied with some of the most well-respected jazz drummers including Billy Hart, Tim Froncek, Keith Hall and Dana Hall. Each nurtured his passion and skill for the art of jazz drums. As a result, Sawyer has become a passionate and gifted educator, both as a private lesson teacher as well as in a group setting.

Hailing from Oak Park, IL, pianist, guitarist, composer and improver ROB CLEARFIELD grew up steeped in music. After a childhood filled with garage bands, gospel choirs, South American guitar ensembles, and everything in between, Rob moved to Chicago to study at the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. During and after college, he embedded himself in the local music scene, residing in the city for fifteen years.

Over the course of his career, Clearfield has had the privilege of performing with artists such as John Wetton, Patricia Barber, Howard Levy, Makaya McCraven, Marquis Hill, Eighth Blackbird, Fareed Haque, Isaiah Sharkey, and Greg Ward, among others. He was a founding member of the prog-rock group District 97 and the indie rock band Hood Smoke, and is the regular pianist with bassist Matt Ulery, trumpeter Itamar Borochov, and vocalist Grazyna Auguscik.

To date, Clearfield has released six recordings of his original music. He made his bandleading debut and his first two albums with the jazz-meets-indie-rock band Information Superhighway. After the Superhighway disbanded in 2011, Clearfield has led and recorded with many different instrumental jazz ensembles and released two albums of (mostly) improvised solo piano music. Howard Reich of the Chicago Tribune says, “In our very noisy world, pianist-composer Rob Clearfield’s music arrives as a kind of balm.”

In addition to his work as a bandleader, Clearfield has received multiple commissions to compose on a larger scale. Since 2007, he has scored theater productions for Purdue University, a collaboration that is still ongoing. From 2008-2012, he was commissioned annually to compose a song cycle for the experimental church Grace Commons in Chicago. In 2013, he scored the short film The Lost Remake of Beau Geste. 2019 saw Clearfield’s orchestral debut, composing a set of pieces for string orchestra with jazz quartet, commissioned and premiered by the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra in College Station, TX.

As his career continues to take him to new places, Clearfield has had the opportunity to connect with students all over the world. He has given masterclasses and clinics at the Conservatorio Nacional de Música (Mexico City, Mexico), the American Jazz Museum (Kansas City, MO), Bydgoszcz Conservatory of Music (Bydgoszcz, Poland), and the University of North Texas (Denton, TX). He has served on faculty at the Keith Hall Summer Drum Intensive at Western Michigan University and has been part of the ensemble-in-residence at the Guimarães Jazz Festival (Guimarães, Portugal), working with students from Escola Superior de Música e Artes do Espetáculo (Porto, Portugal).

Rob currently resides in Paris, France.

SAM WEBER is a bassist, composer, arranger, and educator based in Brooklyn, New York. A native of Kalamazoo, Michigan, he is an alumni of Western Michigan University, earning both a BA in Jazz Studies (2010) and an MA in Music (2011). Weber relocated to New York City in 2012, where he currently performs full time playing everything from jazz, hip hop, and rock to bluegrass and contemporary classical music. Weber is also active as an educator, and has traveled around the US and internationally presenting clinics, lectures, and masterclasses, in addition to teaching privately.