

THE PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM AND THE  
AMHERST COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC  
PRESENT

**Jason Moran**  
**and the Harlem Hell Fighters**  
**James Reese Europe**  
**and the Absence of Ruin**

**Featuring:**

Jason Moran, piano  
Darryl Harper, clarinet  
Logan Richardson, alto saxophone  
Brian Settles, tenor saxophone  
David Adewumi, trumpet  
Chris Bates, trombone  
Reginald Cyntje, trombone  
Jose Davila, tuba  
Tarus Mateen, bass  
Nasheet Waits, drums

*with contributions from artist/writer/filmmaker John Akomfrah and  
visual materials from acclaimed cinematographer Bradford Young*

Friday, September 23, 2022 • Buckley Recital Hall • 8 PM

MUSIC AT **AMHERST** SERIES

## PROGRAM NOTES

There is great beauty in the life of Lieutenant James Reese Europe. Within the scholarship of who he was and what his music is, it becomes clear that the history surrounding him is a complex and tightly woven knot. Each strand of the cord holds a uniquely American history, a history that also births another complex knot, JAZZ.

Europe becomes a freedom fighter. He learns aspects of this at an early age as his violin teacher is the son of the great abolitionist Frederick Douglass. An early lesson he understands is that sound and freedom aid one another. With his violin he arrives in New York on a mission. Much of this mission revolves around music, but his greater mission will be that of demanding equality of African-American performers, PEOPLE. He finds fame by producing music for many societies: dances, parties, ceremonies, concerts. In 1910 he formed the groundbreaking Clef Club, a union for African-American musicians. His 1911 standing room only Carnegie Hall premiere of the Clef Club Orchestra was a sensation. His work developing dance music with the famous dancing duo, Vernon and Irene Castle, innovated the fox trot tempos and other dance steps. With each of these developments Europe always found a larger stage. The “stage” will always be a portal for a place to test what is real and surreal.

In WWI he found his largest and most dangerous stage. When he joined the New York’s 15th Regiment, later becoming the 369th Infantry Harlem Hellfighters, he knew African-American soldiers could not fight alongside white soldiers. His writing partner Noble Sissle was shocked Europe signed up. Sissle asked Europe if he could get out of the war, would he? Europe replied “If I could, I would not. My country called me and I must answer. And if I live to come back, I will startle the world with my music.”

He indeed startled the world. 100 years later, we celebrate a brave individual among a company of soldiers, The Harlem Hellfighters, who predict a thought Martin Luther King Jr. would write some 47 years later in his letter from a Birmingham jail: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

Hear We Are.

Jason Moran

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*Please silence your mobile phone, pager, watch, or any other electronic noise-makers during the concert. Please refrain from using electronic devices with light-producing screens, as they are distracting to your fellow audience members.*

***Cameras and recording devices are strictly prohibited.***

# JASON MORAN

Pianist and composer **Jason Moran** has established himself as a risk-taker and trendsetter for new directions in jazz. *Rolling Stone* calls him “the most provocative thinker in current jazz.” It’s that incomparable talent and unyielding drive towards innovation that earned Moran a prestigious MacArthur “Genius Grant” Fellowship and the title of Kennedy Center Artistic Director for Jazz. Since 2000, Moran and his trio **The Bandwagon (Tarus Mateen and Nasheet Waits)** have dazzled audiences at elite venues worldwide. Moran has also performed with many acclaimed artists such as Charles Lloyd and Dave Holland. He composed a ballet for Alonzo King LINES Ballet, conceived a jazz and skateboarding collaboration, wrote the film score for *Selma*, and paid homage to two legendary pianists in his Blue Note album, *All Rise: A Joyful Elegy for Fats Waller*, and his multimedia program, *In My Mind: Monk at Town Hall 1959*. A prolific composer, Moran released two albums in 2018 – *Looks of a Lot*, which was commissioned by the Chicago Symphony Center, and *Music for Joan Jonas*, a collaboration with performance artist Joan Jonas containing excerpts from three of their major collaborations. The *Los Angeles Times* hails Moran as, “a startlingly gifted pianist with a relentless thirst for experimentation.”



## Amherst College Music Department Upcoming Events

- 9/30 M@A Aizuri Quartet** 8 PM. Tickets required.\$
- 10/1 Aizuri Side-by-Side** at the Drake 12 PM. Members of the Aizuri play Brahms with Amherst High School musicians
- ASO Concert:** “Come Sunday: Building Community” 4 PM
- 10/6,13,20,27 Jazz@Friedmann Room** Keefe Campus Center 9 PM
- 10/14 M@A Blue Heron Vocal Ensemble:** Ockeghem *Requiem* 8 PM  
Tickets required. FREE.
- 10/22 M@A Imani Winds** with Corey Smythe, piano 8 PM  
“Revolutionary aka The Civil Rights Project” Tickets req. \$

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**M@A Tickets are available at [amherst.universitytickets.com](https://amherst.universitytickets.com)**  
NEW: FREE tickets with your AC ID: contact [concerts@amherst.edu](mailto:concerts@amherst.edu)

# Presidential Scholars

DISTINGUISHED VOICES IN ANTI-RACIST SCHOLARSHIP

During their short-term residencies, visiting scholars present a public lecture in the President's Colloquium on Race and Racism, hold seminars, and meet with students, faculty, and staff.



**Jason Moran**

SEPTEMBER 19–23, 2022

Pianist, composer, MacArthur Fellow, and Artistic Director for Jazz at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.



**Karma Chávez**

OCTOBER 23–29, 2022

Chair and Associate Professor in the Department of Mexican American and Latina/o Studies at the University of Texas at Austin.



**Hilton Als**

FEBRUARY 24–26, 2023

Associate Professor of Writing at Columbia University, staff writer and theater critic for *The New Yorker* magazine, Guggenheim Fellow and 2017 winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Criticism.



**Sadiya Hartman**

APRIL 4–7, 2023

Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University, with a focus on African American and American literature and cultural history.

Learn more about our Presidential Scholars:  
[amherst.edu/go/pressscholars](https://amherst.edu/go/pressscholars)

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*All events are free and held in Buckley Recital Hall unless otherwise noted*  
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