Barbary Coast Jazz Ensemble
Taylor Ho Bynum, director

Traditions and Transformations:
Music from Ellington to Sun Ra

with
Wes Brown, bass

Funded in part by the Don Glasgo Fund, a gift to the Don Glasgo Fund in memory of Alan L. Gottesman '13, the Dartmouth Class of 1975 Guest Artist Residency Fund, the William D. 1905 and Besse M. Blatner Fund No. 1, the Hopkins Center Performance Fund No. 1, and the Visiting Performers Supplementary Fund No. 1.
Program

While listeners are encouraged to make sound as the spirit moves them, please refrain from applause until after the music is concluded—while it is common to clap after “solos” at jazz concerts, we never know when one finishes and another starts, and sometimes the transitions are the best spots.

(Order will be announced from the stage)

Mary’s Idea
Mary Lou Williams (1930/38)

Koko
Duke Ellington (1940)

Concierto for Cootie/Do Nothing ‘Til You Hear from Me
Duke Ellington, lyrics by Bob Russell (1940/44)

Haitian Fight Song
Charles Mingus (1957)

Fate in a Pleasant Mood
Sun Ra (1960)

Four Five Six
Frank Foster (1962)

A Child is Born
Thad Jones, lyrics by Alec Wilder (1969)

Revamped
Taylor Ho Bynum (2008)

Tonight’s concert will also feature a small group performance with some special guests of music by Thelonious Monk (1917-1982), celebrating the 100th anniversary of his birth, and will incorporate Anthony Braxton’s system of Language Music conducting as a means of shaping the sound in the moment.

Program Notes

For my first concert as director of the Barbary Coast, I wanted to dig into the century-long history of the big band/creative orchestra tradition, and pull out some cherished favorites that demonstrate why I so love this music. These brilliant artists pioneered a new way of organizing sound, finding a magical balance between the individual voice and the collective ensemble, between the improvised moment and the composed gesture. In kicking off a new era with the Coast, we’ll start by looking back—acknowledging the past as the first step towards moving into the future.

The program includes two pieces by Duke Ellington (1899-1974)—someone whose influence is so profound, I would argue he’s underrated when lauded as “the greatest jazz composer.” Koko might be described as Ellington’s version of Beethoven’s Fifth in miniature, an expansion of a minor blues form and a simple motif into a symphony for improvisors. Concierto for Cootie, originally a feature for his inimitable trumpet soloist Cootie Williams, later became a pop hit with the lyrics “Do Nothing ‘Til You Hear from Me.” For much of my twenties, I used to listen to a live version of Cootie before every gig to get psyched up.
The composer and pianist Mary Lou Williams (1910-1981) was born a decade after Ellington, but as a child prodigy was already an active performer by the mid-1920s. Ellington described her as “perpetually contemporary…like soul on soul”—a fitting tribute considering the continual musical evolutions throughout Williams’s career: from the Kansas City swing of the 1930s; to her mentorship of bop pioneers like Parker, Gillespie and Monk in the ‘40s; to her spiritually informed works like Black Christ of the Andes and Mary Lou’s Mass after a conversion to Catholicism in 1957; to collaborations with artists as diverse as choreographer Alvin Ailey and avant-garde pianist Cecil Taylor in the ‘70s. Tonight we play a classic from her early years with Andy Kirk’s Clouds of Joy, a stomper entitled Mary’s Idea. (This seems particularly appropriate, considering the Hopkins Center for the Arts is now under the leadership of our own fantastic Mary Lou...)

By the time Charles Mingus (1922-1979) and Thad Jones (1923-1986) reached their artistic maturity in the 1950s, the “big band era” had faded, and for reasons of both economics and taste, jazz had become dominated by smaller ensembles. Nonetheless, both persisted to find avenues for their particular brands of orchestral genius. Mingus played his bass like a one-man big band, and made any-sized band seem bigger than it was; Haitian Fight Song captures a taste of the unruly joy of his music. After a long tenure in Count Basie’s band, Thad Jones started co-leading a rehearsal band with drummer Mel Lewis in the late ‘60s, bringing together musicians on their night off from Broadway shows and commercial jingles to make some real music on Monday nights at the Village Vanguard. That blossomed into one of the most celebrated large ensembles of the era—with the ballad A Child is Born one of their signature compositions.

Saxophonist/composer Frank Foster (1928-2011) was another Basie alum; his gut-bucket blues Four Five Six was first part of the Basie band book, then later played by Foster’s own Loud Minority big band in the 1970s. My first mentor, bass trombonist Bill Lowe, was a member of the Loud Minority, and introduced me to this composition and arrangement when I was still in high school—probably one of the first tunes I ever improvised on. As I consider the heavy legacy of taking over the reins of an ensemble nearly 100 years old, after forty years of Don Glasgo’s inspired leadership, Foster also provides a good example—he had to replace Lester Young in the tenor sax chair of the Basie band, and he was born on the exact same day as John Coltrane! If he could negotiate that kind of musical pressure and find his own voice, I should be OK here at Dartmouth.

Speaking of Don’s legacy, one of our (many) shared passions is the music of Sun Ra (1914-1993). Leading his legendary Arkestra, Ra combined the model of the Fletcher Henderson big band tradition with Egyptian mythology and science fiction philosophy into a stew that was recognized only decades later as the birth of Afrofuturism. One of my favorite of his compositions is the aptly titled Fate in a Pleasant Mood—a tune I used to play as an encore with my own small groups. Tonight we’ll take Don’s arrangement of the piece for the Coast, expanding on it with some new timbres to honor both bandleaders: Glasgo and Ra.

Throughout the concert, you’ll see me waving my hands and offering a variety of gestures and symbols to the orchestra. Sometime this will look like traditional conducting, but at other times it will look like something different—mostly I’ll be using some variation on Anthony Braxton’s Language Music. The spontaneous shaping of ensemble sound has been part of the big band tradition since the beginning, but Braxton (b. 1945) was one of the first to organize that idea into a specific gestural vocabulary. Since he’s been one of my closest mentors, friends and collaborators for almost two decades, I couldn’t imagine leading an ensemble without his explicit influence on my conducting techniques.
Finally, we will play one piece of mine—a tune called *Revamped*, which, true to its title, takes vamps of different feels and phrase lengths to generate a little playground for the musicians to have some fun. I first recorded the piece about a decade ago with a band I named Positive Catastrophe—a ten-piece group that was my first step down the windy, bumpy, but ultimately beautiful and rewarding path of leading and composing for large ensembles. It is my great pleasure to have that path lead here to Dartmouth with the Coast, and I look forward to sharing the next leg of the journey with you.

*Taylor Ho Bynum*

### About the Artists

**Wes Brown** bass has the distinction of having played with artists from three different centuries. Wes toured the world with legendary pianist Earl “Fatha” Hines, and has played with such iconoclasts as Wadada Leo Smith, Anthony Braxton, Fred Ho and Anthony Davis. His versatile work on bass, keyboard and African flute is documented on numerous recordings, ranging from the Black Rebels reggae ensemble, to the Ghanaian band Talking Drums, to the global jazz collective quartet Blood Drum Spirit.

The *Barbary Coast* is the student jazz ensemble of Dartmouth College. Composed almost entirely of non-music majors, the Coast is dedicated to the idea that a large group of people improvising together, navigating forms and making choices in real time, can be a transformative experience.

The jazz big band has been a model of creative interaction, structural innovation and American ingenuity for over a century—and the Barbary Coast has been around for almost as long! In its rich history, the ensemble has hosted a diversity of guest artists, from jazz legends like Max Roach, Dexter Gordon and Clark Terry, to leaders of the avant-garde like Sun Ra, Don Cherry and Lester Bowie, to Latin jazz masters like Eddie Palmieri and Jerry and Andy Gonzales. This tradition continues with visits from some of the brightest voices of today's creative music scene like Nicole Mitchell, Mary Halvorson and Tomeka Reid.

The Coast explores the full spectrum of jazz and creative music, from pioneers like Duke Ellington, Mary Lou Williams and Charles Mingus, to the latest original compositions by its guest artists, director and students. Each term brings a new theme—whether the focus is on a particular composer or historical period, a collaboration with guests or other Hop Ensembles, or a program conceived by graduating students. The Barbary Coast continues to improvise and evolve, living up to its reputation as "the most eclectic college jazz ensemble in the country."

*Taylor Ho Bynum* director, who began leading the Barbary Coast Jazz and Creative Music Ensemble at Dartmouth in 2017, has spent his career navigating the intersections between structure and improvisation—through musical composition, performance and interdisciplinary collaboration, and through production, organizing, teaching, writing and advocacy. Bynum’s expressionistic playing on cornet and his expansive vision as composer have garnered him critical attention on over twenty recordings as a bandleader and dozens more as a sideman, including being named Downbeat’s Rising Star on Trumpet in the 2017 Critics Poll. His varied endeavors include leading his own bands (such as his long-running Sextet and his 15-piece creative orchestra The PlusTet), his Acoustic Bicycle Tours (where he travels to concerts solely by bike across thousands of miles) and his stewardship of Anthony Braxton’s Tri-Centric Foundation (which he serves as executive director,
Barbary Coast Jazz Ensemble

Taylor Ho Bynum, director
Emma Howeiler ‘18, ensemble assistant

Alto Saxophone
Daniel Seo GR (+ soprano sax & EWI)
Shivesh Shah ’19
Ziqi Wang ’18

Tenor Saxophone
Noah Campbell ’21 (+ clarinet)
Dillon Ford ’20 (+ bassoon)
Connor Quigley ’21

Baritone Saxophone
Amanda Sload ’19

Trumpets
Sophia Kinne ’20 (+ flugelhorn)
Barrett Noone ’21
Nick Samel ’20
Noel Siegert ’21

Trombones
David Ballou ’18
Ned Feist ’18
Lucas James ’21
Charlie Johnson ’19

Piano
Emma Howeiler ’18

Guitar
Andres Jacobs ’18 (+ flute)
Drew Kaler ’21

Bass
Mali Obomsawin ’18 (in absentia)

Drums/Percussion
Charlotte Kamin ’18
Mackenzie Kynoch ’19 (+ marimba)

Voice
Jasmine Collins ’21
Zoe Sands ’18

Fall term guest artist/coaches
Tomas Fujiwara, drums
Patrice Williamson, voice
Jason Ennis, guitar
Wes Brown, bass

About the Artists continued

producing and performing on most of Braxton’s recent major projects). Bynum has worked with many legendary figures such as Bill Dixon and Cecil Taylor, maintains current collaborative projects with forward thinking peers like Mary Halvorson and Tomas Fujiwara, and increasingly travels the globe to conduct community-based large ensembles in explorations of new creative orchestra music. He is also a published author and contributor to The New Yorker’s Culture Blog, has taught at universities, festivals and workshops worldwide, and has served as a panelist and consultant for leading funders, arts organizations and individual artists. His work has received support from Creative Capital, the Connecticut Office of the Arts, Chamber Music America, New Music USA, USArtists International and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.
Upcoming Events

Dartmouth Theater Department

**Cabaret**

**November 3-12**

The loves and losses of a group of artists and performers struggling to live in a world on the brink of fascism.

Dartmouth College Gospel Choir

**Unsung Heroes: Hidden Figures**

**Sat • November 11 • 8 pm**

Celebrating female greats in soul, R&B and gospel.

For tickets or more info, call the Box Office at 603.646.2422 or visit hop.dartmouth.edu. Share your experiences! #HopkinsCenter

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