

Hopkins Center for the Arts at Dartmouth

presents

Mali Obomsawin Sextet

Mali Obomsawin, bass, vocals, compositions

Savannah Harris, drums

Miriam Elhajli, vocals, guitar

Allison Burik, alto saxophone, bass clarinet

Noah Campbell, soprano, alto, tenor saxophones

Taylor Ho Bynum, cornet

and

Coast Jazz Orchestra

Taylor Ho Bynum, director

Saturday, October 30, 7:30 pm

2021 • Spaulding Auditorium • Dartmouth College

Generously supported by the Dartmouth Class of 1975, a gift to the Don Glasgo Fund in memory of Alan Gottesman '13, Mark B. Weiss '86 and Terry Acebo Davis in honor of Paul E. Weiss P'86 and Maya Wiley '86 and Keith Boykin '87

Program

Approximate duration: *1 hour, 15 minutes, no intermission*

Mali Obomsawin Sextet

Sweet Tooth (composed and arranged by Mali Obomsawin, unless otherwise noted)

Odana (Ambroise O'Bomsawin, arranged by Mali Obomsawin)

Lineage

Wawasint8da *Religious Song*, (traditional, arranged by Mali Obomsawin)

Pedigwajois *Little Round Mountain*

Fractions

Blood Quantum / Nəwewəčəskawikapáwihtawə

Coast Jazz Orchestra

Aware of Vacuity (Jim Hobbs)

Naptown/Trenton (Bill Lowe)

Half the Fun (Billy Strayhorn & Duke Ellington)

Wolves & Blizzards (music by Taylor Ho Bynum, text by David Mitchell)

The Coast Jazz Orchestra + the Mali Obomsawin Sextet

Sleeping Giant/a simple ending (for a complex time) (Taylor Ho Bynum)

Program Notes

Odana

Ambroise O’Bomsawin

Arranged by Mali Obomsawin

Written originally by Ambroise O’Bomsawin at Odanak Abenaki reserve in Quebec, this ballad is an homage to ‘the village’ (*odana*). Renowned Canadian filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin recorded an arrangement of the song on her legendary but largely unknown 1988 album, *Bush Lady*.

“*Our village, we love you/ Our grandfathers, we remember you*” she sings in Abenaki.

Lineage

by Mali Obomsawin

Wawasint8da *Religious Song*

Arranged by Mali Obomsawin

A hymn translated into the Abenaki language by Jesuit Missionaries possibly as early as the 1690s, and recorded at Odanak in the mid-1900s. This hymn tells the story of Jesus’ Descent into Hell or Hades, (also known as The Harrowing of Hell) to liberate souls who had died outside of the Christian faith.

Pedigwajois *Little Round Mountain*

Recorded by Gordon Day

Music by Mali Obomsawin

Theophile Panadis of Odanak recounts the story of a young man receiving a *m’teuwin* teaching from an elder. The teaching brings him to the middle of *Betobagw* (“Lake Champlain”) to meet the seven thunders, and requires that he survive all seven in order to come into his spiritual power. Holiness is earned through respectful relationship with the earth and natural elements.

Fractions

Mali Obomsawin

Blood Quantum / *Nəwewəčəskawikapáwihtawa*

I stand to face him, I face him defiantly, unflinchingly, I confront him. (Mali Obomsawin)

Director’s Notes for the Coast Jazz Orchestra

The Coast has always been more than a band—it is a community, a continuum throughout generations, a laboratory for creative music on this campus. I recently met two Coast members from the class of ’56 for a coffee—they were eager and excited to hear what the current students were up to, as I hope those in band today might be curious 65 years in the future. Even for a band that survived two world wars and the Great Depression, the last year

and a half presented new and unusual challenges. The band met on zoom to share our passions for music of all genres—from Sun Ra to Joni Mitchell to the Residents—while the few students on campus at any time assembled to make music as best we could, whether outside under a tent or inside fully masked and distanced. In lieu of the traditional senior feature concert, the graduating ’20s produced a vinyl double album of greatest hits

Director's Notes *continued*

from the previous four years (available for sale this very evening!); the graduating '21s barnstormed outdoor concerts in the courtyard— though we hope to invite all of them back to this stage in the spring. It has been 19 months since the full ensemble last played together—only 10 out of the 23 current members of the ensemble have ever played with Coast on the Spaulding stage before!

So this term has been about reconnecting as musicians in real time, welcoming two years of new students into the band, and reminding ourselves of the extraordinary and ephemeral joys of creative music. Tonight's program will start with compositions by two of my dearest colleagues and long-time collaborators, Jim Hobbs and Bill Lowe. Jim's *Aware of Vacuity* is inspired by the Monkey King from the 16th-century Buddhist adventure novel *Journey to the West*, while Bill's *Naptown/Trenton* is a hard swinging number that connects legendary jazz educator David Baker's hilariously profane tales of life in Indianapolis, Indiana (aka Naptown) to Bill's own childhood in Trenton, New Jersey. We follow with a reprise of Billy Strayhorn's mysterious *Half the Fun*, a reprise from the

Ellington/Strayhorn suite *Such Sweet Thunder* we performed in February 2019.

The final two pieces of the evening feature our guests joining the Coast. First, Mali Obomsawin '18 and Noah Campbell '21 will rejoin the Coast for a performance of my composition *Wolves and Blizzards*, which draws text from the David Mitchell novel *Cloud Atlas*. It's become something of a signature song for the Coast, and our distinguished alumni will help pass it off across the generations. Then Mali's entire sextet will enter the fray, as we close with *Sleeping Giant*, a composition that offers possibilities and paths rather than fixed destinations. It will also incorporate a more recent tune of mine, something I wrote for my first tour post-lockdown, whose title speaks for itself.

I have never taken performing (or teaching, or listening to) this music for granted—but now more than ever, we all know to cherish every drop. Please enjoy, and welcome back.

Taylor Ho Bynum

The Coast Through Time

The Coast Jazz Orchestra is the latest iteration of an unbroken continuum of students at Dartmouth College interested in creating exciting and innovative sounds together. For over 100 years, Dartmouth students have been swinging, bopping and vibing to a changing and adaptive style of music often tied down to the singular descriptive word “jazz,” that may mean something different depending on who you ask. Whether it's the notion of a particular instrumentation,

the presence of improvisation, or the inclusion of varying music styles in its repertoire, Coast has been a part of the expanse of meanings this word can carry.

The conception of a “jazz band” at Dartmouth College originated in the early years of the 20th century, when advances in recording technology and media distribution allowed the innovations and performance styles of black musicians to permeate and influence

The Coast Through Time *continued*

popular culture. In 1917, an ensemble called the “Dartmouth Five” began performing popular Dixieland music and vaudeville style shows, marking the beginning of a long history of jazz at Dartmouth.

In 1921, the administration of Dartmouth College forced the musicians to remove the college’s name from the title of their band, leading to a new name, “The Barbary Coast Five,” referencing the notorious red-light district in San Francisco where this new music was known to thrive. Through the 1920s and 1930s, the band toured the country and made records, performing at college campuses and other venues and contributed their own musical stylings to the developing artform. Blues, ragtime, hot jazz and swing developed in their own right and bled into one another to create the wealth of styles associated with jazz today. As the music of the day evolved, the taste, style and instrumentation of the band also changed, along with its name, with variations including “The Barbary Coast Eight,” “The Barbary Coast Orchestra” and “The Barbary Coast Jazz Ensemble.”

After six decades as a student-led group, Dartmouth College officially recognized the band in the 1970s, putting it under the umbrella of the Hopkins Center for the Arts and hiring Don Glasgo as the first appointed director of the band. During his 40 years at the helm of the ensemble, Don nurtured and supported generations of Dartmouth musicians, and brought in an eclectic mix of guest artists to work with the band, including such legends as Max Roach, Dexter Gordon and Sun Ra.

In 2017, Taylor Ho Bynum came on board as Coast’s new director, and under his leadership the band has remained a home for musical creativity, individual exploration and collective discovery. The band has served as an important community at Dartmouth College for a variety of students with different musical backgrounds and artistic goals. The Coast recognizes the privilege to play this music in a supportive

collegiate environment, while acknowledging and attempting to honor the improvisatory and revolutionary principles that guided the pioneers of the music.

Our “New” Name

In 2017, members of the ensemble became interested in the origins and meanings of the band’s name, “The Barbary Coast Jazz Ensemble.” The students formed a committee to investigate the meanings of “Barbary Coast” throughout history and within the context of jazz at Dartmouth and beyond. After nearly two years of research and discussion, the committee presented its findings to the rest of the band, the alumni of the band, and interested members of the Dartmouth community.

As discussed above, at the time of the band’s original naming, San Francisco’s “Barbary Coast” was a red-light district known for its emerging swing and dance scene. That district in turn was named after the colonial term for the Northern coast of Africa, a region known in the Western imagination for its history of piracy and slave trading.

After heavy research and discussion, the committee offered the opinion that the word “Barbary” did not need to remain in the name in order to stay connected to the band’s traditions. The contemporary associations among the general public generated by the words “Barbary Coast” are very different than in the 1920s, and the current students felt it was more important to honor the intent of the founders of the band and the values of the music itself, rather than stay attached to a name.

Long informally known as “Coast” among its members, alumni and fans, the band has now adopted “The Coast Jazz Orchestra at Dartmouth” as its official moniker.

Sophia Kinne ’20

About the Artists

Mali Obomsawin Sextet

Mali Obomsawin is a bassist, singer, composer and songwriter from the Odanak W8banaki First Nation. Known for her extensive work in the American folk scene with her trio Lula Wiles (Smithsonian Folkways Recordings), Obomsawin draws her influences from a wide range of North-American traditional musics.

While Mali was raised in Wabanaki, Quebecois, blues and Appalachian folk traditions, she was brought into the avant-garde and improvised music community in her teens. She went on to study at Berklee College of Music before coming to Dartmouth College where she graduated in 2018. Today, you can find her deftly navigating the indie-rock, avant-garde and trad music scenes alike as an accompanist and frontwoman based in the northeast. Alongside her work as a musician, Obomsawin is a journalist and organizer in the movement for racial and environmental justice and #LandBack.

Inspired by the work of Don Cherry, Charles Mingus and Buffy Sainte-Marie, Mali's debut compositional suite, *Sweet Tooth*, carves a sonic path that honors political rage, spiritual peace and collective liberation. Her compositions for sextet explore these themes in the context of colonization, Indigeneity and ancestral reverence.

Taylor Ho Bynum is a composer, performer and interdisciplinary collaborator, and a producer, organizer, teacher and writer. His expressionistic playing on cornet and expansive vision as composer have garnered him critical attention on over 20 recordings as a bandleader and dozens more as a sideman, including *The Ambiguity Manifesto*, a top-10 choice in the 2019 NPR Jazz Critics' Poll. His

varied endeavors include leading his own bands, 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 (where he served as executive director from 2010-2018, producing and performing on many major Braxton projects, including two operas and multiple festivals). Bynum has worked with other legendary figures such as Bill Dixon, Cecil Taylor and Wadada Leo Smith, and maintains current collaborative projects with Tomas Fujiwara, Mary Halvorson, Kyoko Kitamura, Joe Morris and Tomeka Reid, among others. He is currently the director of the Coast Jazz Orchestra at Dartmouth College, where he also teaches music history, composition and improvisation, and his writing has been published in *The New Yorker*, *Point of Departure*, *The Baffler* and *Sound American*.

Taylorhobynum.com

taylorhobynum.bandcamp.com

Savannah Harris is a New York City-based drummer, composer and producer. She has performed alongside Kennedy Center Artistic Director for Jazz Jason Moran, Kenny Barron, Aaron Parks, Terence Blanchard, Geri Allen and Georgia Anne Muldrow. She currently tours with Etienne Charles' Creole Soul, José James, Peter Evans' Being + Becoming, the María Grand Trio, Or Bareket and avant-garde art collective Standing on the Corner. Savannah is an active collaborator creating interdisciplinary works with The Second City improv group, Vail Dance Festival Artistic Director Damian Woetzel and visual artist Mark Fox. As a bandleader, Savannah has taken her trio to Wine and Bowties' Feels V festival as well as the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage. She was awarded the Harlem Stage Emerging Artist Award in 2019 and holds her Master's Degree from

About the Artists *continued*

Manhattan School of Music, under program director Stefon Harris. She is also a teaching artist for Jazz at Lincoln Center's Jazz for Young People programs.

Noah Campbell is a recent Dartmouth graduate from Richmond, Virginia. Primarily a tenor saxophonist, Noah brings spontaneity and passion to any musical context. His musical passions run tandem with his interest in Black political thought, especially in the context of music in the "jazz" idiom. Currently, Noah is a working musician on the Richmond scene and acts as an intern for Virginia State Senator Jennifer McClellan, engaging both his artistic and political interests. In the future, Noah hopes to continue his music while pursuing a PhD in Political Theory and/or Black Studies. You can find his improvisatory independent projects on Bandcamp under Noah C. noahc.bandcamp.com

Miriam Elhajli is a Venezuelan-Moroccan-American composer-improviser, guitarist and vocalist whose work is influenced by the folkloric traditions of their heritage, creative new music and improvisation in all forms.

When not based out of a moving vehicle, Elhajli lives in Brooklyn and works as a puppeteer,

performer and as a researcher at The Association for Cultural Equity founded by Alan Lomax. Elhajli's debut LP *Observations* is now available on her independent label Numina Records.

www.miriamelhajli.com

MiriamElhajli.bandcamp.com

Allison Burik is a saxophonist, clarinetist, improviser and composer based in Tio'tia:ke/Montreal, Quebec. She has performed in festivals, residencies and concerts in places as far reaching as France, South Korea, Canada and the US. Though originally from Kansas City, Burik moved to Boston to receive her Bachelor's Degree in Performance (2016) at Berklee College of Music, and her Master's degree in Contemporary Improvisation at the New England Conservatory (2020). Over the years Burik has studied with notable musicians including George Garzone, Joe Morris, Ingrid Laubrock, Ran Blake, Carla Kihlstedt, Anthony Coleman, Frank Tiberi, Bobby Watson, Jaleel Shaw, Shannon LeClaire and Tia Fuller. Currently, Burik is an active member of the jazz and experimental music scenes in Montreal, and can be found at festivals and concerts throughout the region.

allisonburik.bandcamp.com

Coast Jazz Orchestra

Taylor Ho Bynum, director

Trumpets

Ryan McClure '23
Barrett Noone '21.5

Trombones

Sarah Chacko '23
Ted McManus '22
Jack McGary '23
Julia Picker '24 (+ voice)

Saxophones

Evan Bass '24 (alto)
Everett Magnuson '22 (tenor)
Mateo Oyola '24 (baritone)
Bryden Wright '23 (alto)

Steel pans

Aidan Adams '24 (+ guitar)
Shania Smith '23 (+ marimba)*

Cello

Daniel Lin '23

Guitar

Matt Keating '23
Carson Peck '22

Bass

Christopher Damon '22
(+ bassoon)
Eli Hecht '23*

Drums/percussion

Sam Beutner '25
Tanaka Chikati '25
(+ mbira, voice)
Damon Dewitt '25
Kirusha Lanski '24
Tony Perez '23
Jayanth Uppaluri '24

Percussion section coach:
Amy Garapic

*Hop Ensemble Fellow

The Coast Jazz Orchestra acknowledges we are performing upon
the ancestral and unceded lands of the Abenaki people.

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