

# fulcrumpoint

NEW MUSIC PROJECT 



## intuitive music: new beginnings



**Wednesday, January 20, 2021, 7 PM**  
**Live from Segundo Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center, Chicago**  
**Presented virtually on YouTube and Facebook Live**

## **Artists**

**Isaiah Collier**, saxophone

**Kahil El'Zabar**, percussion, voice, conduction

**Katie Ernst**, bass

**Jean-Christophe Leroy**, percussion

**Chad McCullough**, trumpet

**James Sanders**, violin

Post-concert Q&A hosted by **Stephen Burns**

## **A Note from Fulcrum Point New Music Project Artistic Director Stephen Burns**

New Beginnings: A Cause for Celebration!

Welcome to Fulcrum Point's 23<sup>rd</sup> season featuring new art music at the nexus of composition, improvisation, acoustics, electronics, tradition, and innovation in search of the fresh, creative sounds of new art music. Tonight's celebratory performance of intuitive music transcends definitions of genre and seeks to express the essence of human being through music. With the intention of uniting humanity, honoring diverse cultures, and celebrating collaborative creativity, this concert brings six esteemed improvisors together in a collective conversation—call & response, solo & ensemble, imagination & invention—all expressed through intuitive music.

The great composer Karlheinz Stockhausen defined intuitive music as:

“A form of musical improvisation based on instant creation in which fixed principles or rules may or may not have been given.”

The artists performing tonight represent the pinnacle of improvising musicians from Jazz, Classical, Latin, and experimental styles. Communicating and responding spontaneously with each other, these artists will take us on a sonic journey of expression and experimentation. Kahil El'Zabar will be leading the adventure through conduction, whose ethos is—

“To make music in the moment is to render one's self to the infinite possibilities of expressive capacity. When I conduct a completely improvised ensemble, my inspiration is to become an empath of musical pathways, using my experience to hear, feel, and respond with intelligent instincts. I am a tool for my musicians to resonate with. We become an altered state of collective investigation; to the known and the unknown. If we are lucky, an opening appears and alleviates our cacophony, transforming it into a melodic state of harmony, where epiphanies resound!”     Kahil El'Zabar

Join us in this celebration of new beginnings and new possibilities.

Stephen Burns

## Bios

**Isaiah Collier** is a Chicago/Brooklyn based multi-instrumentalist, composer, arranger, curator, activist, motivational speaker and educator. Collier is best known for his dazzling work as a saxophonist. Collier's sound and approach is drawn from the influences of saxophonists such as John Coltrane, Roscoe Mitchell, Wayne Shorter, Ari Brown and Gene Ammons. Collier has shared the stage with Chance The Rapper, Waddada Leo Smith III, Junius Paul, Rene Marie, Marquis Hill, Rudy Van Gelder, Angel Bat Dawid and many more. In addition to performing at The White House, Collier has been featured at The Jazz Showcase, Dizzy's Club Coca Cola, Lithuania Jazz Festival, Chicago Jazz Festival, New York Winter Jazz Festival, Hyde Park Jazz Festival, Sons D'hiver Festival (Paris, France), Logan Center for the Arts, and the Harris Theatre. Collier is a former fellow of the Dave Brubeck Institute Stockton, Ca. and leads his acclaimed ensemble *Isaiah Collier & The Chosen Few*.

**Kahil El'zabar** is considered by his peers to be one of the most prolific innovators of his generation. He is a master musician, composer, and educator, as well as an accomplished/exhibited visual artist and designer, along with being a published writer and poet. El'Zabar's belief is that art expressed first from the heart into the higher mind, inspires the journey to the soul. An internationally acclaimed musician and composer El'Zabar has worked with such luminaries as Dizzy Gillespie, Cannonball Adderley, Stevie Wonder, Pharoah Sanders, Neneh Cherry, Nina Simone, David Murray, and Lester Bowie, to name a few. He has scored feature films "How You Like Me Now," (Warner Brothers) "Mo Money," (Columbia Pictures) and "Love Jones," (New Line Cinema). He also scored arrangements for the theatrical version of Disney's "The Lion King". He has been featured in the 2014 documentary "BeKnown," (which is on the life of El'Zabar) and scored "America the Beautiful III," by Darryl Roberts. Dr. El'Zabar holds a PHD in Inter-Disciplinary Arts from Lake Forest College (2006). He has taught and held the position of Associate Professor at the University of Nebraska (Lincoln) and at the University of Illinois (Chicago). He has also served on several prestigious panels such as the National Endowment of the Arts, the NPN (National Performance Network) and the Lila Wallace Reader's Digest Fund. El'Zabar is a former Chairman of the internationally acclaimed AACM, and a founding board member of the NCFE

(National Campaign for the Freedom of Expression). As a cultural events specialist, El'Zabar created and produced Underground Fest (one of the most famous Avant-garde Jazz Festivals ever). He also created and curated "Traffic," for Steppenwolf Theater (an inter-disciplinary arts series which also spawned the National Public Radio show also titled "Traffic"). In 2014, Dr. Kahil El'Zabar was knighted by the Counsel General of France, and christened as a "Chevalier Medal of Letters". He has been awarded the 2012 International Ambassador's Award in the Arts, 2006 Chicago Tribune Chicagoan of the Year, and served on the 1994 National Task Force on Arts Education.

Bassist/vocalist **Katie Ernst** is described by the Chicago Tribune as "a versatile young bassist who plays in far-flung bands and sings with uncommon delicacy and authenticity." She is co-leader of the adventurous Chicago-based jazz trio Twin Talk and has received widespread critical acclaim for her Dorothy Parker poetry song cycle Little Words, which premiered at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC in 2015. Some recent notable performances and awards include performing in Mexico City, MX for a Chicago/CDMX Improvised Music Exchange in 2020; performing with MacArthur Fellow and renown pianist/composer Jason Moran at the Chicago Symphony Center and the Kennedy Center; receiving a composing residency at the Ragdale Foundation; multiple performances at the Hyde Park Jazz Festival and Chicago Jazz Festival; representing the USA as bassist and vocalist for the 2018 EuroRadio Jazz Orchestra in Riga, Latvia; and being named a Luminarts Fellow in Jazz in 2013. Katie is an active sidewoman in the jazz and improvised music communities of Chicago, and travels throughout the US as a guest artist/clinician for young musicians. She is the director of the jazz ensemble at Wheaton College and teaches at Birch Creek Music Academy for the Jazz I summer program. Katie holds a Bachelor of Music in Jazz Studies & Contemporary Media and a Bachelor of Musical Arts from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY. More information about Katie and her music can be found at [www.katieernst.com](http://www.katieernst.com).

Percussionist and educator **Jean-Christophe Leroy's** style and expertise is the result of a life-long dedication to Afro-Cuban, Afro-Caribbean, and West African music, combined with an upbringing in Western classical music, popular genres, and jazz studies. His artistic philosophy and technique strives to blend

the music of multiple cultures by using elements of each that have strong cross-stylistic currency. Leroy was born in Canada of French-Vietnamese descent. Since his arrival in Chicago nearly 20 years ago, Leroy has become one of Chicago's most recognized Afro-Cuban musicians. A versatile percussionist and drummer, Jean-Christophe's approach to performing embraces his ability to incorporate multicultural rhythms into non-traditional settings. He has worked around the globe including but not limited to numerous locations in Canada, the U.S., Cuba, Poland, Israel, Morocco and Ecuador. He has been featured in a wide variety of locales including percussion conventions, arts festivals, theatre productions, studio recordings, and regularly drums for Afro-Cuban (Santeria/Palo) religious ceremonies.

**Chad McCullough** is "*a Chicago trumpeter with a remarkable lyrical gift*" (*Chicago Tribune*) and his performances around the world with a variety of ensembles have garnered critical acclaim. His latest album *Forward* (Outside In Music) drew high international praise and has been featured on many "Best Jazz Recordings of 2020" lists, including the *Chicago Tribune* and *All About Jazz*. and He has been a featured performer in jazz festivals in Chicago, New York, Seattle, Dublin, Belgium, UK, Italy, and Canada, and performed in Indonesia, Macedonia, Slovakia, The Netherlands, and Japan. His work with Belgian pianist Bram Weijters has spawned nearly 200 concerts globally within the last decade. His compositions have been featured in film, international radio, NPR, and he has written for many modern dance ensembles. McCullough has performed with Miguel Zenon, Dave Douglas, Tim Hagans, Maria Schneider, Kendrick Scott, and Steve Coleman, and been featured at the Chicago JRAC series 15 times. A recipient of two DCASE grants from the City of Chicago, McCullough is currently on faculty in the jazz studies departments at DePaul University and UW-Madison. He is endorsed by AR Resonance trumpets and mouthpieces.

Violinist **James Sanders** confidently crosses stylistic borders yet stays true to both the jazz violin legacy and his rigorous classical training, creating music that transcends category yet remains faithful to its multiple inspirations. Sanders has honed his chops as both a leader and collaborator in various

contexts for nearly 30 years: Latin jazz, free improvisation, Gypsy swing, straight-ahead, blues, third stream and more. He has performed around the world, including major jazz festivals in Italy, Brazil, Poland and Chicago. Sanders formed the Latin jazz ensemble James Sanders & Conjunto in 2001. The band plays frequently at clubs and festivals around Chicago and performed before nearly 10,000 people at the Pritzker Pavilion in Chicago's Millennium Park in 2011. In addition to Conjunto, he leads the Blue Violin Quartet, an ensemble dedicated to straight-ahead jazz, and Proyecto Libre, an experimental ensemble that pulls equally from free improvisation and Afro-Latin traditions. He has contributed his violin to the Harrison Bankhead Sextet, Doug Lofstrom's New Quartet, Dee Alexander's Evolution Ensemble, Cerqua Rivera Dance Theatre Jazz Ensemble and many more jazz, blues and folk ensembles.

Conductor, composer and trumpeter **Stephen Burns** is the Founder and Artistic Director of the Fulcrum Point New Music Project in Chicago. He has been acclaimed on four continents for his virtuosity and interpretative depth in recitals, orchestral appearances, chamber music, and multi-media performances. He has worked closely with composers John Corigliano, Osvaldo Golijov, Gunther Schuller, Jacob TV, and La Monte Young. He won the Young Concert Artists International Auditions, Avery Fisher Career Grant, the NEA Recital Grant, the Naumburg Award, the Charles Colin Award, the Meier Arts Achievement Award, and the Maurice André Concours International de Paris. Mr. Burns is on faculty at DePaul University's School of Music and The Bienen School of Music at Northwestern University. CDs at Naxos, MHS, Dorian, Delos, Essay, Kleos, & Innova. Stephen Burns is a Yamaha performing artist.

## **Fulcrum Point New Music Project staff**

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## **Special thanks to Omar Torres-Kortright, Segundo Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center**

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