ARUN RAMAMURTHY TRIO & RUDRESH MAHANTHAPPA HERO TRIO

VIOLIN Arun Ramamurthy
ELECTRIC BASS Damon Banks
PERCUSSION Sameer Gupta

ALTO SAXOPHONE Rudresh Mahanthappa
ACOUSTIC BASS François Moutin
DRUMS Rudy Royston

Zellerbach Theatre
Friday, October 30 @ 7:30 PM

There will be an intermission between trios.



William Penn Foundation



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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Arun Ramamurthy (Violin)
Ramamurthy is a violinist, composer and educator based in Brooklyn, NY. Rooted in South Indian classical Carnatic music, Ramamurthy is a versatile musician, performing internationally in both traditional Carnatic and Hindustani settings, as well as blurring genres with his own innovative projects like the acclaimed Arun Ramamurthy Trio (ART). Ramamurthy studied under the celebrated violinist brothers, Sri Mysore Nagaraj and Dr. Mysore Manjunath, as well as the distinguished violinist Sri. Ananthakrishnan, and he spent many early years with western classical violinist Jim Mate.

He has shared the stage with luminaries like Dr. M. Balamuralikrishna, Sudha Ragunathan, Reggie Workman, Kenny Werner, Jamey Haddad, Flute Shashank, Amir ElSaffar, Hamid Drake, Mashkoor Ali Khan, Adam Rudolph, Hamid Al-Saadi, Subhankar Banerjee, Martha Redbone and Awa Sangho, among others. He has performed and recorded in a wide range of musical genres including jazz, Arabic maqam, Afro-Cuban, Malian, American folk, Western classical and other creative and improvisational styles. Ramamurthy's music has brought him to prestigious stages like Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, Celebrate Brooklyn and many more.

In addition to leading ART, Ramamurthy also co-leads a violin duo project with his wife and violinist Trina Basu, reimagining string chamber music through the lens of Indian classical

raga. The duo released their debut studio album, *Nakshatra*, in 2022. Other notable projects include Raga Maqam, an ensemble with Amir ElSaffar, bridging the worlds of raga and maqam, and Ragmala Go: Organic Orchestra & BRM, a large ensemble led by percussionist and composer Adam Rudolph.

As a composer, Ramamurthy has created new works for his trio and duo project, scores for theatrical productions, such as Tom Stoppard's *Indian Ink*, composition for Indian classical dance and for the pioneering musician's collective Brooklyn Raga Massive. Ramamurthy was recently commissioned by Chamber Music America's New Jazz Works grant to create music for his ensemble and was commissioned through New Music USA to compose original work for Malini Srinivasan's *Appeasing Radhika*, an ambitious project investigating Devadasi lives in Indian Classical performing arts.

Ramamurthy is a co-founder and co-Artistic Director of Brooklyn Raga Massive, a progressive genre-bending collective of musicians rooted in and inspired by the classical music of India. He created and produced the innovative series Carnatic Sundays at the iconic West Village haunt, Cornelia Street Cafe. Throughout his career, he has curated and performed in hundreds of concerts, bringing together music from all over the world. Ramamurthy also is a dedicated educator, teaching Carnatic music privately to children and adult students, professional string players and instrumentalists from various genres. He conducts workshops and has held teaching-artist residencies working with student ensembles at Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Brooklyn College's Jazz & Big Band program, NYU, Yale University, Sarah Lawrence University and many others.

Damon Banks (Electric Bass)
Born and raised in The Bronx, Banks has evolved into a world musician in the truest sense of the term. Growing up in New York City, he was exposed to all aspects of the arts at an early age, as well as a wide range of musical genres, approaches and schools of thought. At 14 years old, Banks was fortunate to enroll in the prestigious Fame School, a high school of music and art, as a visual artist. Those four years were some of the most inspirational and impactful years of his life musically and artistically. Upon graduation from Fisk University with a BA in music, he decided to pursue that career path full-time. Since then, he has evolved into an in-demand bassist and composer and has worked with some of the music industry's most creative artists, innovative musicians and brightest stars. His ability to adapt creatively and remain open-minded has led him into countless collaborations with genre-bending, musical trendsetters worldwide.

Banks has worked with George Benson, Peter Gabriel, Caetano Veloso, Angélique Kidjo, Chico Hamilton, Hassan Hakmoun, Arto Lindsay, Marc Ribot, Loose Ends, Leo Wadada Smith, The Neville Brothers, Andre de Shields, Bobby Womack, C.J. Chenier, Saul Williams, Noel Pointer, Ronny Jordan, Majek Fashek, KRS-ONE, Brooklyn Raga Massive, Phyllis Hyman, George Howard, Karsh Kale, DJ SPOOKY, The Frankfurt Ballet, The Weather Girls, Eric Gadd, Min Xiao-Fen, Ntozake Shange, Me'lissa Morgan, Lawrence "Butch" Morris, Roxane Butterfly, Angela Bofill and Adam Rudolph. In addition to numerous tours and recordings, his bass playing appears on the soundtracks of *Footsteps In Africa* (Kiahkeya Films) and *Muppets from Space* (Henson/Sony Films).

As a composer, Banks wrote, produced and arranged his 2014 debut LP *Travelguides*, and several tracks on violinist Gwen Laster's *Sneak Preview*, *I Hear You Smiling* and *Gameboard* records. He also co-wrote the singles "Where Are You Now" with George Benson and "Kiss Of A Stranger" with Miki Howard. Banks is an international teaching artist, and has led workshops and/or facilitated grant-supported teaching initiatives for The El Sistema Organization, Bard College, Interlochen School of the Arts, Cal Arts, Wesleyan University, St. Ann's School and Medger Evers College.

Sameer Gupta (Percussion)
Gupta is a first generation Indian-American artist, parent, entrepreneur and educator. Gupta is also known as one of the few percussionists simultaneously representing the traditions of American jazz on the drum set and Indian classical music on tabla. While living in Brooklyn, his own experiences as an artist and his love of many kinds of music from both America and India inspired Gupta to become a co-founder of Brooklyn Raga Massive and co-founder of Raga Kids, an Indian music education program for toddlers. Gupta has created a unique musical sound by combining traditional and modern improvisational styles drawing from his dual Indian and American heritage and has established himself as an original voice in music today. From bebop to avant-garde jazz, and European classical percussion to North Indian classical tabla, Gupta continues to compose and perform music from a true multicultural perspective that bridges several continents.

Gupta has had the pleasure to make music with many great musicians including 2019 NEA Jazz Master Reggie Workman, Marc Cary, Jon Batiste, Ron Carter, Kaoru Watanabe, Prince Lasha, Rogerio Boccato, Kenny Garret, Harry Belafonte, Adam Rudolph, Charlie Burnham, Brandee Younger, Casey Benjamin, Martha Redbone, Awa Sangho, Falu Shah, Adam Rudolph, Rez Abbasi, Kiran Ahluwalia, Wallace Roney, Karsh Kale, Pandit Krishna Bhatt, Pandit Chitresh Das, Jason Samuels Smith, Pandit Ramesh Mishra and numerous other luminaries.

Rudresh Mahanthappa (Alto Saxophone)
Hailed by *Pitchfork* as "jaw-dropping… one of the finest saxophonists going," alto saxophonist, composer and educator Rudresh Mahanthappa is widely known as one of the premier voices in jazz of the 21st century. He has over a dozen albums to his credit, including the acclaimed *Bird Calls*, which topped many critics' best-of-year lists for 2015 and was hailed by PopMatters as "complex, rhythmically vital, free in spirit while still crisscrossed with mutating structures." His most recent release, *Hero Trio*, was considered one of the best jazz albums of 2020 by critics and fans alike. Mahanthappa has been named alto saxophonist of the year for nine of the last eleven years running in *DownBeat Magazine*'s International Critics' Polls (2011-2013, 2015-2018, 2020-2021), and for five consecutive years by the Jazz Journalists' Association from 2009 to 2013 and again in 2016. He won alto saxophonist of the year in the 2015, 2018 and 2020 *JazzTimes* Critics' Polls and was named the *Village Voice*'s "Best Jazz Artist" in 2015. He has also received the Guggenheim Fellowship and the Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, among other honors, and is currently the Anthony H. P. Lee '79 Director of Jazz at Princeton University.

Born in Trieste, Italy to Indian émigrés in 1971, Mahanthappa was brought up in Boulder, Colorado and gained proficiency playing everything from current pop to Dixieland. He went on to study at North Texas, Berklee, DePaul University and the Stanford Jazz Workshop before settling in Chicago. Soon after moving to New York in 1997, he formed his own quartet featuring pianist Vijay Iyer. The band recorded an enduring sequence of albums, *Black Water*, *Mother Tongue* and *Codebook*, each highlighting Mahanthappa's inventive methodologies and deeply personal approach to composition. He and Iyer also formed the duo Raw Materials.

Coming deeper into contact with the Carnatic music of his parents' native southern India, Mahanthappa partnered in 2008 with fellow altoist Kadri Gopalnath and the Dakshina Ensemble for *Kinsmen*, garnering wide acclaim. *Apti*, the first outing by Mahanthappa's Indo-Pak Coalition (with Pakistani-born Rez Abbasi on guitar and Dan Weiss on tabla), released the same year; *Agrima* followed nine years later and considerably expanded the trio's sonic ambitions. In 2020, Mahanthappa released *Hero Trio*, an album of covers paying tribute to his musical heroes. He also co-led a project celebrating the centenary of Charlie Parker with the blessing of the Parker estate.

Mahanthappa has worked with Jack DeJohnette, Mark Dresser, Danilo Pérez, Arturo O'Farrill's Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra, the collaborative trios MSG and Mauger, the co-led quintet Dual

Identity with fellow altoist Steve Lehman and another co-led quintet with fellow altoist and Chicago stalwart Bunky Green (*Apex*). His exploratory guitar-driven quartets on *Samdhi* and *Gamak* featured David Gilmore and Dave "Fuze" Fiuczynski, respectively. In 2015, he was commissioned by Ragamala Dance to create *Song of the Jasmine* for dancers and a hybrid jazz/South Indian ensemble. He was also commissioned by the PRISM Quartet to compose a chamber piece, "I Will Not Apologize for My Tone Tonight," which can be heard on the quartet's 2015 double-disc release *Heritage/Evolution, Volume 1*.

François Moutin (Acoustic Bass)
Moutin was born in Paris, and at age five, he began learning guitar and then piano by age 11. Studying mathematics and physics, Moutin received a college degree in engineering and earned a doctorate in physics at the age of 24, before he elected to become a professional musician. As a member of the legendary Martial Solal's Trio, Moutin was recognized as one of the finest young bass players in Europe. At 29, he began co-leading the Quintet Moutin with his twin brother, Louis, a top echelon jazz drummer. That project evolved into the Moutin Reunion Quartet. With this band, the brothers have toured extensively around Europe and the U.S. The third album of the Moutin Reunion Quartet, *Something Like Now* (after *Power Tree* and *Red Moon*), was released in September 2005.

In November 1997, Moutin moved his base to New York, where he has found steady work in live performance and studio sessions with the premier artists on the New York jazz scene. A partial list of their names reads like the yellow pages of jazz: Franck Wess, Jimmy Heath, Monty Alexander, Benny Powell, Don Alias, Mike Stern, Lew Soloff, Steve Kuhn, Joe Locke, Billy Hart, Jeff Tain Watts, Victor Lewis, Billy Drummond, Richie Beirach, Dave Liebman, Oliver Lake, Harry Belafonte, Odean Pope, James Hurt, Ari Hoenig, Jean-Michel Pilc, Rick Margitza, Franck Kimbrough, Joel Frahm, Greg Tardy, Gene Jackson, Dave Binney, Rudresh Mahanthappa, Vijay Iyer, Adam Rogers, David Gilmore, Ben Monder, John Hart, Billy Drews, Jamie Haddad,Steve Hass and Bob James. Moutin has also recorded and performed with Arab music star Simon Shaheen. He is a familiar presence on the stages of such establishments as Jazz Standard, Birdland, Village Vanguard, Blue Note, Lincoln Center and The Town Hall, and has also appeared in major jazz festivals around the country like Newport JVC Jazz Festival, Freihoffer Jazz Festival in Saratoga Springs, Detroit Jazz Festival, Monterey Jazz Festival and San Francisco Jazz.

Rudy Royston (Drums)
Royston has been a professional teacher, drummer and percussionist for almost 20 years. He studied classical percussion at University of Denver where he earned undergraduate degrees in music and English. He also earned his teacher certification credentials from Metropolitan State College of Denver. Royston grew up playing drums in church and found his voice while studying with Colorado's celebrated trumpeter Ron Miles, whom Royston deems his greatest influence, and with whom he has played since 1991. He has taught, recorded and performed all styles of music from jazz to marching percussion.

Since moving to Piscataway, New Jersey in 2006, Royston has completed a master's degree in music at Rutgers University's Mason Gross School of the Arts in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and has quickly integrated into the New York music scene, performing with world-renowned artists such as Javon Jackson, Bill Frisell, Les McCann, David Gilmore, Ben Allison, Jason Moran, JD Allen, Sean Jones, Jeremy Pelt, Greg Osby, Jennifer Holiday, Tia Fuller, Ravi Coltrane, Ralph Bowen, Bruce Barth, George Colligan, Don Byron, Stanley Cowell, Tom Harrell, John Ellis, Jenny Scheinman, John Patitucci, Dave Douglas, Branford Marsalis, Rudresh Mahanthappa and The Mingus Big Band. A lover of all genres of music, Royston continues to expand his horizons as he gains increasing recognition in the world of jazz.