



Cedric Angeles

23|24 SEASON

 UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

presents

TERENCE BLANCHARD,
trumpet and composer
THE E-COLLECTIVE
TURTLE ISLAND QUARTET

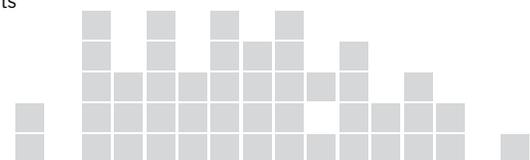
FRI, NOV 17, 7:30 pm
Hodgson Concert Hall

The program will be announced from the stage.

Supported by
CHARLIE AND TERESA FRIEDLANDER

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#ugapresents



TERENCE BLANCHARD, trumpet

E-COLLECTIVE

FABIAN ALMAZAN, piano

CHARLES ALTURA, guitar

DAVID GINYARD, bass

OSCAR SEATON, drums

TURTLE ISLAND QUARTET

DAVID BALAKRISHNAN, violin

GABRIEL TERRACCIANO, violin

BENJAMIN VON GUTZEIT, viola

NASEEM ALATRASH, cello



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

TERENCE BLANCHARD

Terence Blanchard has been a consistent artistic force for making powerful musical statements concerning painful American tragedies—past and present. He stands tall as one of jazz’s most esteemed trumpeters and defies expectations by creating a spectrum of artistic pursuits. Boundary-breaking and genre-defying, Blanchard is recognized globally as a dazzling soloist and a prolific composer for film, television, opera, Broadway, orchestras and for his own ensembles. In fact, one leading theater magazine recently cited Blanchard as “the most exciting American composer working in opera today.”

A seven-time Grammy winner and twice Oscar-nominated film composer, Blanchard became only the second African American composer to be nominated twice in the original score category at the 2022 Academy Awards, duplicating Quincy Jones’ feat from 1967’s *In Cold Blood* and 1985’s *The Color Purple*. Blanchard’s work has placed him at the forefront of giving voice to human rights, civil rights, and racial injustice, including the 2016 album *Breathless*, an elegy for Eric Garner, who was killed by police and whose words, “I can’t breathe,” became a civil rights rallying cry.

Blanchard is also heralded as a two-time opera composer whose *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* is based on the memoir of celebrated writer and *New York Times* columnist Charles Blow. The Metropolitan Opera premiered *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* on September 27, 2021, to open their 2021-22 season in New York, making it the first opera composed by an African American composer to premiere at the Met in its 138-year history. The recording of those performances received a Grammy award for Best Opera Recording, and *The New York Times* heralded *Fire* as “inspiring,” “subtly powerful” and “a bold affecting adaptation of Charles Blow’s work.” Of the historical moment, Blanchard said, “I don’t want to be a token, but a turnkey.” *Fire* has been widely recognized as one of our nation’s most important cultural milestones.

Blanchard’s first opera, *Champion*, about the troubled life of boxer Emile Griffith, premiered in 2013 and starred Denyce Graves with a libretto from Pulitzer Prize winner Michael Cristofer. *Champion* premiered at the Met in April 2023 to widespread critical acclaim.

But there is a center of gravity. It’s Blanchard’s beautiful, provocative, inspiring jazz recordings that undergird all these projects. The same holds true now as it did early in his career in 1994 when he told *DownBeat*: “Writing for film is fun, but nothing can beat being a jazz musician, playing a club, playing a concert.”

From his expansive work composing the scores for more than 20 Spike Lee projects over three decades—ranging from the documentary *When the Levees Broke* to the recent Lee films *BlacKkKlansman* and *Da 5 Bloods* (both of which garnered Blanchard Oscar nominations)—Terence has interwoven beautiful melodies that create strong backdrops to human stories like Regina King’s *One Night in Miami*; Kasi Lemmons’ *Eve’s Bayou*; George Lucas’ *Red Tails*; the HBO

drama series *Perry Mason*; Apple TV's docuseries *They Call Me Magic* (for which Blanchard received an Emmy nomination) and Gina Prince Bythewood and Viola Davis' critically acclaimed film *The Woman King*.

In his expansive career as a recording leader Blanchard delivered *Absence*, a collaboration with his longtime E-Collective band and the acclaimed Turtle Island Quartet which received Grammy nominations in November 2021 for Best Instrumental Jazz Album and Best Improvised Jazz Solo for Blanchard. Recorded in February 2020 just before the Covid-19 lockdowns, *Absence* started out as a project to show gratitude to Wayne Shorter. "I knew that Wayne wasn't feeling well at the time, so I wanted to honor him to let him know how much he has meant to me," says Blanchard, who today lives in Los Angeles as well as in his native New Orleans. "When you look at my own writing, you can see how much I've learned from Wayne. He mastered writing compositions starting with a simple melody and then juxtaposing it against the harmonies that come from a different place to make it come alive in a different light."

Born in New Orleans in 1962, Blanchard is a musical polymath who launched his solo career as a bandleader in the 1990s. Since then, he has released 20 solo albums, garnered 14 Grammy nominations, composed for the stage and for more than 60 films, and received 10 major commissions.

Regarding his consistent attachment to artistic works of conscience, Blanchard says, "You get to a certain age when you ask, 'Who's going to stand up and speak out for us?' Then you look around and realize that the James Baldwins, Muhammad Alis and Dr. Kings are no longer here . . . and begin to understand that

it falls on you. I'm not trying to say I'm here to try to correct the whole thing, I'm just trying to speak the truth." In that regard, Blanchard cites unimpeachable inspirations. "John Coltrane playing *Alabama*, even Louis Armstrong talking about what was going on with his people any time he was interviewed. Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter who live by their Buddhist philosophy and try to expand the conscience of their communities. I'm standing on all their shoulders. How dare I come through this life having had the blessing of meeting those men and not take away any of that? Like anybody else, I'd like to play feel good party music but sometimes my music is about the reality of where we are."

TURTLE ISLAND QUARTET

Since its inception in 1985, the Turtle Island Quartet has been a singular force in the creation of bold, new trends in chamber music for strings. Winner of the 2006 and 2008 Grammy awards for Best Classical Crossover Album, Turtle Island fuses the classical quartet esthetic with contemporary American musical styles, and by devising a performance practice that honors both, the state of the art has inevitably been redefined. Cellist nonpareil Yo-Yo Ma has proclaimed TIQ to be "a unified voice that truly breaks new ground—authentic and passionate—a reflection of some of the most creative music-making today."

The Quartet's birth was the result of violinist David Balakrishnan's brainstorming explorations and compositional vision while completing his master's degree program at Antioch University West. The journey has taken Turtle Island through forays into folk, bluegrass, swing, bebop, funk, R&B, new age, rock, hip hop, as well as music of Latin America and India . . . a repertoire consisting of hundreds of ingenious arrangements and originals. It has included more than a dozen recordings on labels such as Windham Hill, Chandos, Koch, Telarc and Azica, soundtracks for major motion pictures, TV and radio credits such as the *Today Show*, *All Things Considered*, *Prairie Home Companion*, and *Morning Edition*, feature articles in *People* and *Newsweek* magazines, and collaborations with famed artists such as trumpeter Terence Blanchard, clarinetist Paquito D'Rivera, vibraphonist Stefon Harris, guitar legends such as Leo Kottke and the Assad brothers, The Manhattan Transfer, pianists Billy Taylor, Kenny Barron, Cyrus Chestnut and Ramsey Lewis, singers Tierney Sutton and Nellie McKay, the Ying Quartet and the Parsons and Luna Negra Dance Companies.

Another unique element of Turtle Island is their revival of venerable improvisational and compositional chamber traditions that have not been explored by string players for nearly 200 years. At the time of Haydn's apocryphal creation of the string quartet form, musicians were more akin to today's saxophonists and keyboard masters of the jazz and pop world, i.e., improvisers, composers, and arrangers. Each Turtle Island member is accomplished in these areas of expertise.

As Turtle Island members continue to refine their skills through the development of repertory by some of today's cutting edge composers, through performances and recordings with major symphonic ensembles, and through a determined educational commitment, the Turtle Island Quartet stakes its claim as the quintessential "New World" string quartet of the 21st century.

