



Saturday, April 12, 2025, 8:00 PM
Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall

Princeton University Jazz Festival presents CREATIVE LARGE ENSEMBLE with special guest

ETIENNE CHARLES
Trumpet, Composer, Arranger

Darcy James Argue, Conductor
Rudresh Mahanthappa, Program Director

About the Department of Music

The Department of Music at Princeton University provides its undergraduates—whether they major or minor in Music—the opportunity to learn from a world-renowned faculty of scholars and composers. Performance opportunities include student-led and departmental ensembles like symphony orchestras, multi-genre choruses, jazz, contemporary music, African music, steel band, laptop orchestra, and much more, and students have access to private instrumental and voice lessons from eminent performing artists. The graduate program offers two distinct and prestigious Ph.D. programs in composition or musicology; graduate students receive fully-funded, immersive experiences conducting research, advancing their craft, and collaborating with faculty within Princeton University's inspiring, interdisciplinary campus.

For more information about the Department of Music and other upcoming events, and to sign-up for our mailing list, please visit music.princeton.edu.

PROGRAM

Selections from the following to be announced from the stage.

Centerpiece Harry “Sweets” Edison, Jon Hendricks

Douens Etienne Charles

Lujon Henry Mancini

Night Train Jimmy Forrest, Duke Ellington

Old School Etienne Charles

Poison Elliot “Dr. Freeze” Straite

A Shade of Jade Joe Henderson

Stompin’ at the Savoy Edgar Sampson

Think Twice Monty Alexander

All compositions arranged by Etienne Charles.

The use of photographic, video, or audio equipment is strictly prohibited. Please turn off or mute electronic devices for the duration of the performance.

PERFORMERS

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY CREATIVE LARGE ENSEMBLE

Conducted by Darcy James Argue

SPECIAL GUEST

Etienne Charles

Trumpet, Composer, Arranger

WINDS

Milan Sastry '26

Daisy Yao '28

Noah LaBelle '28

Simon Law '27

Marcello Troncoso '27

TRUMPETS

Sean Hack *

Theodore Peebles '28

John Cureton '26

Lucas Comesaña *

Cueyoung Lee '27

TROMBONES

Thomas Verrill '25

Basant Bruce Singh '27

Gloria Simmons '27

Wesley Sanders '26

VOICE

Allison Jiang '26 (on "Centerpiece")

GUITAR

Isadora Knutsen '25

PIANO

Charles Dutta '27

BASS

Ari Freedman GS

DRUMS

Ryder Walsh '26

* *Guest Artist*

ABOUT

ETIENNE CHARLES, GUEST ARTIST

Trinidad born Etienne Charles is a performer, composer and storyteller, who is continuously searching for untold stories and sounds with which to tell them.

His lush trumpet sound, varied compositional textures and pulsating percussive grooves enable him to invoke trance, soothing and exciting listeners while referencing touchy and sometimes controversial subjects in his music.

A 2015 Guggenheim Fellow and 2022 Creative Capital Awardee, he researches his compositions by travelling to the regions on which he is focused, meeting with musicians and cultural leaders then observing and participating in rituals to be fully immersed into the cultures that he is studying.

As an Afro-descendant, his work is actively connecting the diaspora and drawing lines to regions at the roots of migrations. Highlighting marginalized communities and engaging with them has been his mission, evident with projects such as Carnival: The Sound of a People Vol. 1, San Jose Suite, Creole Soul, and Folklore.

A firm believer in music and performance as a tool for provoking thought and dialogue, Charles' themes speak to the status quo while drawing parallels to history. With his latest commissioned project, San Juan Hill, he goes a step further by exploring the storied New York neighborhood to bring the culture of San Juan Hill to the mainstage.

His concerts engage, enlighten, educate and enrich audiences with energized multidisciplinary performance utilizing original composition, thematic improvisation, dance, short films and spoken word to create a holistic experience.

In June 2012, he was written into the US Congressional Record for his musical contributions to Trinidad & Tobago and the World. In 2013, his album Creole Soul reached #1 for three weeks on the Jazzweek chart and was eventually named #3 Jazz Album of the year by Jazzweek. Also in 2013 he received the Caribbean Heritage Trailblazer award from the Institute of Caribbean Studies (Washington, DC). In 2016 he was the recipient of the Michigan State University Teacher Scholar Award, the Jazz at Lincoln Center Millennial Swing award and was a featured panelist and performer at the White House for a Caribbean Heritage Month Briefing. He made his debut as producer and songwriter on the album Petite Afrique by Somi (Sony/Okeh 2017) which won Outstanding Jazz Album at the 2018 NAACP Image Awards.

He has been featured as a bandleader at the Newport Jazz Festival (RI), Monterey Jazz Festival (CA), Atlanta Jazz Festival (GA), Pittsburgh JazzLive international Festival (PA), San Jose Jazz Festival (CA), Java Jazz Festival (Indonesia), Ottawa Jazz Festival (Canada), St. Lucia Jazz Festival, Barbados Jazz Festival, Library of Congress (DC), Carnegie Hall (NY) and Koerner Hall (Canada).

As a sideman he has performed with and/or arranged for Roberta Flack, Marcus Roberts, Marcus Miller, Count Basie Orchestra, Frank Foster's Loud Minority Big Band, Monty Alexander, Gregory Porter, René Marie, Paulette McWilliams and many others. He has been commissioned as a composer and arranger by Lincoln Center (2018 & 2021), Savannah Music Festival (2017), Chamber Music America (2015 & 2021), the Charleston Jazz Orchestra (2012) and the Chicago Jazz Ensemble (2011).

As an educator and conductor he has done residencies at the Juilliard School, Stanford University, Columbia College Chicago, Oakland University, Kent State University, Walnut Hills High School, Cultural Academy for Excellence, and the US Military Academy.

His dedication to the preservation of artistic traditions in his homeland inspired him to form and lead the Carnival bands, "We the People" (2017), "Street Party" (2018), "D'longtime Band" (2019) and "Euphoria" (2020) which featured a full live brass band on a truck going through the streets of Woodbrook and Port of Spain playing vintage calypso and soca.

Understanding his role as Artist citizen, he sees live music as a way to uplift all peoples and is dedicated to bringing it to those who aren't able to attend concerts. Specifically, in his homeland of Trinidad and Tobago, he has done performances and workshops at Princess Elizabeth Center, St. Dominic's children's home, St. Mary's children's home, St. Jude's school for girls, St. Michael's school for boys, St. Margaret's school for boys, Youth Training Center and Maximum Security Prison.

He currently serves as Associate Professor of Studio Music and Jazz at the University of Miami, Patricia L. Frost School of Music.

DARCY JAMES ARGUE, CONDUCTOR

Darcy James Argue, "one of the top big band composers of our time" (*Stereophile*), is best known for Secret Society, an 18-piece group "renowned in the jazz world" (*New York Times*). Argue brings an outwardly anachronistic ensemble into the 21st century through his "ability to combine his love of jazz's past with more contemporary sonics" and is celebrated as "a syncretic creator who avoids obvious imitation" (*Pitchfork*). Acclaimed as an "innovative composer, arranger, and big band leader" by *The New Yorker*, Argue's accolades include multiple GRAMMY nominations and a Latin GRAMMY Award, a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Doris Duke Artist Award, and countless commissions and fellowships.

Dynamic Maximum Tension, Argue's latest album with Secret Society and his label debut on Nonesuch Records, is named after the three words that inventor and futurist R. Buckminster Fuller combined to form his personal brand: "Dymaxion" — a term reflecting Bucky's desire to get the most out of his materials, the utopian vision of his designs, and his quest to improve the pattern of daily life. The recording earned Argue his fourth consecutive GRAMMY nomination for Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album, and was named one of the 50 Best Albums of 2023 by NPR, who called it "a double album that reinvigorates the big-band tradition with a modern metabolism."

Argue's affinity for blurring genres and deftly weaving sociopolitical ideas into ambitious, culturally resonant work is exemplified in the "stunningly original" (*Wall Street Journal*) song cycle *Ogresse*, a collaboration with GRAMMY-winning vocalist Cécile McLorin Salvant, and in the multimedia performance *Real Enemies*, a "breathtaking" (*JazzNu*) production co-created with writer-director Isaac Butler and filmmaker Peter Nigrini that premiered in 2015 at the BAM Next Wave Festival.

Argue has been named Arranger of the Year and Composer of the Year, and Secret Society named Big Band of the Year by the DownBeat International Critics Poll. He has been commissioned by the MAP Fund, the Fromm Music Foundation, the Newport Festival Foundation, the Jerome Foundation, BAM, and the Jazz Gallery, as well as ensembles including the Danish Radio Big Band, the Canadian National Jazz Orchestra, NYO Jazz, the Hard Rubber Orchestra, the West Point Jazz Knights, and the Orquestra Jazz de Matosinhos. He is the recipient of grants and fellowships from the New York Foundation for the Arts, New Music USA, Composers Now, the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, the Canada Council for the Arts, and MacDowell.

RUDRESH MAHANTHAPPA, PROGRAM DIRECTOR

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 criss-crossed with mutating structures." His most recent release, *Hero Trio*, was considered to be one of the best jazz albums of 2020 by critics and fans alike. Rudresh 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, 2020-1), and for five consecutive years by the Jazz Journalists' Association (2009-2013) and again in 2016. He won alto saxophonist of the year in the 2015-2018 & 2020 JazzTimes Magazine 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.

JAZZ AT PRINCETON UNIVERSITY serves to promote this uniquely American genre of music as a contemporary and relevant art form. Its goals are to convey the vast musical and social history of jazz, establish a strong theoretical and stylistic foundation with regard to improvisation and composition, and emphasize the development of individual expression and creativity. Offerings of this program include academic course work, performing ensembles, master classes, private study, and independent projects. Jazz at Princeton University thanks you for joining them on this evening's journey of beauty, exploration, discovery, and hope.



Jazz Ensembles

The Creative Large Ensemble, the Jazz Small Groups, and the Jazz Vocal Ensemble at Princeton engage the grand history of jazz as well as its modern forms and approaches. Performances take place both on and off campus. Guest artists are often in residence for a week conducting master classes and visiting ensembles and classrooms in addition to rehearsing with students. These have included Archie Shepp, Billy Childs, Theo Beckmann, Gerald Clayton, and Danilo Perez to name just a few. In some cases, guests have been commissioned to compose new work that is then premiered in concert.

Upcoming Jazz performances at Princeton

Thursday, May 1, 2025, 7:30 PM, Taplin Auditorium, Fine Hall

Jazz at Princeton presents: Jazz Small Groups Z & 1

Jazz at Princeton presents performances by Small Groups Z & 1. Small Group Z, directed by Rudresh Mahanthappa, and Small Group 1, directed by Miles Okazaki, will play a mixture of classic jazz repertoire and contemporary compositions. | Unticketed

Saturday, May 3, 2025, 7:30 PM, Taplin Auditorium, Fine Hall

Jazz at Princeton presents: Jazz Small Groups X & A

Jazz at Princeton presents performances by Small Groups X & A. | Unticketed

Keep up to date about Princeton Jazz events on the Performance & Events page of the Princeton Music Department website music.princeton.edu or the Jazz at Princeton website jazzatprinceton.com.
