



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CAP UCLA Presents
Vijay Iyer and Teju Cole's
'Blind Spot'
New Genre-defying Collaboration**

*First event of the 2018–19 season and Jazz series
September 22 at The Theatre at Ace Hotel DTLA*



"The intensity of the ensemble's active engagement with the political zeitgeist on an ugly American morning helped to make [Blind Spot] seem all the more valuable."
—The Guardian

UCLA's Center for the Art of Performance (CAP UCLA) presents composer and pianist Vijay Iyer and writer and photographer Teju Cole's powerful new collaboration, *Blind Spot*, an investigation of humanity's blindness to tragedy and injustice throughout history, on Saturday, Sept. 22 at 8 p.m. at The Theatre at Ace Hotel Downtown Los Angeles. Tickets for \$29.50–\$59.50 are available now at cap.ucla.edu and theatre.acehotel.com, 310-825-2101 and The Theatre at Ace Hotel box office.

Kicking off CAP UCLA's 2018–19 season and Jazz series, *Blind Spot*, based on Cole's book of the same title, combines Cole's striking photography and spoken prose with a

live score composed by Iyer and performed by an exclusive lineup featuring *DownBeat* 2018 Trumpeter of the Year Ambrose Akinmusire, mallet percussionist Patricia Brennan and cellist Tomeka Reid. The music changes for each performance in what Iyer described as an unfolding process where the musicians are pushing back at what they are seeing in the images and hearing from Cole.

"I'm fortunate to have called Teju a friend since long before he became the household name he is today," said Iyer. "Our collaborations have emerged slowly and organically from a camaraderie established in the early 2000s. This particular one was born in 2016 as a kind of stunt, using Teju's photographs and writings as our stimulus. Teju's collection of texts and images gives us a way to be collectively present with some unadorned, harsh truths about the world at this moment; our ritual patterns and emergent unisons offer a slowly evolving emotional correlate to his work."

A Grammy nominee and MacArthur Fellow, Iyer was named *DownBeat* 2018 Jazz Artist of the Year and *JazzTimes* 2017 Pianist of the Year. Iyer's wide-ranging creative work and research has spanned the arts, the humanities and the sciences. An active pianist, recording artist, bandleader, composer, improviser and scholar, Iyer has released over 20 albums of his original music and has received numerous commissions from notable orchestras and ensembles. Recognized as "one of the most celebrated names in modern jazz" (*Rolling Stone*), "there's probably no frame wide enough to encompass the creative output of the pianist Vijay Iyer" (*The New York Times*). Iyer returns to CAP UCLA following his *Music of Transformation* double concert of *Radhe Radhe: Rites of Holi* and *Mutations I – X* in December 2014 at Royce Hall.

Nigerian-American writer Cole is the award-winning author of *Open City* and photography critic for *The New York Times Magazine*. Cole is an acclaimed novelist, an influential essayist, and an internationally exhibited photographer. His latest project, *Blind Spot*, an innovative synthesis of words and images, was named one of the best books of 2017 by *Time* and was shortlisted for the *Paris Photo-Aperture PhotoBook Awards*. Hailed as "an eclectically brilliant distillation of what photography can do, and why it remains an important art form" (*San Francisco Chronicle*), *Blind Spot* is a testament to the art of seeing by "one of the most vibrant voices in contemporary writing" (*Los Angeles Times*).

Funds provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation multi-year grant for Collaborative Intersections in the Visual and Performing Arts.

CAP UCLA's Jazz series continues at Royce Hall with Tigran Hamasyan (Oct. 14), An Evening with Pat Metheny with Antonio Sanchez, Linda May Han Oh and Gwilym Simcock (Oct. 26), Terri Lyne Carrington (Nov. 9) and Luciana Souza's *The Book of Longing* (Dec. 1).

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAP UCLA presents

[Vijay Iyer & Teju Cole's *Blind Spot*](#)

Saturday, Sept. 22 at 8 p.m.

CAP UCLA at The Theatre at Ace Hotel DTLA
929 S. Broadway, Los Angeles, CA 90015

Program: Composer-pianist Vijay Iyer and writer-photographer Teju Cole's powerful new collaboration, *Blind Spot*, combines Cole's striking photography and own voice with Iyer's live score in an incisive investigation of humanity's blindness to tragedy and injustice throughout history. In addition to Iyer and Cole, an exclusive lineup of musicians assembled for this evening include trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire, mallet percussionist Patricia Brennan and cellist Tomeka Reid. Signings to follow the performance.

Related activity: Art In Action: *Listening to the Landscape*

Join us before and after the show for our signature Poetry Bureau and spoken word slam riffing off the theme, *What Is Your Blind Spot?*, featuring special guests from Los Angeles-based *Get Lit*, whose mission is to use poetry to increase literacy, empower youth and inspire communities.

Tickets:

Single tickets: \$29.50–\$59.50

Online: cap.ucla.edu, theatre.acehotel.com

Phone: 310-825-2101

The Theatre at Ace Hotel box office: Thursday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; day of show, 90 minutes prior to the event start time.

Personnel:

Vijay Iyer – piano

Teju Cole – spoken word

Ambrose Akinmusire – trumpet

Patricia Brennan – vibraphone and marimba

Tomeka Reid – cello

Artist websites: [Vijay Iyer](#) | [Teju Cole](#) | [Ambrose Akinmusire](#) | [Patricia Brennan](#) | [Tomeka Reid](#)

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Vijay Iyer

Composer-pianist Vijay Iyer was named *Downbeat* Magazine's Jazz Artist of the Year for 2012, 2015, 2016 and 2018, and the Vijay Iyer Sextet was named *DownBeat's* 2018 Jazz Group of the Year. He received a 2013 MacArthur Fellowship, a 2012 Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, and a 2011 Grammy nomination. He has released 23 albums, including *Far From Over* (ECM, 2017), with the Vijay Iyer Sextet, which topped numerous year-end critics polls and was cited by *Rolling Stone* as "2017's jazz album to beat"; *A Cosmic Rhythm with Each Stroke* (ECM, 2016) in duo with legendary composer-trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith, named "Best New Music" by *Pitchfork*; *Break Stuff* (ECM, 2015) with the Vijay Iyer Trio, winner of the German Record Critics' Award for Album of the Year; the live score to the film *Radhe Radhe: Rites of Holi* (ECM, 2014) by filmmaker Prashant Bhargava; and *Holding it Down: The Veterans' Dreams Project* (Pi Recordings, 2013), his third politically searing collaboration with poet-performer Mike Ladd, named Album of the Year in the *Los Angeles Times*.

Iyer's compositions have been commissioned and premiered by Bang on a Can All-Stars, The Silk

Road Ensemble, Ethel, Brentano Quartet, Brooklyn Rider, Imani Winds, American Composers Orchestra, International Contemporary Ensemble, Chamber Orchestra Leopoldinum, Matt Haimowitz, and Jennifer Koh. Iyer is the Franklin D. and Florence Rosenblatt Professor of the Arts at Harvard University, and the director of the Banff International Workshop in Jazz and Creative Music.

Teju Cole

Teju Cole is a writer, photographer and the photography critic of *The New York Times Magazine*. He is the author of four books, each in a different genre: the novella *Every Day Is for the Thief*, the novel *Open City*, the essay collection *Known and Strange Things* and, most recently, the genre-defying *Blind Spot*. His work has been translated into 16 languages. His honors include the PEN/Hemingway Award, the Internationaler Literaturpreis from the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, the New York City Book Award for Fiction, the Rosenthal Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Focus Award from the Griffin Museum of Photography, the Windham Campbell Prize from Yale University, and a Guggenheim Fellowship. His photography has been the subject of solo exhibitions in Milan, Berlin, Zürich, and New York, and he has given numerous distinguished lectureships. He is Gore Vidal Professor of the Practice of Creative Writing at Harvard University.

Ambrose Akinmusire

During his 15-year career, Ambrose Akinmusire has paradoxically situated himself in both the center and the periphery of jazz, most recently emerging in classical and hip-hop circles. He's on a perpetual quest for new paradigms, masterfully weaving inspiration from other genres, arts and life in general into compositions that are as poetic and graceful as they are bold and unflinching. His unorthodox approach to sound and composition make him a regular on critics polls and have earned him grants and commissions from the Doris Duke Foundation, the Kennedy Center, the Monterey Jazz Festival and Berlin Jazz Festival. While Akinmusire continues to garner accolades, his reach is always beyond — himself, his instrument, genre, form, preconceived notions and anything else imposing limitations. Motivated primarily by the spiritual and practical value of art, Akinmusire wants to remove the wall of erudition surrounding his music. He aspires to create richly textured emotional landscapes that tell the stories of the community, record the time and change the standard. While committed to continuing the lineage of black invention and innovation, he manages to honor tradition without being stifled by it. His fifth release as leader, *Origami Harvest*, will be released in October 2018.

Patricia Brennan

Vibraphonist, marimbist, improviser and composer Patricia Brennan, originally from Mexico, has toured all over the world and has received numerous awards. Her search for freedom in her musical expression led her to find her voice through the vibraphone and mallet percussion in improvisational music. Brennan performs with Grammy-nominated John Hollenbeck Large Ensemble and with Michael Formanek's Ensemble Kolossus. Brennan has performed with many renowned artists such as Vijay Iyer, Matt Mitchell and Wadada Leo Smith. She has performed at Newport Jazz Festival and Carnegie Hall. Recent projects include an ECM recording with Ensemble Kolossus. Brennan holds degrees from Curtis Institute of Music and NYU.

Tomeka Reid

Recently described as a "New Jazz Power Source" by *The New York Times*, cellist and composer Tomeka Reid has emerged as one of the most original, versatile and curious musicians in Chicago's bustling jazz and improvised music community over the last decade. Now based in New York, her distinctive melodic sensibility, usually braided to a strong sense of groove, has been featured in many distinguished ensembles over the years. Reid has been a key member of ensembles led by legendary reedists Anthony Braxton and Roscoe Mitchell, as well as a younger

generation of visionaries including flutist Nicole Mitchell, singer Dee Alexander and drummer Mike Reed. She is also a co-leader of the adventurous string trio Hear in Now with violinist Mazz Swift and bassist Silvia Bolognesi. Reid released her eponymous debut recording as a bandleader in 2015 by the Tomeka Reid Quartet, including Jason Roebke, Tomas Fujiwara and Mary Halvorson. Reid is a recipient of a 2016 3Arts award in music and received her doctorate in music from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign in 2017.

About CAP UCLA

[UCLA's Center for the Art of Performance](#) (CAP UCLA) is dedicated to the advancement of the contemporary performing arts in all disciplines — dance, music, spoken word and theater, as well as emerging digital, collaborative and cross-platforms — by leading artists from around the globe. Part of UCLA's School of the Arts and Architecture, CAP UCLA curates and facilitates direct exposure to artists who are creating extraordinary works of art and fosters a vibrant learning community both on and off the UCLA campus. The organization invests in the creative process by providing artists with financial backing and time to experiment and expand their practices through strategic partnerships and collaborations. As an influential voice within the local, national and global arts communities, CAP UCLA connects this generation to the next in order to preserve a living archive of our culture. CAP UCLA is also a safe harbor where cultural expression and artistic exploration can thrive, giving audiences the opportunity to experience real life through characters and stories on stage, and giving artists an avenue to challenge assumptions and advance new ways of seeing and understanding the world we live in now.

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About The Theatre at Ace Hotel Downtown Los Angeles

The Theatre at Ace Hotel Downtown Los Angeles is Ace's loving reanimation of the historic United Artists Theater. Built in 1927 for the maverick film studio founded by Mary Pickford, Charlie Chaplin and Douglas Fairbanks, The Theatre stands as a monument to a group of seminal American artists — modern iconoclasts striking out on their own. Ace's restoration of this majestic space serves as a singular stage for art, film, dance and creative celebration in the heart of the Broadway Theater District's vibrant modern renaissance. View all upcoming events at The Theatre at Ace Hotel DTLA at theatre.acehotel.com.

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PRESS REVIEW TICKETS/PHOTO PASSES/INTERVIEW REQUESTS: Contact Holly Wallace at hawallace@arts.ucla.edu, 310-206-8744.

IMAGES: Available by request or register for download at cap.ucla.edu/pressimages. Photos (from left): Vijay Iyer by Barbara Rigon and Teju Cole by Martin Lengemann.