

CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING AND CINEMATIC ARTS
Boyer College of Music and Dance

Master Class
Aaron Diehl, piano

February 15, 2024
Rock Hall Auditorium

Thursday
12:00 pm

Program

Night Sky

Dana Suesse (1911-1987)

Dominick D'Alessandro, piano

Four Piano Blues

Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

- I. Freely poetic (For Leo Smit)
- II. Soft and languid (For Andor Flodes)
- III. Muted and sensuous (For William Kapell)
- IV. With bounces (For John Kirkpatrick)

Sarah Lee, piano

Variations, Op. 41

Nikolai Kapustin (1937-2020)

Suyi Zheng, piano

This class is sponsored by Jacobs Music.

One hundred ninety-first performance of the 2023-2024 season.



About the Artist

Pianist **AARON DIEHL** has quietly re-defined the lines between jazz and classical, and built a global career around his nuanced, understated approach to music-making. Praised for his “melodic precision, harmonic erudition, and elegant restraint” (*The New York Times*), and his “traditional jazz sound with a sophisticated contemporary spin” (*The Guardian*), Diehl has performed with musical giants such as Wynton Marsalis, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Tyshawn Sorey, and Philip Glass, and has been a soloist with the New York Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the San Francisco Symphony, and the Cleveland Orchestra, working with conductors like Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Marin Alsop, and Alan Gilbert. In 2023, Diehl was named as the Artistic Director of 92NY’s *Jazz in July* Festival, succeeding the legendary Bill Charlap.

A leader in contemporary jazz, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* exclaimed that “there’s an entire world of jazz in Aaron Diehl’s playing...he makes the case that jazz is not one style or genre but many, gliding gorgeously among decades of artistic influences.” With an expansive, orchestral, lyrical approach to the piano that channels predecessors like Ahmad Jamal, Erroll Garner, Art Tatum and Jelly Roll Morton, Diehl has headlined the Monterey, Detroit, and Newport Jazz Festivals, and had residencies at Jazz at Lincoln Center, the Village Vanguard, SF Jazz, and many more. He counts among his mentors towering figures such as John Lewis, Kenny Barron, Fred Hersch, Marcus Roberts, and Eric Reed.

Diehl’s creative vision draws equally from the Classical music tradition, with *DownBeat Magazine* stating “Diehl gracefully melds two worlds, merging the improvisational spirit of jazz with the compositional intricacies of Western classical music.” Diehl has performed with top orchestras across the US, at leading venues like Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, The Hollywood Bowl, the Elbphilharmonie, and Tanglewood. He has collaborated with classical stars ranging from Inon Barnatan to J’Nai Bridges to The Knights, and his compositions have been commissioned by the Monterey Jazz Festival, Glenmorangie Scotch, and others.

In the 2023-24 season, Diehl and his trio, featuring bassist David Wong and drummer Aaron Kimmel, open the New Jersey Symphony’s season with a program that includes Still’s *Out of the Silence* and Ellington’s *New World A-Comin’*. The trio also makes its St. Louis Symphony Orchestra debut with a performance of Mary Lou Williams’s *Zodiac Suite*. As the 2024 Resonate Festival artist-in-residence, Diehl will explore the theme of musical intersections, with works by John Lewis, Mary Lou Williams’ *Zodiac Suite* and Johann Sebastian Bach’s Harpsichord Concerto No. 1 in D minor, conducted by Eric Jacobsen. In the spring, Diehl joins the Los Angeles Philharmonic for the world premiere of Timo Andres’s new piano concerto, conducted by John Adams.

During the 2022-23 season, Diehl was featured alongside Bill Charlap and Kenny Barron as part of 92NY’s “Three Generations at the Piano” program during Charlap’s penultimate season as the *Jazz in July* music director. Diehl would later go on to perform alongside fellow pianists Isaiah J. Thompson and Caelan Cardello as part of Charlap’s final season. As Kaufman Music Center’s 2022

Artist-in-Residence, Diehl presented a recital program that included Sir Roland Hanna's lesser known 24 Preludes. He would later go on to present the 24 Preludes in a trio performance at Tanglewood. Diehl also performed *Zodiac Suite* with the Philadelphia and Cleveland Orchestras under the batons of Cristian Măcelaru and Jader Bignamini, respectively.

In September 2023, Diehl released his recording of Mary Lou Williams's *Zodiac Suite* with The Knights, a Brooklyn-based orchestral collective led by conductor Eric Jacobsen. As the first-ever studio recording of Mary Lou Williams's *Zodiac Suite*, it has been touted as "a joyous, enchanting creation... a triumph" (*The Guardian*) with Diehl lauded as "a contemporary champion" (*The New York Times*) and "a perfect choice to preside over this landmark recording" (*The Wall Street Journal*). The album features Diehl's trio and guest artists saxophonist Nicole Glover, clarinetist Evan Christopher, trumpeter Brandon Lee, and soprano Mikaela Bennett. The critically-acclaimed album is Diehl's fourth recording on Mack Avenue Records, following 2020's *The Vagabond*, 2015's *Space Time Continuum*, and his 2013 label debut, *The Bespoke Man's Narrative*.

Diehl was born in Columbus, Ohio, where he grew up listening to his grandfather, pianist and trombonist Arthur Baskerville. His family nurtured Diehl's undeniable musical talents from a young age and in 2002, a 16-year-old Diehl competed in Jazz at Lincoln Center's Essentially Ellington competition, where he placed as a finalist. It was there that he attracted the attention of Wynton Marsalis, who invited Diehl to join his septet for a European tour. After studying at Julliard under the direction of Kenny Barron, Eric Reed and Oxana Yablonskaya, Diehl was awarded the 2011 American Pianists Association's Cole Porter Fellowship. Diehl, who holds commercial single and multi-engine pilot certifications, inherited a lifelong love of flying from his father who was himself an avid pilot. Diehl has been a Steinway Artist since 2016.