Edmar Castaneda Trio

Edmar Castaneda – harp
Marshall Gilkes – trombone
David Silliman – drums

and special guest
Andrea Tierra – vocals

Selections will be announced from the stage

Edmar Castaneda, harp
Edmar Castaneda was born in 1978, in the city of Bogotá, Colombia. Since his move to the United States in 1994, Edmar has taken New York and the world stage by storm with the sheer force of his virtuoso command of the harp—revolutionizing the way audiences and critics alike consider an instrument commonly relegated to the “unusual category.” He is a master at realizing beautiful complexities of time, while skillfully drawing out lush colors and dynamic spirit. The legendary Paquito D’Rivera, Edmar’s frequent collaborator, has remarked: “Edmar is...an enormous talent, he has the versatility and the enchanting charisma of a musician who has taken his harp out of the shadow to become one of the most original musicians from the Big Apple.”

Even now, on stages across the globe, one notes how Edmar’s body seemingly engulfs his Colombian harp as he crafts almost unbelievable feats of cross-rhythms, layered with chordal nuances rivaling the most celebrated flamenco guitarist’s efforts. Edmar’s latest recording Double Portion, (which features Miguel Zenon, Cuban pianist Gonzalo Rubalcaba & Hamilton de Holanda on Mandolina) has caught the attention of reviewers and his legion of fans. Rob Young of Urban Flux Magazine says of the recording “Edmar Castaneda’s caliber redefines depth, skill and emotion.”

In addition to his acclaimed performing career as an instrumentalist, which has included features at D’Rivera’s Carnegie Hall tribute, Jazz at Lincoln Center, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Tanglewood Jazz Festival, the 10th annual World Harp Congress, he has also play with Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, John Scofield, Marcos Miller, John Patitucci, Chico O’Farrill’s Afro-Cuban Jazz Big Band.

Marshall Gilkes, trombone
Simply considering the range of music that Marshall Gilkes has played over the course of his career, it would be easy to assume that the trombonist/composer is a musical chameleon, able to alter his sound to fit into whatever situation he finds himself. After all, it seems unlikely that an individual sound would be able to express itself in such diverse contexts as the lush impressionism of the Maria Schneider Orchestra; the exotic chamber jazz of Colombian harpist Edmar Cañetado’s trio; or the fiery combustion of New York’s thriving Latin music scene.

But listen to the four albums that Gilkes has released under his own name— in particular his latest, a stunning set of compositions for the WDR Big Band named for its home base, Köln— and it immediately becomes clear how the versatile trombonist can integrate myriad influences into a singular and distinctive voice. Gilkes combines the spontaneous invention of jazz with the elegant architecture of classical composition; straightahead swing with adventurous modernism; virtuosic technique with passionate emotion. It’s a rare combination that has made Gilkes an in-demand performer, composer, sideman, and clinician since his arrival in New York City in the late 1990s.

They’ve also garnered him accolades from critics, audiences, and peers alike. In 2003 Gilkes was a finalist in the prestigious Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition, and has been voted a Rising Star on multiple occasions in DownBeat Magazine's esteemed Critics Poll. Bill Milkowski of JazzTimes has called Gilkes “compelling, harmonically intriguing and ferociously swinging,” while bandleader Maria Schneider refers to him as “one of those musicians who continually just drops my jaw and leaves me shaking my head in disbelief.”

While his musical career has taken him to stages around the world, including four years in Cologne (Köln), Germany, as a member of the WDR Big Band, Gilkes became familiar with travel long before a trombone ever touched his lips. Gilkes’ father was a trombonist and euphonium player and later conductor in the Air Force, which led the family from Washington D.C. – Gilkes was born on Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland – to New Hampshire, New Jersey, Alabama, Illinois, and Colorado.
Gilkes released his debut as a leader, Edenderry, in 2004 with a quartet featuring pianist Jon Cowherd, bassist Matt Clohesy, and drummer Johnathan Blake. He followed that with the quintet recordings Lost Words in 2008 and Sound Stories in 2012. His latest release, Köln, teams Gilkes with the German WDR Big Band, with whom he was a member from 2010-2013.

During his four years in Cologne, Gilkes worked with renowned soloists, composers and arrangers including Michael Abene, Vince Mendoza, John Scofield, Chris Potter, Kenny Wheeler, Randy Brecker, Patti Austin, Mike Stern, Ron Carter, and Maceo Parker. The influence of those experiences can be heard on Köln, which showcases vivid ensemble writing and arranging which marks the furthest evolution to date of Gilkes’ deft combination of his jazz and classical influences.

Those complex and memorable compositions have begun to attract notice from jazz festivals and educational insti- tutions across the country and around the world, leading to invitations for Gilkes as a composer, bandleader and clinician. While he returned to New York in early 2014, life after his interlude in Germany has begun to once again resemble his childhood as an on-the-move military brat. He continues to work regularly with the Maria Schneider Orchestra and the Edmar Castañeda Trio while teaching and offering master classes at institutions including The Banff Center, Berklee College of Music, the New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music, and the Brubeck Institute. Gilkes is an artist for Edwards Instruments.

Drummer and percussionist, David Silliman’s middle name should be versatility. Whether accompanying song stylists such as Mariah Carey, Cassandra Wilson, and Blossom Dearie or playing with Colombian Harpist Edmar Castaneda, David’s exciting rhythmic energies add color and mood to any musical performance. He’s also comfortable playing in the pit of a Broadway show or with the New Jersey Symphony. David has over 20 years of experi- ence. His performances have taken him to concerts and festivals in Italy, Vienna, Berlin, the North Sea, Monterrey, Uruguay and Lithuania. David was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, where he was exposed to a wide variety of music. It was during this time in his life that his mother, David’s first studies were in the Classical field, studying snare drum, xylophone and timpani. Later studies exposed him to Jazz, Latin Jazz, Brazilian and Funk music. Hearing music with a drummer and a percussion- istic made a strong impression on his playing. Trying to recreate that sound and “feel” with just one person has become a lifetime passion. David’s current setup includes a standard American Drum Set augmented with a South American Cajon. Drums from the Middle East, Africa and the Caribbean along with various other percussion and some his own original setups allow him to move seamlessly from the Cajon, to Drum Set and all the percussive ‘toys’ in between, creating the rhythmic sound and energy of two or three percussionists.” Years of playing with Blossom Dearie’s trio, showed another side of David’s musical talents. Dearie’s soft and understated musical style is matched perfectly with David’s softer, highly sensitive drumming. Highlights of David’s past work include concert tours with Al DiMeola, Cassandra Wilson, and Leslie Uggams. He also has performed with Aretha Franklin in New York, and is featured on the VH1 Divas 2001 concert.

Andrea Tierra, vocals

Hailing from Medellin, Colombia, Andrea Tierra blends Latin American rhythms with jazz and her poetry to create a one-of-a-kind musical brew. Her songs focus on the progressive, challenging injustices, to love, to life, and to the land (“Tierra” means “earth” in Spanish.)

With a rare contralto voice that pierces the heart, Andrea Tierra’s transcends time. With her own group she explores a world of poetry that moves through such Latin American rhythms as cumbia, bambuco and joropo (Colombia), zamba (Argentina), lando (Peru) bossa nova and samba (Brazil), flamenco (Spain), mixed with the unique New York style. In her first CD Melodía Verde (2008) she takes this sensibility on a journey around Latin America, putting the music through the lens of her life and experience.

Andrea Tierra released her first book of poetry, Canto (2006), in which she develops a new concept of poetry that mixes her Colombian roots with the US culture and her own experiences as immigrant and New York resident.

Among the many stages she has performed, her appearance at the annual Colombian Heritage Festival held at Madison Square Garden proved her an audience favorite. Andrea Tierra, has performed at the New Orleans Jazz Festival, Bayside Festival of Miami, Latino Festival of New York, Lowell Folk Festival, jazz festivals in Colombia, Uruguay, and Panama, and in world-renowned music venues such as Satalla, Jazz Gallery, Zinc Bar, Sweet Rhythms, Jazz Standard, Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola, among others. A performance art legacy (she was a member of her father’s traveling theater company since childhood) Andrea Tierra delivers an intensity in music that could be described in words, but is much better experienced.

See music.williams.edu for full details and additional happenings as well as to sign up for the weekly e-newsletters.

Upcoming Events

Tue Sep 20 8pm Bruce Williamson/Art Lande ’69 Duo Brooks-Rogers Recital Hall
Fri Sep 23 8pm Faculty Recital: Ronald Feldman, cello; Brooks-Rogers Recital Hall
Tue Sep 27 4:15pm Doris Stevenson, piano Prof. Lewis Porter Class of 1960 Lecture Bernhard Room 30