

NEWS RELEASE



UMass Amherst Fine Arts Center
Magic Triangle Jazz Series
www.fineartscenter.com/magictriangle

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 27, 2007

WHAT: The Omar Sosa Afreecanos Quartet

WHEN: Tuesday, April 1, 2008 at 8PM

WHERE: Bezanson Recital Hall

IMAGES: To download images relating to this press release please go online to <http://www.umass.edu/fac/centerwide/pressRoom>

(Omar Sosa offers a joyful mix of jazz and Afro-Caribbean music, combining his own Afro-Cuban tradition with an experimenter's attitude.)

The Magic Triangle Jazz Series, produced by WMUA, 91.1FM and the Fine Arts Center at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, continues its 19th season on Tuesday, April 1, 2008, in Bezanson Recital Hall at 8:00pm with the Omar Sosa Afreecanos Quartet, featuring Omar Sosa, piano, Mola Sylla (Senegal), vocals; Childo Tomas (Mozambique), electric bass and Julio Barreto (Cuba), drums.

Omar Sosa is one of today's most versatile jazz artists: composer, arranger, producer, pianist, percussionist, and bandleader. He fuses a wide range of world music and electronic elements with his native Afro-Cuban roots to create a fresh and original urban sound - all with a Latin jazz heart. "Sosa's vision of contemporary jazz reaches across every imaginable boundary", writes Don Heckman of The Los Angeles Times.

Sosa has released 15 recordings on the Oakland-based Otá Records label since 1997, including 2002's Grammy-nominated *Sentir*, and *Mulatos*, nominated for Latin Jazz Album of the Year by the Jazz Journalists Association. Omar Sosa received a lifetime achievement award from the Smithsonian Institution in 2003 for his contributions to the development of Latin music in the United States.

He performed with his Octet at the opening of Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall. Composer John Adams, who curated the opening, called Sosa "a deeply creative musician with an extraordinary harmonic sense. His piano playing is sui generi. It has obvious roots in Cuban music, but he's taken his approach to the keyboard into completely new regions".

Omar Sosa was born and raised in Camagüey, Cuba in 1965, and at eight began studying percussion at the local music conservatory. He moved to the prestigious Escuela Nacional de Musica in Havana where, not finding his first choice instrument – the marimba –available, he began to focus on the piano. He finished his formal education in 1983 at the Instituto Superior de Arte, also in Havana.

Moving to Quito, Ecuador for several years beginning in 1993, Sosa discovered the folkloric music of Esmeraldas, a pocket of African-rooted culture on the northwest coast of that country known especially for its use of the marimba. After a brief stint in Spain, Sosa moved to the San Francisco Bay Area in late 1995 where he quickly invigorated the local Latin jazz scene with his explosive playing and adventurous writing. The next year Sosa made his U.S. recording debut on Ota Records with a solo piano outing, Omar Omar, followed in 1997 with the first in a trilogy of groundbreaking large-ensemble, world/jazz recordings: Free Roots, Spirit Of The Roots and Bembon.

The Magic Triangle Jazz Series concludes with Frank London & Hazonos (April 17). Tickets are \$12/general public and \$7/students and are available through the Fine Arts Center Box Office, 1-800-999-UMAS.

The Magic Triangle Jazz Concert Series is produced by WMUA-FM and the Fine Arts Center, and funded by the: UMass Arts Council, Student Affairs Cultural Enrichment Fund, Alumni Association and Commuter Area Government. Additional support from: Campus Center Hotel and 88.5 WFCR, NPR News and Music for Western New England.

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