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THE 2006 MAGIC TRIANGLE JAZZ SERIES PRESENTS:

James 'Blood' Ulmer's Odyssey Band

The Magic Triangle Jazz Series, produced by WMUA, 91.1FM and the Fine Arts Center at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, begins its 17th season on Thursday, February 23, in Bezanson Recital Hall at 8:00pm with James 'Blood'

Ulmer's Odyssey Band, featuring James 'Blood' Ulmer, guitar and vocals; Charles Burnham, violin, and Warren Benbow, drums.

James 'Blood' Ulmer was once described by Village Voice music critic, Greg Tate, as "the missing link between Jimi Hendrix and Wes Montgomery on one hand, between P-Funk and Mississippi Fred McDowell on the other." Indeed, the guitarist, vocalist and composer ranks atop the pantheon of American music mavericks. Forging an unyielding synthesis of musical styles, vision and virtuosity, Ulmer has left an indelible mark on keen ears for 30 years. Too primitive for sophisticated jazz audiences; too funky for the four-bar blues crowd; too country for the urban funk kind; too psychedelic for straight-ahead rock fans; his audience, like many of the great artists of the 20th century, is small yet devout. His legend would be secure just from his work with Ornette Coleman, but since Ulmer began his solo career at the end of the '70's, he has crafted a career that has put him in a category reserved for masters like Sonny Sharrock and Derek Bailey.

The first of nine children, James Blood Ulmer was born in 1942 in rural St.

Matthews, South Carolina in a strict Baptist family. While gospel sparked Blood's passion for music, the flames quickly spread as he discovered early rock & roll, country & western and blues. Ulmer began his career playing in funk bands, first in Pittsburgh (1959-1964) and later around Columbus, OH (1964-1967), where he played in organist Hank Marr's group. With him, Blood toured the U.S. and Europe and made his first recordings on a King Records LP entitled, "In the Marr-Ketplace". Ulmer spent four years in Detroit before moving to New York in 1971, where he became an essential part of Ornette Coleman's musical evolution. In 1978, Ornette produced and performed on Ulmer's stunning debut record, "Tales of Captain Black".

Signed by the British rock label, Rough Trade, Ulmer recorded "Are You Glad to Be In America?", a frenetic concoction of free funk and jazz.. CBS, which bought out Ulmer's contract with Rough Trade, produced three landmark Ulmer records:

"Free Lancing" (1981), "Black Rock" ('82) and "Odyssey" ('83), described by Bill Milkowski as "avant-gutbucket; conjuring images of Skip James and Albert Ayler jamming on the Mississippi Delta." Around this time he began an association with David Murray and Ronald Shannon Jackson and formed the Music Revelation Ensemble, a quartet with that produced a number of intense, free-blowing albums over a span of two

decades. Phalanx, a cooperative group featuring George Adams, Sirone and Rashied Ali, also produced some startling records beginning in the late 80s.

More recently, Ulmer has recorded three acclaimed blues records, produced by Vernon Reid including, "Memphis Blood: The Sun Sessions" and "No Escape From The Blues: The Electric Lady Sessions", which have led to a Grammy nomination and Rolling Stone Magazine "Best Album" honors. His most recent releases are "Back in Time" (Pi) with the Odyssey Band and a solo project, "Birthright".

"The number of bonafide original contributions to the musical language of the blues in the last 30 years are as scarce as hair on a Mississippi bullfrog", wrote Dave Rubin in Guitar Player Magazine. "One must now add James Blood Ulmer's 'Birthright' to this short list and it may be the most groundbreaking of all."

Tickets are \$12/general public and \$7/students and are available through the Fine Arts Center Box Office, 1-800-999-UMAS. Magic Triangle continues with the ICP Orchestra (March 30) and Ernest Dawkins' New Horizon Ensemble (April 27)

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, Public Radio for Western New England.