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THE 2007 MAGIC TRIANGLE JAZZ SERIES PRESENTS:

Michael Gregory Trio

The Magic Triangle Jazz Series, produced by WMUA, 91.1FM and the Fine Arts Center at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, begins its 18th season on Thursday, February 22, 2007 in Bezanson Recital Hall at 8:00pm with the **Michael Gregory Trio**, featuring **Michael Gregory**, guitars, **Mark Helias**, bass and **Pheeroan akLaff**, drums.

Michael Gregory has successfully straddled the pop and improvised music worlds since the beginning of his career in the 1970s. "Gregory has that rare combination of virtuosity and versatility, able to play the guitar whiz...then slip easily into hugely commercial cuts," writes Q Magazine. "Michael Gregory is, quite simply, the business."

A long-time resident of the Pioneer Valley, Michael Gregory was born in New Haven in 1953 and began to play guitar at the age of seven. Among his early influences were Jimi Hendrix, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Son House, Joni Mitchell and Igor Stravinsky. Visionary trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith opened him up to creative music, and he began collaborations with Smith, as well as pianist Anthony Davis, and saxophonists Julius Hemphill, David Murray and Oliver Lake. During this period, Gregory produced a series of outstanding recordings, including *Clarity*, *Circle*, *Triangle*, *Square*, *Karmonic Suite*, *Gifts* and *Heart and Center*.

"By the time (Gregory) was twenty-one he was already one of the most original jazz guitarists to emerge since the sixties," writes Rolling Stone magazine.

Bassist/composer Mark Helias embarked on an international performance career with the Anthony Braxton quartet in 1977. Since then he has enjoyed long musical associations with Edward Blackwell, Anthony Davis, Dewey Redman, Ray Anderson, Don Cherry and Gerry Hemingway. Ten albums of his music have been released since 1984. The most recent is, *Atomic Clock* (2006).

Drummer Pheeroan akLaff was born in Detroit and came of musical age in New Haven, Connecticut. His live and recorded work with Wadada Leo Smith, Oliver Lake, Anthony Davis, Michael Gregory and Henry Threadgill, catapulted him to the top echelon of improvising musicians. His most recent recording as a leader is *Brooklyn Waters* (Telepathy Records) which he co-leads with pianist Michael Cain.

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 Series continues with concerts by Michele Rosewoman & New-Yoruba (March 29) and the Roscoe Mitchell Trio (April 26).

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.