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THE 2006 SOLOS & DUOS SERIES PRESENTS:

“As Serious As Your Life: Creative Music in the 60s”, a panel discussion

The Fine Arts Center’s Solos & Duos Series, and the History Department at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, present **“As Serious As Your Life: Creative Music in the 60s”**, a **panel discussion** on **November 30 at 7:30pm** in **Herter Auditorium**. This free event is part of the History Department’s fall Feinberg Family Distinguished Lecture Series: “Politics and Protest: 1960s and Now”.

Panelists include musicians Joe McPhee and Archie Shepp, poet/writer Ron Welburn and moderator WS Tkweme (University of Louisville). This free-wheeling discussion will explore the political dimension of the jazz avant garde. Was there a message in the music itself that can be said to be political? What role did Black Nationalism play in the creation of ‘the new thing’? When writers said free jazz was an expression of anger and alienation, did musicians agree with this interpretation? What were the goals of musician’s organizations such as the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, the Jazz and People’s Movement and the Black Artists Group. What effect did they have on the industry as far as ownership, working conditions, remuneration?

Joe McPhee is a brilliant improvising musician who plays saxophones, trumpets, valve trombone, clarinet, piano, and sometimes electronics. “McPhee is a major figure,” writes Brian Morton. “He is one of the most consistently impressive and adventurous composer/ instrumentalists in the music.” Born in Miami in 1939 to a family with strong ties to sacred and secular musical traditions, McPhee taught in the Black Studies Department at Vassar College and continues an international career that spans 40 years and 80 recordings. He made his recording debut on Clifford Thornton’s *Freedom and Unity*, (Third World, ‘67), and began recording under his own name two years later (*Underground Railroad*). In the early ‘70’s, Werner Uehlinger formed HatART Records, with McPhee as the artistic inspiration and focus. He produced 11 brilliant recordings for the label between 1975 and ‘82.

Archie Shepp was born in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in 1937, and raised in Philadelphia, where he studied piano, clarinet and alto saxophone before focusing on tenor saxophone. An alumnus of Goddard College, Shepp joined Cecil Taylor’s band in 1960 and appeared on *Air*, *The World Of Cecil Taylor* and *Cell Walk For Celeste*, all of which remain defining Taylor recordings. His first recordings under his own name came with the New York Contemporary Five, which included Don Cherry. Shepp was recommended to Impulse! Records by John Coltrane. Between 1964-1972 he produced 12 seminal albums on the label. Mr. Shepp was recently retired as professor at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Ron Welburn is a Professor of English at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Of Gingaskin & Assateague/Cherokee/African American ancestry, Welburn directs the undergraduate Native American Indian Studies Certificate Program. His research and teaching interests include ethnohistory of eastern Native America, postmodernism, cultural studies, and jazz studies. A widely published poet, the latest of his six books is *Coming Through Smoke and the Dreaming* (Greenfield Review Press, 2000). For over two decades Welburn published jazz and international music reviews in *downbeat*, *JazzTimes* and other periodicals. He formerly coordinated the Jazz Oral History Project of the National Endowment for the Arts at the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University Newark.

Moderator **WS Tkweme** is assistant professor of Pan African Studies, University of Louisville. He earned his Ph.D from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He has looked closely at the work of Amiri Baraka, Larry Neal and the Black Arts Movement.

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