

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 6, 2020

Johannes Wallmann
www.johanneswallmann.com
wallmann@wisc.edu
917-992-9101

Johannes Wallmann Premieres New Works for Jazz Quintet and String Orchestra

UW-Madison Director of Jazz Studies Joined by New York All-Star Group

Madison, WI: Pianist and UW-Madison Director of Jazz Studies Johannes Wallmann will present a concert of new composition for jazz quintet and string orchestra at 8 pm on Thursday, February 20, 2020 in UW-Madison's new Hamel Music Center. The concert will feature all new music composed by Wallmann and performed by a group that includes New York veterans and internationally recognized recording artists Ingrid Jensen, trumpet; Dayna Stephens, saxophone; and Allison Miller, drums; as well as a 14-piece string orchestra conducted by Michael Dolan.

Wallmann, who joined UW-Madison's music faculty in 2012 as the inaugural holder of the John and Carolyn Peterson Chair in Jazz Studies, is a Fresh Sounds Records and Shifting Paradigm recording artist. A prolific composer of small-group and big band jazz, Wallmann has spent the last year composing new music for strings orchestra and jazz quintet, a shift in instrumentation he considers to be "both an extension of as well as a departure from my previous writing. Composing for strings in a jazz context has been a great catalyst for new ideas. It adds such a wide range of rich tone colors to a composer's palate. It's also a wonderful compositional challenge to bring together musicians of different musical backgrounds and to write to the strengths of orchestrally-trained string players while preserving space for the improvisation that's so core to the jazz ensemble. Even more than most musical ensembles, cross-genre collaborations require a special openness and selflessness on the part of each performer, and UW-Madison's emphasis on interdisciplinary work makes it a fitting setting for this concert."

Wallmann was one of two 2019 recipients of the Emily Mead Baldwin Awards by UW-Madison's Division of the Arts (artsdivision.wisc.edu). The award, together with a grant from the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation, is funding the concert as well as a follow-up recording to be released in early 2021. The admission-free concert is presented in the Mead Witter Concert Hall, the crown jewel of UW-Madison's new Hamel Music Center, which opened in October 2019, located at 740 University Ave.

Born 1974 in Germany and raised on Canada's Vancouver Island, Wallmann studied jazz piano and composition at Berklee College of Music (BM) and at New York University (MM, PhD). Over twelve years in New York City and five years in Oakland, CA, he established himself as a versatile and in-demand sideman before moving to Madison, Wisconsin in 2012, where as the

inaugural holder of the John and Carolyn Peterson Chair in Jazz Studies at the University of Wisconsin, he founded the university's jazz studies program. Wallmann is a Yamaha Piano artist, who has recorded eight critically acclaimed CDs as a leader. *DownBeat Magazine* called Wallmann "a remarkable pianist and composer...his evocative compositions are brimming with melodic cogency and rhythmic pull," named his 2015 *Town Musicians* album an "Editors' Pick," and described his playing on *Day and Night* (2018) as "confident, muscular and elegant." The *Wisconsin Gazette* called *Love Wins* (2018), "One of the most interesting and accomplished jazz albums to come out in recent years. *Love Wins* has taken the uniquely American art form to the next step of its creative journey."

Ingrid Jensen was named 2019's Trumpeter of the Year by the Jazz Journalists Association. As a sought-out teacher, collaborator, and soloist, it is easy to see why the *New York Times* calls her "as versatile as she is vigorous." After graduating from Berklee College of Music in 1989, Jensen became the youngest professor in the history of the Bruckner Conservatory in Linz, Austria. In the 1990s, she recorded three highly acclaimed CDs for the ENJA record label, becoming one of the most in-demand trumpet players on the global jazz scene. She has been a member of the jazz orchestras of Maria Schneider (1994-2012) and Darcy James Argue (2002-present) and has performed with a multi-generational cast of jazz legends ranging from Clark Terry to Terri-Lyne Carrington to Esperanza Spalding. She is a featured soloist on her sister Christine Jensen Jazz Orchestra's Juno-award-winning album, *Treelines* (2011), and its successor, *Habitat* (2013). In 2016, the sisters released a highly regarded small group recording entitled *Infinitude* featuring the guitarist Ben Monder. Ingrid Jensen's latest album, *Invisible Sounds* (2018, Whirlwind), honors the late great trumpeter/composer Kenny Wheeler. Allison Miller and Ingrid Jensen are both members of the all-star septet ARTEMIS, whose debut album will be released later this year on Blue Note Records.

Dayna Stephens, winner of the 2019 *DownBeat* Critics Poll in the category "Rising Star—Tenor Saxophone," has garnered critical acclaim over the years for his playing, compositions and arrangements. *Downbeat* magazine's James Hale describes *Gratitude*, the saxophonist/composer's eighth release as a leader, as a "highly cinematic listening experience, full of roiling seas and shifting skies." Brad Faberman cites Stephens as the *JazzTimes* Editor's Pick, writing, "His big, warm lines are full of notes and intent but also gusts of wind, bodies of water." Stephens has traveled and recorded with a cross section of such distinctive voices, including pianists Brad Mehldau, Fred Hersch, Billy Childs, Geoffrey Keezer, Taylor Eigsti, Muhal Richard Abrams, Kenny Barron, Theo Hill, Gerald Clayton and Aaron Parks; trumpet players Roy Hargrove, Tom Harrell, Sean Jones, Terrell Stafford, Brian Lynch, Ambrose Akinmusire and Michael Rodriguez; saxophone players Wayne Shorter, Jaleel Shaw, Ben Wendel, Chris Potter, John Ellis and Walter Smith III; bass players Ben Street, Rufus Reid, Kiyoshi Kitagawa, Joe Sanders, Linda Oh, Doug Weiss, Larry Grenadier and Harish Raghavan; vocalists Gretchen Parlato, Becca Stevens and Sachal Vasandani; and guitar players John Scofield, Julian Lage, Charles Altura, Mike Moreno, Lage Lund, Pete Bernstein and Carlos Santana.

NYC-based drummer Allison Miller has been named "Rising Star Drummer" and "Top 20 Jazz Drummers" in *Downbeat* magazine's acclaimed Critics Poll. She has release five albums with her

band Boom Tic Boom to critical acclaim, garnering “Top 10 Jazz Albums” lists from *Downbeat*, *The LA Times*, the Jazz Journalists Association, and *Something Else*. As a side-musician, Miller has performed with jazz artists such as organ legend Dr. Lonnie Smith, vocalist Patricia Barber, and avant-garde trailblazers Marty Ehrlich, Steven Bernstein, Ben Allison, Steve Cardenas, and Ben Goldberg, as well as with mainstream artists as Ani DiFranco, Natalie Merchant, Brandi Carlile, Pino Daniele, Erin McKeown, Jill Sobule, and Late Night with Seth Meyers. Miller is a three-time Jazz Ambassador of the US State Department and teaches at The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music, Stanford Jazz Workshop, and Jazz Camp West. Her lessons and writings have been published in *The Huffington Post*, *Modern Drummer*, *Jazz Times*, *DRUM*, *Tom Tom*, and *Drummer UK*.

- Johannes Wallmann (Madison) – composer, piano
- Ingrid Jensen (New York) – trumpet
- Dayna Stephens (New York) – saxophone
- Allison Miller (New York) – drums
- Nick Moran (Madison) – bass
- Michael Dolan (Madison) – conductor
- & 14-piece string orchestra

More information at www.johanneswallmann.com

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