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**THE VANGUARD OF CONTEMPORARY JAZZ HITS BERKELEY WHEN
THE JASON MORAN TRIO AND THE VIJAY IYER QUARTET PERFORM
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4 AT 8:00 P.M. IN WHEELER AUDITORIUM**

BERKELEY, September 26, 2006 — A double bill of innovative contemporary jazz comes to Cal Performances when the **Jason Moran Trio** and the **Vijay Iyer Quartet** play Wheeler Auditorium on **Saturday, November 4 at 8:00 p.m.** Pianist **Jason Moran**, a force on the jazz scene since he emerged in the late 1990s, is admired for his take-no-prisoners playing and his willingness to experiment with technology—such as digital sampling—in both his recordings and live performances. **Vijay Iyer**, a Cal alumnus and pianist who rose to prominence in the Bay Area and New York jazz clubs in the 1990s, plays a cerebral blend of jazz spiced with influences from his south Asian heritage (his parents are immigrants to the United States from India). Both Moran and Iyer have assembled small, tight groups of talented, like-minded musicians who promise to challenge and thrill audiences. The program will be announced from the stage.

JASON MORAN

Born and raised in Houston, Texas, pianist and bandleader **Jason Moran** attended Houston's High School for the Performing and Visual Arts and the Manhattan School of Music, where he studied with Jaki Byard. While still in college he became a fixture in saxophonist Greg Osby's touring and recording bands, and made his professional recording debut in Osby's 1997 CD *Further Ado*. Two years later Moran released his first disc as bandleader, *Soundtrack to Human Motion*, and a year later (2000) he released *Facing Left* with bassist **Tarus Mateen** and drummer **Nasheet Waits**, who comprise his current trio. Moran calls the trio The Bandwagon because, as he says, "The name ... indicates a group of guys who enjoy playing and also an image of taking a ride together. When people jump on the bandwagon they rarely jump off." The trio was called "the best new rhythm section in jazz" (*JazzTimes*) upon the release of their 2003 album *The Bandwagon*. The album was culled from The Bandwagon's six-day stint at New York's Village Vanguard, where they played music ranging from hip-hop to Björk to Prokofiev.

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The New York Times found the live sessions arresting: “A band so committed to toying with an audience’s blood pressure has bypassed the normal goals of jazz performance; it’s going beyond the call of duty.”

Bassist **Tarus Mateen** was born in California and studied music at Morehouse College in Atlanta. His performing and recording experience ranges from studio sessions with early California rappers, performing with reggae stars Sly & Robbie, touring with bebop singer Betty Carter and recording with a variety of artists including Outkast and Tony Braxton, and the soundtrack to the Spike Lee film *Malcolm X*. Drummer **Nasheet Waits** is the son of Freddie Waits who played with Ella Fitzgerald, Sonny Rollins, McCoy Tyner and others. Waits attended Morehouse College and graduated with honors from Long Island University and was in the quintet of reedman Antonio Hart. In addition to The Bandwagon, Waits performs with Andrew Hill’s various bands and Fred Hersch’s trio, and teaches privately.

The Bandwagon uses digital human voice samples and other technological methods and tools, many of them more associated with hip-hop and other genres than with jazz, to achieve its unique, layered, eclectic sound. Use of technology is not a gimmick, however, and not intended to mask the players’ virtuosity; indeed, *Jazziz* wrote, “even without the technology, this is one of the most ear-catching piano trios working today. Moran tempts fate with every solo ... nothing seems out of reach.”

VIJAY IYER

Called one of “today’s most important pianists” by *The New Yorker*, **Vijay Iyer** brings together African, Asian and European musical lineages to create his own fresh, original music. Born in upstate New York and a UC Berkeley alumnus—he earned a master’s degree in physics, followed by an interdisciplinary PhD in music and cognitive science in 1998—Iyer a versatile, genre-defying pianist and composer. When he first appeared on the Bay Area jazz scene in the mid-1990s, while still attending Cal, Iyer “wanted to unite jazz and funk, Indian drone elements, and swing; he also seemed to want to synthesize four pianists, related but still diverse: Duke Ellington, Andrew Hill, Thelonious Monk and Cecil Taylor” (*The New York Times*).

The quartet—Iyer, alto saxophonist **Rudresh Mahanthappa**, bassist **Stephan Crump** and drummer **Marcus Gilmore**—“play[s] with just the level of intimacy and shared understanding needed for Iyer’s tricky music” (*Down Beat*). Iyer’s relationship with Mahanthappa dates from 1998, and the two share both Indian heritage and a deep musical connection. “As Iyer’s roiling sound propels Mahanthappa’s saxophone over the turbulence, his soaring melodic style redolent of John Coltrane, the two display the sort of intuitive connection that produces great improvised music” (*Boston Globe*). The *Chicago Tribune* has praised Mahanthappa’s playing as “smoldering,” and said of the other quartet members, “The three players practically have become a single rhythmic organism.” The quartet’s latest recording, *Reimagining*, released in 2005, was praised by the *Detroit Free Press* as “dense with waves of odd-metered Indian and funk rhythms, open harmony, heart-of-darkness overtones, incantatory solos, and a churning pool of group interaction.”

Iyer has also received praise for *In One Language*, his collaboration with rapper and poet Mike Ladd. The 2003 album is a series of Ladd’s monologues, set to Iyer’s piano music, that explore the post-9/11 world through the eyes of foreign-born travelers passing through airports under the wary eyes of security forces. “Let’s count it as a breakthrough hip-hop-jazz fusion,” wrote Ben Ratliff of the album in *The New York Times*.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for the **Jason Moran Trio** and the **Vijay Iyer Quartet** on **Saturday, November 4** in Wheeler Auditorium are priced at **\$32.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens and other students receive a \$2 discount, and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$3 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Saturday, November 4 at 8:00 p.m.

**Wheeler Auditorium, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley**

Jazz

Jason Moran Trio (The Bandwagon)

Jason Moran, piano

Tarus Mateen, bass

Nasheet Waits, drums

Vijay Iyer Quartet

Vijay Iyer, piano

Rudresh Mahanthappa, alto saxophone

Stephan Crump, bass

Marcus Gilmore, drums

Program: Two leading modern jazz groups, the Jason Moran Trio (The Bandwagon) and the Vijay Iyer Quartet, present an evening of eclectic modern jazz music. Selections will be announced from the stage.

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