Sunday, April 1, 2012, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

Keith Jarrett

An Evening of Solo Piano Improvisations

There will be one 20-minute intermission and no late seating until intermission.

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er the past five decades, Keith Jarrett has come to be recognized as one of the most creative musicians of our time—universally acclaimed as an improviser of unsurpassed genius; a master of jazz piano; a classical keyboardist of great depth; and a composer who has written hundreds of pieces for his various jazz groups, plus extended works for orchestra, soloist and chamber ensemble. Born on May 8, 1945, in Allentown, Pennsylvania, Mr. Jarrett began playing the piano at age three and studied classical music throughout his youth. He took formal composition studies at age 15, before studying briefly at the Berklee College of Music in Boston. After a tentative period of sitting in at various New York jazz spots, Mr. Jarrett toured with Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers in 1965–1966, and with the Charles Lloyd Quartet from 1966–1968. He soon established his own trio with bassist Charlie Haden and drummer Paul Motian, which in 1972 expanded to a quartet with the addition of tenor saxophonist Dewey Redman. In 1970–1971, Mr. Jarrett was a member of Miles Davis's band, playing electric piano and organ—his last stint as a sideman. Thereafter, Mr. Jarrett dedicated himself exclusively to performing acoustic music as a solo artist and leader.

In 1971, Mr. Jarrett made his first recording for Manfred Eicher of ECM (Editions of Contemporary Music) Records. Their fruitful collaboration has produced over 60 recordings to date, unparalleled in their scope, diversity and quality. The foundation of Mr. Jarrett's ECM discography are his landmark solo piano recordings, which have redefined the role of the piano in contemporary music. Facing You, Solo Concerts: Bremen and Lausanne, The Köln Concert, Staircase, Sun Bear Concerts, Invocations: The Moth and the Flame, Concerts (Bregenz), Paris Concert, Dark Intervals, Vienna Concert, La Scala, Radiance, The Carnegie Hall Concert and Paris/London—Testament incorporate a broad spectrum of musical idioms and languages—classical, jazz, ethnic, gospel, folk, blues and pure sound—resulting in music both deeply personal and universal. Mr. Jarrett's most recent ECM solo piano CD is Rio, recorded live in Brazil in April 2011 and released in fall 2011 to worldwide critical acclaim.

In 1999, The Melody at Night, with You, a solo piano studio recording of classic melodies, was released by ECM, winning many “Best of the Year” awards in Europe, Japan and the United States. In 2010, ECM released jasmine, an duo recording by Mr. Jarrett and Mr. Haden, their first musical collaboration in over 30 years, which became one of the most acclaimed and best-selling jazz recordings of the decade.

For the past 29 years, Mr. Jarrett's main context for playing jazz has been in trio with bassist Gary Peacock and drummer Jack DeJohnette. In January 1983, Mr. Jarrett invited Mr. Peacock and Mr. DeJohnette to New York's Power Station studio to record 'standards'—American show and jazz tunes from the 1930s, '40s and '50s. At the time, it was considered passé for jazz musicians to concentrate on 'standards' instead of original material, but Mr. Jarrett thought it important to demonstrate that “music wasn't about the material, but what the player brings to the material.”

The original 1983 session produced the trio's first three ECM releases: Standards, Vol. 1 and Vol. 2, and Changes, which features free playing. These seminal trio recordings were re-released by ECM in 2008 as a special three-CD set titled The New York Sessions, in celebration of the trio's 25th anniversary.


In 1991, two weeks after the death of Miles Davis, the trio went into the studio for the first time in eight years to record Bye Bye Blackbird, their deeply felt tribute to the jazz giant whom all three had played with in their early years.

There are also four ECM releases by Mr. Jarrett's acclaimed late-1970s Scandinavian quartet featuring Jan Garbarek (saxophone), Palle Danielsson (bass) and Jon Christensen (drums). Belonging, My Song, Nude Ants and Personal Mountains became bestsellers, influencing a generation of young jazz players in Europe and the United States.

In the late 1960s and '70s, Mr. Jarrett made a dozen recordings on the Atlantic, Columbia, Impulse! and ECM labels with his original American quartet with Mr. Haden, Mr. Motian and Mr. Redman: The Mourning of a Star, Birth, El Juicio, Expectations, Fort Yawuh, Treasure Island, Death and the Flower, Back Hand, Mysteries, Shades, The Survivor's Suite and Eyes of the Heart.

Classical music releases by Mr. Jarrett on ECM include J. S. Bach's The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I (piano) and Book II (harpischord), Goldberg Variations (harpischord), French Suites (harpischord), and Sonatas for Viola da Gamba and Cembalo with Kim Kashkashian (viola) and Mr. Jarrett (harpischord); plus piano recordings of Shostakovich's 24 Preludes and Fugues, Op. 87; Handel's Suites for Keyboard; and two volumes of Mozart Piano Concertos with the Stuttgart Kammerorchester under the direction of Dennis Russell Davies.


In 2005, Euro Arts released the DVD, Keith Jarrett: The Art of Improvisation, a full-length documentary directed by British filmmaker Mike Dibbs that includes extensive interviews with Mr. Jarrett, as well as Chick Corea, Mr. Haden, Mr. Peacock, Mr. DeJohnette and Mr. Eicher.

Mr. Jarrett's many honors include a Guggenheim Fellowship; Président de la République and Grand Prix du Disque awards from the Académie Charles-Cros; seven Deutscher Schallplattenpreis awards; and eight Grammy Award nominations in the jazz and classical categories. He has received dozens of “Artist” or “Album of the Year” awards from The New York Times, The New Yorker, Time, Stereo Review, DownBeat, Billboard, CD Review and Rolling Stone; was named “Best Classical Keyboardist” in Keyboard Magazine's Readers' Poll (1991, 1993); and awarded “Best Classical CD” in the CD Review Editor's Poll (1992) for the Shostakovich Preludes and Fugues; in addition to receiving dozens of awards from the international music press.

In December 2008, Mr. Jarrett was inducted into the DownBeat Hall of Fame, following his many annual DownBeat awards over the previous 30 years.

In 1989 Mr. Jarrett was named an Officier de L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, and in 2007 Commandeur dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, two of the highest honors the French Ministry of Culture bestows on artists. In 1996, he was elected a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music, joining Duke Ellington as the only the second foreign jazz musician to ever be so honored. In 2002 he was named a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and in 2003 he was awarded the Polar Music Prize, presented by the King of Sweden in a special televised ceremony in Stockholm. In July 2004, Mr. Jarrett was awarded the Léonie Sonning Music Prize in Copenhagen, Denmark. He is only the second jazz artist to receive the Sonning Award since its founding in 1959; the first was Miles Davis in 1985.