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PEAK Performances Programming History

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## Open City

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming

PEAK Performances at Montclair State University

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Dr. Susan A. Cole, President  
Daniel Gurskis, Dean, College of the Arts  
Jedediah Wheeler, Executive Director, Arts & Cultural Programming

## World Premiere!

# The Vijay Iyer Large Ensemble Project

# OPEN CITY

Vijay Iyer, piano, electronics

Teju Cole, readings, texts  
Himanshu Suri, vocals, lyrics

Ambrose Akinmusire, Jonathan Finlayson, Adam O'Farrill, trumpets

Graham Haynes, cornet, flugelhorn

Steve Coleman, alto saxophone

Hafez Modirzadeh, alto and tenor saxophones

Mark Shim, tenor saxophone

Elena Pinderhughes, flute and vocals

Josh Roseman, bass trombone, tuba

Tyshawn Sorey, trombone, percussion

Mat Maneri, viola

Okkyung Lee, cello

Patricia Franceschy, vibraphone, marimba

Rafiq Bhatia, guitar

Harish Raghavan, bass

Marcus Gilmore, drums

Rajna Swaminathan, mridangam, kanjira

*OPEN CITY* is commissioned by Peak Performances @ Montclair State (NJ).

Produced by Music + Art Management, Steve Cohen, musicandart.net.

In consideration of both audience and performers, please turn off all electronic devices.  
The taking of photographs or videos and the use of recording equipment are not permitted.  
No food or drink is permitted in the theater.

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Montclair State's **Office of Arts & Cultural Programming** (ACP) presents and produces leading artists of the world in dance, music, theater, and opera. Under its signature series Peak Performances, ACP has produced works such as *Zinnias: The Life of Clementine Hunter* by Robert Wilson, Bernice Johnson Reagon, Toshi Reagon, and Jacqueline Woodson; *Dog Days* by David T. Little and Royce Vavrek; Harry Partch's *Oedipus*; and Ridge Theater's *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field* by David Lang. In addition, ACP has commissioned works by Bill T. Jones, Kronos Quartet, Jan Fabre, Liz Lerman, Wayne McGregor, Laurie Anderson, Romeo Castellucci, Richard Alston, Susan Marshall, Fred Hersch, and David Gordon.

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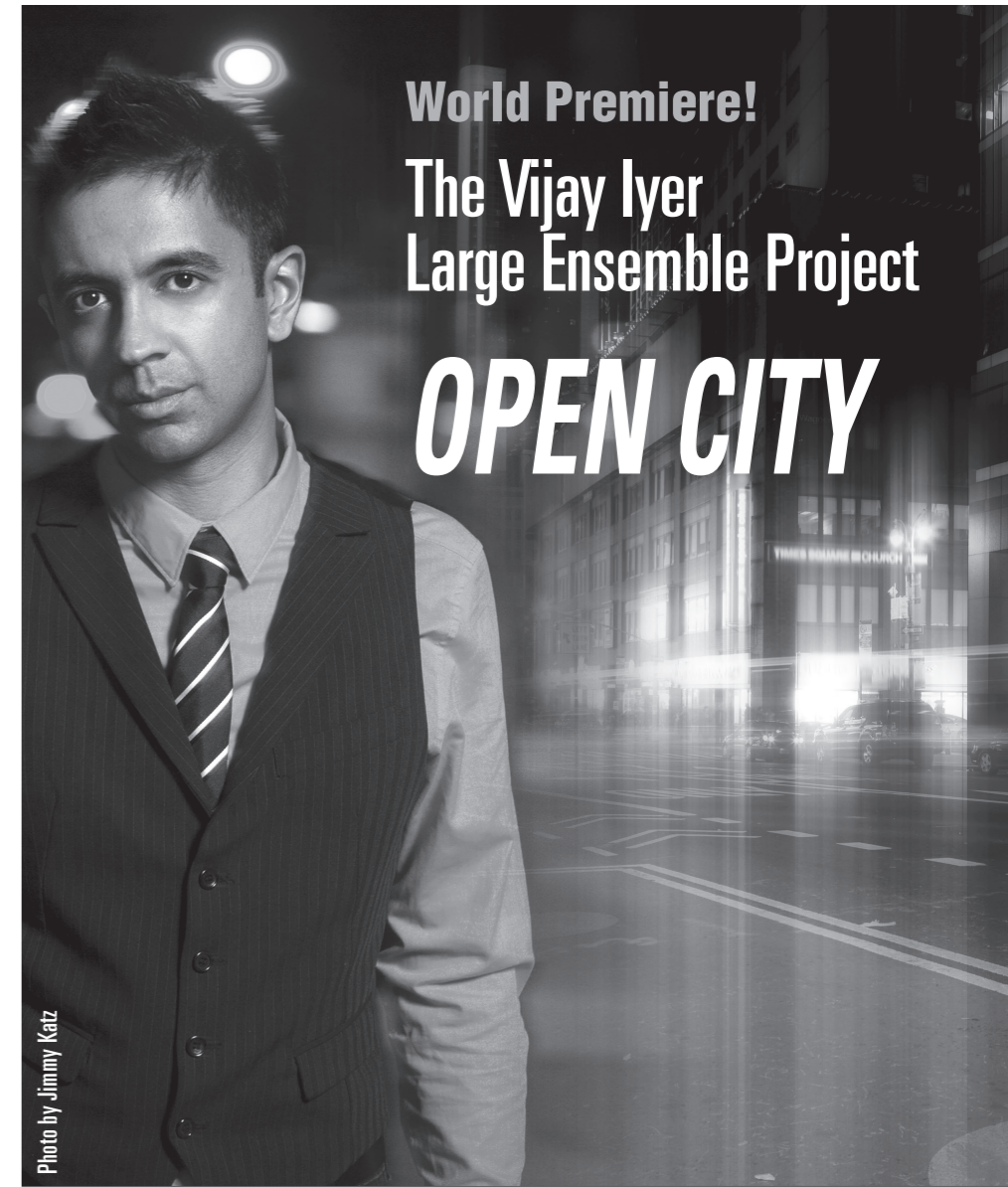


Photo by Jimmy Katz

# Peak Performances

THE 2013|14 SEASON

World Premiere!  
The Vijay Iyer  
Large Ensemble Project  
**OPEN CITY**

October 4 & 5, 2013  
Alexander Kasser Theater





## Program Notes

*OPEN CITY* uses a format close to that of a “big band” to present something that might strike some listeners as not very big-band-like. For some, the term “big band” conjures up thoughts of a genre characterized (in the imagination, if not always in reality) by hierarchical control, linear development, militaristic order, and maybe a tendency toward bombast. But what we intend to do here instead is offer transparency, distributed control, small cyclical modules of composed material, and opportunities for individual and collective creation and discovery.

This ensemble is made up of a few generations' worth of brilliant innovators, including the great Steve Coleman and several who first came to prominence in his ensembles. Gathered together, the band members represent the state of the art in creative music. The goal with this music is to create an adaptive but stable environment for their ideas and enable them to respond to and reinforce one another's actions. I prefer terms offered by Muhal Richard Abrams, Wadada Leo Smith, Roscoe Mitchell, and others: it's not a “big band” but a *creative orchestra*; it's not “jazz” but rather *creative music*; improvisations are not “free” but *open*; we work not “in a tradition” but at the meeting place of multiple streams of history.

I also try to work with the legacy of the late, great Butch Morris, who used a baton and the techniques of an orchestra conductor to channel and amplify the noise, frictions, and static between people, their individual strengths and collective interactive capacities, and their human ability to listen to one another, make choices, and take action. One question I ask is, given a sufficient and specific enough toolset and guidelines, can a team of stellar composer-improvisers make coordinated real-time choices that are indistinguishable from conduction? Can something like a guiding intelligence emerge from a collection of detailed, goal-driven individual actions?

Most of all I am interested in the distribution of agency—the full integration of real-time choice, and therefore individual personhood, into the basic fabric of this music. The fact is that improvisation doesn't “sound like” anything in particular; you can't necessarily tell that a given sound was decided in that instant just by hearing it. But if a listener bears that understanding in mind—that at some level, even with me as the nominal composer, every sound you hear is a choice made in that moment—then we all become part of that interdependent process, co-experiencing it in the moment of performance.

I borrowed the title *OPEN CITY* from the novel of the same name by Teju Cole, who has imbued his characters with rich, transcultural, cosmopolitan subjectivities. Cole joins us here as an occasional narrator, as does Himanshu Suri, a Queens native, poet, and rapper.

I am honored to have this opportunity to present this work. Thank you for listening.

—*Vijay Iyer*

## About the Artists

**Vijay Iyer** (piano, electronics) is the recipient of a 2013 MacArthur “Genius” Fellowship and a Grammy-nominated composer-pianist whose recent honors include an unprecedented “quintuple crown” in the 2012 *DownBeat* International Critics Poll (winning Jazz Artist of the Year, Pianist of the Year, Jazz Album of the Year, Jazz Group of the Year, and Rising Star Composer categories), a “quadruple crown” in the *JazzTimes* extended critics poll (winning Artist of the Year, Acoustic/Mainstream Group of the Year, Pianist of the Year, and Album of the Year), Pianist of the Year Awards for both 2012 and 2013 from the Jazz Journalists Association, and the 2013 ECHO Award (the “German Grammy”) for best international pianist. He has released 17 albums as a leader, including *Accelerando* (2012), voted #1 Jazz Album of the Year for 2012 by NPR, the *Los Angeles Times*, PopMatters, and Amazon, and *Historicity* (2009), a 2010 Grammy nominee for Best Instrumental Jazz Album and named #1 Jazz Album of 2009 by the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Detroit Metro Times*, NPR, PopMatters, the *VillageVoice* Jazz Critics Poll, and the *DownBeat* International Critics Poll. Other honors include the Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, the Greenfield Prize, the Alpert Award in the Arts, the New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship, and numerous composer commissions. His compositions have been commissioned and performed by The Silk Road Ensemble, Ethel, Brentano String Quartet, JACK Quartet, American Composers Orchestra, HERMESensemble, International Contemporary Ensemble, and Imani Winds.

Profuse 73, Lord RAJA, Valgeir Sigurðsson, and Son Lux; emcees Himanshu Suri and High Priest (of Anti-Pop Consortium); members of the chamber ensembles ICE, JACK, MIVOS, and Alarm Will Sound; and numerous others. In 2012, Bhatia released two debut recordings to high acclaim, including recognition on several critics’ lists of the best albums of 2012. He is currently developing new music for his band, composed of Jeremy Viner, Jackson Hill, and Alex Ritz.

**Teju Cole** (readings, texts) was born in the United States to Nigerian parents and raised in Nigeria. He moved back to the US at age 17 and now lives in Brooklyn. He is the author of two books: a novella, *Every Day Is for the Thief*, and a novel, *Open City*, which was nominated for the National Book Critics Circle Award for Best Fiction and won the Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award (2012) for a distinguished first book of fiction. The German-language translation by Christine Richter-Nilsson won the International Literature Award (2013). The novel was short-listed for the Ondaatje Prize (2012), was a finalist for the Morning News Tournament of Books (2012), and was included in *Time* magazine's “Best Books of the Year” (2011). Cole is currently Distinguished Writer in Residence at Bard College.

**Steve Coleman** (alto saxophone) was born in Chicago and moved to New York City in 1978; he has worked there and around the world since then. His main group, Steve Coleman and Five Elements, has been performing internationally since 1981. As one of the founders of the M-Base movement, Coleman has led several groups and has recorded extensively. Initially influenced by saxophonists Charlie Parker, Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane, Von Freeman, and Bunky Green, Coleman has performed and recorded with Thad Jones, Sam Rivers, Doug Hammond, Cecil Taylor, Abbey Lincoln, and Dave Holland. He has incorporated many elements from the folkloric music of the African diaspora fused with musical ideas influenced by ancient metaphysical concepts. He states that his main concern is the use of music as a language of sonic symbols used to express the nature of man's existence. Coleman has been a driving force in today's musical landscape. Visit m-base.com or recording label Pi Recordings at pirecordings.com.

Agency: Unlimited Myles, Inc., unlimitedmyles.com.

**Ambrose Akinmusire** (trumpet) has staked his place at the vanguard of jazz and artistic expression. Winner of the 2007 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition and the 2007 Carmine Caruso International Jazz Trumpet Solo Competition, he was named 2012 Trumpet Player of the Year in *DownBeat* magazine's Critics Poll and the Jazz Journalists Association awards and received Germany's ECHO Award as Instrumentalist of the Year, International Brass. His two CDs, *Prelude to Cora* (Fresh Sound New Talent) and *When the Heart Emerges Glistening* (Blue Note), were met with critical acclaim. The latter topped critics’ lists at the *New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times* and earned Akinmusire France's Grand Prix l'Academie du Jazz.

**Rafiq Bhatia** (guitar) has collaborated with composer-improvisers Vijay Iyer, Billy Hart, David Virelles, and Marcus Gilmore; producers Alexander Overington,

has performed in venues and festivals such as Newport Jazz Festival, Carnegie Hall, and the Jazz Standard and has appeared on television and public radio. She holds a Bachelor of Music from Curtis Institute of Music and a Master of Music from New York University.

**Marcus Gilmore** (drums) was inspired by the music of his grandfather, legendary drummer Roy Haynes, who gave him his first set of drums at age 10. He has performed around the world and recorded with some of today's best-known contemporary artists, including Chick Corea, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Natalie Cole, Clark Terry, Cassandra Wilson, Steve Coleman, Ravi Coltrane, Dave Douglas, John Clayton, Christian Scott, Flying Lotus, and many others. In 2012, *DownBeat*'s Critics Poll named him its top Rising Star Drummer. Gilmore joined Vijay Iyer's group in 2003, at age 16. He also leads his own ensemble and recently debuted a commissioned suite, titled *American Perspicacity*.

**Graham Haynes** (cornet, flugelhorn), son of jazz drummer Roy Haynes, grew up in Queens surrounded by innovators like Roy Eldridge, Milt Jackson, and Jaki Byard. After studying music at Queens College, Haynes helped launch the M-Base collective, an influential group of NY improvisers. He spent much of the 1990s studying and performing with masters of African and Asian music while also investigating sampling and hip-hop music. Since 2000, Haynes has worked as music director and composer, recorded 15 CDs as a leader, scored for film and TV, and played on countless CDs as a side person with such artists as Roy Haynes, Abbey Lincoln, Sting, Butch Morris, The Roots, and Karl Berger. He is currently an adjunct professor at The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music.

**Elena Pinderhughes** (flute and vocals) has won numerous awards for “best soloist” at jazz festivals and from *DownBeat* magazine and was featured in *The Music in Me*, an HBO special on young musicians. She is a 2013 YoungArts Gold Award recipient and a US Presidential Scholar in the Arts. She has performed in major venues and music festivals around the country and toured internationally. She has shared the stage with Hubert Laws, Kenny Garrett, Carlos Santana, Orlando “Maraca” Valle, Omar Sosa, Arturo Sandoval, Stefon Harris, and others. Pinderhughes attends the Manhattan School of Music.

**Harish Raghavan** (bass) began studying Western and Indian percussion at age 8, switching to the double bass at 17. He was accepted to study with John Clayton at the University of Southern California. In 2007 he moved to New York and has quickly become an accomplished and respected bassist. Raghavan has played and toured with Ambrose Akinmusire, Eric Harland, Taylor Eigsti, Kurt Elling, Vijay Iyer, Aaron Parks, Logan Richardson, Dayna Stephens, Gerald Clayton, Walter Smith III, and Gretchen Parlato, among many others. He is featured on major recordings, including Akinmusire's *When the Heart Emerges Glistening*, Harland's *Voyager*, and Eigsti's *Daylight at Midnight*.

**Josh Roseman** (bass trombone, tuba) is a New York City–based musician and producer. He has toured and recorded with Jason Moran, Dave Douglas, Don Byron, Dave Holland, MMW, Me'Shell, Charlie Hunter, Peter Apfelbaum, and The Groove Collective, among others, and has appeared on a few hundred recordings as a sideman. His solo projects include The Water Surgeons, a chamber quartet featuring trombones, guitars, and primitive digital devices of the late 1900s; The Josh

**Hafez Modirzadeh** (alto and tenor saxophones) has represented his original “chromodal” approach to creative music for over two decades, with Grammy-nominated work on saxophones and other reeds on dozens of CDs. He most recently garnered critical acclaim with *Post-Chromodal Out!* (Pi Recordings, 2012). He has performed with masters such as Ornette Coleman, Danongan Kalanduyan, and Mahmoud Zoufonoun and composed works supported by two National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships, Other Minds, Djerassi, and MAP Fund. His musical cultural research has been published by the *Black Music Research Journal*, *Leonardo*, and *Critical Studies in Improvisation* and recognized by the Fulbright Foundation. Dr. Modirzadeh is a professor of music at San Francisco State University.

**Adam O’Farrill** (trumpet) was born and raised in Brooklyn to a musical family including his grandfather, Afro-Cuban composer and arranger Chico O’Farrill; his father, Arturo O’Farrill, pianist and director of the Afro-Latin Jazz Alliance; and his mother, Alison Deane, a classical pianist. O’Farrill has performed at the Newport, Monterey, and Mount Fuji jazz festivals, Teatro Mella, and Marian's Jazz Room and with many NY-based rock bands. He won the ASCAP Herb Alpert Young Jazz Composer Award and the ASCAP Gerswhin Award. He co-leads the O’Farrill Brothers Band with his brother, Zack, and has released two albums, *Giant Peach* and *Sensing Flight*. O’Farrill currently studies at the Manhattan School of Music.

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**Okkyung Lee** (cello), a native of Korea, has been developing her own voice in contemporary cello performance, improvisation, and composition for more than a decade. Since moving to New York in 2000, she has released more than 20 albums, including her latest solo record, *Ghil*, on EditionsMego/Ideologic Organ and *Noisy Love Songs (for George Dyer)* on Tzadik, and toured extensively in the US and Europe. Lee has collaborated with numerous artists such as Laurie Anderson, David Behrman, Douglas Gordon, Vijay Iyer, Christian Marclay, Thurston Moore, Jim O'Rourke, Evan Parker, and John Zorn. She received a composer commission from the New York State Council on the Arts in 2007 and a Foundation for Contemporary Arts Grant in 2010 in Music/Sound. In November 2013, she will curate Festival Music Unlimited 27 in Wels, Austria.

**Mat Maneri** (viola) is an American composer, improviser, and jazz violin and viola player. He has recorded with Cecil Taylor, Matthew Shipp, Joe Morris, Joe Maneri, Gerald Cleaver, Tim Berne, Borah Bergman, Mark Dresser, William Parker, Michael Formanek, and John Lockwood, with his own trio, quartet, and quintet, and on various band releases: Club d'Elf, Decoupage, Brewed by Noon, Paul Motian's Electric Bebop Band, and Buffalo Collision. Maneri received a full scholarship as the principal violinist at Walnut Hill High School and New England Conservatory of Music. He started releasing records as a leader in 1996 and has performed and recorded worldwide.

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Roseman Unit, a dub-influenced jazz quartet; and the King Froopy Allstars, as well as “Josh Roseman,” his solo trombone program. He is founder, director, and producer at The Looove, a new production facility and label in Williamsburg, and is the founder of the New York Slideworkers’ Union, a curatorial program for recovering improvising trombonists.

**Mark Shim** (tenor saxophone), born in Jamaica, has toured and recorded with many influential and legendary musicians, including Betty Carter, Elvin Jones, David Murray, Al Foster, and Terence Blanchard, to name a few. He has made three critically acclaimed recordings for the prestigious Blue Note label, *Mind Over Matter* (1998), *New Directions* (1999), and *Turbulent Flow* (2000). One of the few saxophonists of the last 20 years with an instantly recognizable sound, Shim has also made a name for himself as a versatile producer and composer with a unique knowledge of electronics and rhythmic concepts.

**Tyshawn Sorey** (trombone, percussion) is a composer-performer and educator working across an extensive range of musical idioms. He performs with his own ensembles and with such artists as Muhal Richard Abrams, Steve Coleman, Butch Morris, Misha Mengelberg, John Zorn, Wadada Leo Smith, Dave Douglas, Anthony Braxton, Steve Lehman, Tim Berne, and Myra Melford. As a composer, Sorey has received commissions from Roulette and the International Contemporary Ensemble. In 2012, he was selected as an Other Minds Composer. Sorey regularly teaches at The New School for Social Research and the School for Improvised Music and at numerous academic institutions in Europe. He is currently pursuing his Doctor of Musical Arts in composition at Columbia University.

**Himanshu Suri** (vocals, lyrics) is an American rapper from Queens, best known as part of the alternative hip-hop group Das Racist. He is also founder of Greedhead Music, an independent record label. After graduating from Wesleyan University, he moved back to New York and worked in the financial sector until finding success with Das Racist. A vocal advocate of the South Asian community in New York, Suri serves on the board of directors of the Queens-based community organization SEVA NY. In 2012, Suri released his first solo mixtape, *Nehru Jackets*, in conjunction with SEVA. He has also written about music and all things South Asian for the *Village Voice*, *Death and Taxes* magazine, *Fuse*, *Stereogum*, and *Alternet*.

**Rajna Swaminathan** (mrudangam, kanjira), an accomplished artist in the field of South Indian classical percussion, has performed in the US, Canada, and India. With her hybrid upbringing in South Indian and Western music, she developed a penchant for intercultural and crossover work. Over the past two years, she has collaborated with artists in the NY jazz scene, including Vijay Iyer and Steve Coleman. She is also active as a composer and has been commissioned to create and develop musical scores for Ragamala Dance (Minneapolis), Dakshina/Daniel Phoenix Singh Dance Company (DC), and playwright Anu Yadav. She holds degrees in Anthropology and French from the University of Maryland, College Park.