

BRAITHWAITE & KATZ

Communications

NEWS RELEASE

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Trumpeter, composer, musical visionary Wadada Leo Smith Receives 2016 Doris Duke Artist Award

The **Doris Duke Charitable Foundation** (DDCF) today announced that the boldly original composer, trumpeter and Pulitzer Finalist **Wadada Leo Smith** has been named a **2016 Doris Duke Artist**. Smith is one of twenty-one awardees appointed in recognition of their creative vitality and ongoing contributions to the fields of dance, jazz and theater. The awardees will each receive \$275,000 in flexible, multi-year funding as well as financial and legal counseling, professional development activities and peer-to-peer learning opportunities provided by Creative Capital, DDCF's primary partner in the awards. With the 2016 class, DDCF will have awarded approximately \$27.7 million to 101 noteworthy artists through the Doris Duke Artist Awards.

"To receive the prestigious Doris Duke Artist Award is the highest honor," said Smith. "It celebrates my achievements as a creative composer and performer in an art form that transcends boundaries. With the support of the Doris Duke Foundation, I now have the unique opportunity to develop a fresh connection to my art and to my community."

Smith, who turns 75 in December 2016, maintains an active touring and recording schedule. Most recently, he's been touring widely with pianist/composer Vijay Iyer to support their March 2016 duo recording a *cosmic rhythm with each stroke* on ECM.

Upcoming recordings scheduled for fall 2016, include **Wadada Leo Smith: Nagwa** (TUM) featuring Smith with guitarists Michael Gregory Jackson, Henry Kaiser, Brandon Ross and Lamar Smith, plus Bill Laswell on electric bass, Pheeroan akLaff on drums and Adam Rudolph on percussion. Also on TUM will be a **solo recording of Monk's music**. Cuneiform will release **Wadada Leo Smith: The National Parks** featuring Smith's Golden Quintet plus cellist Ashley Walters.

Smith's 2016 schedule includes performances at the Montreal International Jazz Festival, Berlin Jazz Festival, Molde Jazz Festival, Pittsburgh International LiveJazz Festival, Jazz at Lincoln Center, Vision Festival, Festival Suoni Per il Popolo, Summer Stage, NYC and the premiere of his opera /cantata *Rosa Parks* at the FONT Festival, among others (see full schedule at end of this release.) He will also be honored as Faculty Emeritus and receive an honorary doctorate from CalArts.

This will be the final group of Doris Duke Artists to receive these awards under the umbrella of the foundation's Doris Duke Performing Artists Initiative, a larger \$50 million allocation by DDCF above its existing funding to the performing arts. However, having witnessed the tremendous value of the program over the past five years, DDCF is pleased to announce plans to extend the life of the Doris Duke Artist Awards by incorporating the program into its annual grant-making budget at a more sustainable scale for the long term. In the future, the foundation will continue to yearly give Doris Duke Artist Awards to three artists. These awards will be managed internally by DDCF staff. DDCF expresses deep gratitude to Creative Capital for their successful administration of the first five classes of Doris Duke Artists and for their part in making the awards program a success.

"The Doris Duke Performing Artist Awards has been a truly visionary program, setting a standard for comprehensive artist support," said Ruby Lerner, founding president and executive director at Creative Capital. "We at Creative Capital have been so proud to be a part of the powerful partnership that has supported the 101 artists who have received awards to date."

About the Doris Duke Artist Awards

Each recipient of a Doris Duke Artist Award receives \$275,000—including an unrestricted, multi-year cash grant of \$225,000, plus as much as \$25,000 more in targeted support for audience development and as much as \$25,000 more for personal reserves or creative exploration during what are usually retirement years for most Americans. Artists will be able to access their awards over a period of three years under a schedule set by each recipient. Creative Capital, DDCF's primary partner in the Doris Duke Performing Artist Awards, will also offer the awardees the opportunity to participate in professional development activities, regional gatherings, and financial and legal counseling—all designed to help them personalize and maximize the use of their grants.

To qualify for consideration by the review panels, all the Doris Duke Artists must have won grants, prizes or awards on a national level for at least three different projects over the past 10 years, with at least one project having received support from a DDCF-funded program. The panel chose the artists based on demonstrated evidence of exceptional creativity, ongoing self-challenge and the continuing potential to make significant contributions to the fields of contemporary dance, jazz and theater in the future.

About Wadada Leo Smith

Wadada Leo Smith, whose roots are in the Delta blues, is one of the most boldly original figures in American jazz and creative contemporary music and one of the great trumpet players of our time. As a composer, improviser, performer, music theorist/writer and educator, Smith has devoted a lifetime to navigating the emotional heart, spiritual soul, social significance and physical structure of jazz to create new music of infinite possibility and nuance.

A 2016 Doris Duke Artist and 2013 Pulitzer finalist, Smith was DownBeat Magazine's 2013 "Composer of the Year" and the Jazz Journalist Association's 2013 Musician of the Year and Trumpeter of the Year. In 2014 DownBeat magazine named him "One of the 80 Coolest Things in Jazz Today," citing his "magisterial instrumental voice, his inspirational leadership, and his command of classical, jazz and blues forms to remind us of what's gone down and what's still happening." The Jazz Journalists Association named Smith Composer of the Year in 2015. Early in his career, Smith developed *Ankhrasmation*, a radically original musical language that uses visual directions and remains the philosophical foundation of his oeuvre. In October 2015, The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago presented the first comprehensive exhibition of his *Ankhrasmation* scores.

Smith has released more than 50 albums as a leader. His landmark 2012 civil rights opus *Ten Freedom Summers* was called "A staggering achievement... It merits comparison to Coltrane's *A Love Supreme* in sobriety and reach," (Francis Davis, Rhapsody Jazz Critics Poll). Recent recordings include *The Great Lakes Suites*, which earned second place in NPR Music's 2014 Jazz Critics Poll and *Celestial Weather*, which garnered extensive praise as "a perfectly suited twosome...4.5 stars" (DownBeat). In March 2016 ECM released a cosmic rhythm with each stroke featuring pianist Vijay Iyer and Smith, whom Iyer calls his "hero, friend and mentor." The recording has earned wide critical acclaim and the duo is touring internationally in 2016 and 2017.

Born December 18, 1941 in Leland, Mississippi, Smith began performing at age thirteen with his stepfather, bluesman Alex Wallace and went on to play in his high school bands. He received his formal musical education from the U.S. Military band program (1963), the Sherwood School of Music (1967-69), and Wesleyan University (1975-76). Part of the first generation of musicians to come out of Chicago's AACM (Association for the Advancement of Creative Music), Smith collaborated with a dazzling cast of fellow visionaries. He has received commissions to write music for numerous groups including the Wroclaw Philharmonic Orchestra, and was invited to perform and speak on human rights at the Onassis Cultural Centre in Athens.

Smith has been awarded grants and fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the Fromm Music Foundation at Harvard University, Chamber Music America with support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Meet the Composer/Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Commissioning Program, the MAP Fund and the National Endowment for the Arts, among many others.

<http://www.wadadaleosmith.com/>
www.ddpaa.org

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Wadada Leo Smith Upcoming Events

- May 10 – Smith honored as Faculty Emeritus by CalArts
- May 13 – Smith receives honorary doctorate from CalArts
- June 2 – Smith’s Golden Quartet – Festival Suoni Per il Pipolo – Montreal QC
- June 11 – Smith and viola quartet – Vision Festival, NYC
- June 23 – Smith, John Lindberg and Jesse Gilbert – Hammer Museum, LA
- June 25 – Smith and Iyer – Pittsburgh International LiveJazz Festival
- July 7 – Smith and Vijay Iyer – Montreal International Jazz Festival
- July 18 – Smith and John Lindberg – Jazz at Lincoln Center, NYC
- July 21 – Smith’s Golden Quartet – Molde Jazz Festival, Norway
- August 10 – Smith with Nublu Orchestra / DarkMatterHalo – Summer Stage, NYC
- September 24 – Premiere of Smith’s opera /cantata *Rosa Parks* – FONT Festival, NYC
- September 28 – Smith and Iyer – Amherst, MA
- October 23 – Smith & John Lindberg duo Celestial Weather – Grand Rapids, MI
- October 26 – Smith & John Lindberg duo Celestial Weather – Ann Arbor, MI
- October 28 and 29 – Smith & John Lindberg duo Celestial Weather – Constellation, Chicago, IL
- October 30 – Smith & John Lindberg duo Celestial Weather – Milwaukee, WI
- November 3 – Smith’s Great Lakes Quartet performing *The Great Lakes Suites* – Berlin Jazz Festival
- November 6 Wadada with pianist Alexander Hopkins duet – Berlin Jazz Festival