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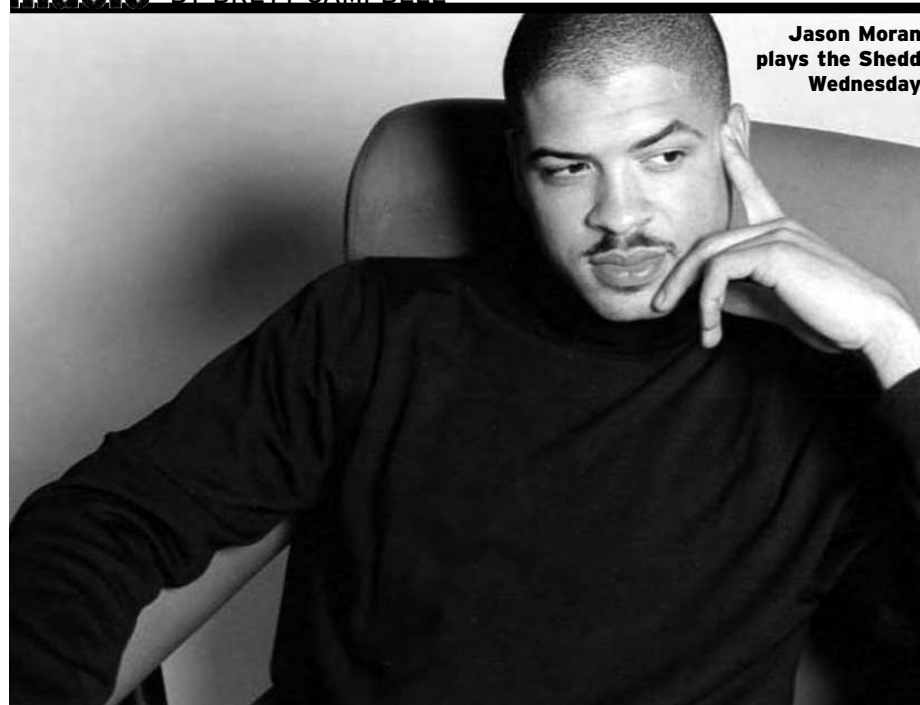
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music BY BRETT CAMPBELL



Jason Moran
 plays the Shedd
 Wednesday

Young Bloods

Youthful jazz, classical artists kick off music season.

If you think classical and jazz music are just for old farts, a couple of shows coming our way in September should set you straight. The Eugene Symphony opens its new season Thursday, Sept. 25 with music by one of the hottest composers in America, Pulitzer Prize winner **Aaron Kernis**, who'll be here for the performance. The 43-year-old Kernis is already one of the most honored and brightest stars in 21st century composition, forging a distinctive style that uses a lot of musical color and dynamics to paint vivid portraits in primary colors, from dark and dramatic to lighter and ironic.

His first piece on the program, *Color Wheel*, is a dense, chromatic mini-concerto for orchestra that goes through plenty of rapid changes in its 20 minutes, bringing out the contrasts between the orchestra's different sections (winds, strings, brass, percussion) and even employing touches of jazz. His other work in the show, the ethereal *Musica Celestis* for string orchestra, is based on medieval hymns of Hildegard of Bingen.

The concert is rounded out by that prototype in how to conjure color through orchestration, Hector Berlioz's *Fantastic Symphony*, an ideal complement to Kernis's modern, though related, vision. Altogether one of the most exciting classical concerts of the season, and a great season opener.

Another strong young classical musician is cellist **Matt Haimovitz**, whose breathing-room-barely show at Sam Bond's last spring was one of my favorite classical concerts. That electrifying evening spotlighted Bach's sublime suites for solo cello — and put it all right in the audience's faces.

On Wednesday, Sept. 24, Haimovitz returns to Sam Bond's with a program that features contemporary music for solo cello from his new album, *Anthem*. It's brave enough to bring a cello into a bar, but even gutsier to play today's music on it rather than just the classics. Some of the new material is indeed stereotypically thorny stuff, but plenty of it is melodically and rhythmically cutting edge music by the likes of Oregon native Lou Harrison, Osvaldo Golijov, Augusta Read Thomas, Steve Mackey and other powerful contemporary voices.

Haimovitz's Bach-in-bars tour drew national acclaim for breaking down the artificial barrier between listeners and performer that plagues so many formal, stiff classical concerts. I hope the dozens of fans who were turned away by the packed house last time will try again.

Jazz has recently seen an influx of amazing young talents, and none is more promising than the 28-year-old pianist/composer **Jason Moran**, whose recent solo album — one of the best I heard last year — covered composers from Robert Schumann to James P. Johnston to Muhal Richard Abrams to Afrikaa Bambata, and made it all work beautifully.

Both as a composer and a pianist, Moran is one of the most exciting, progressive voices in jazz, and the chance to see him in a venue like the Shedd on Wednesday, Sept. 17 (just before he takes the band into New York's famed Village Vanguard again) is one that fans of boss pianism and improvised music everywhere should seize.

That little taste of rain and grey last weekend reminded us that summer's a-waning, so it's great that the Cuthbert Amphitheater offers one more scintillating outdoor concert: On Wednesday, Sept. 25, the Drummers of West Africa bring one of the world's most exciting stage shows to the Cuthbert. Featuring dancers and 35 percussionists, this visually and musically spectacular ensemble weaves a rich tapestry of sound. *Le Figaro* has called the ensemble's leader, the griot Doudou N'Diaye Rose, perhaps the world's greatest drummer, and he's reached across borders to collaborate with the likes of Miles Davis and the Rolling Stones.

The half-dozen types of drums, combined with a variety of ways of striking them, produces an orchestral effect that has won praise all over the world. Rose is even breaking down gender barriers by encouraging women (including his daughters) to engage in hitherto forbidden drum performance. The Hult Center folks often get grief for conservative programming, so when they go out on a limb to present a world music show as exciting as this one, fans of adventurous music need to support them, especially when the payoff is as pleasurable as this one will be.

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