
LOWER
MANHATTAN
CULTURAL
COUNCIL

The
Downtown
Dinner
Reimagined

June 8, 2021

7pm

The Greens on The Rooftop
at Pier 17

The Evening's Program

Welcome Remarks

Timur Galen

Chair, LMCC Board of Directors

Lili Chopra

Executive Director, Artistic Programs

Diego S. Segalini

Executive Director, Finance & Administration

Performance

Okwui Okpokwasili

Film

The Stranger by Damon Davis

Introduced by Nanette Nelms

Performance

Bill Frisell

Closing Remarks



Okwui Okpokwasili is a writer, performer, and choreographer. In partnership with collaborator Peter Born, Okpokwasili creates multidisciplinary projects that are raw, intimate experiences. As a performer, Okpokwasili frequently collaborates with director and choreographer Ralph Lemon, including *Come Home*, Charley Patton (2006), for which she won a "Bessie" Award for Outstanding Performer; *How Can You Stay in the House All Day and Not Go Anywhere?* (2010), a duet performed at the Museum of Modern Art as part of *On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century* (2011), and *Scaffold Room* (2014). Okpokwasili has appeared as an actor in many productions including Richard Maxwell's *Cowboys and Indians* (1999), Richard Foreman's *Maria del Bosco* (2001), Kristin Marting's *Sounding* (2009), Joan Dark (2009), Young Jean Lee's *Lear* (2010), Nora Chipaumire's *Miriam* (2012), and Julie Taymor's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2013). Film credits include *The Interpreter* (2005), *The Hoax* (2006), *I Am Legend* (2007), Knut Åsdam's *Abyss* (2010), and *Malorie's Final Score* (2013).



Damon Davis is a post-disciplinary artist based in St. Louis, Missouri. In a practice that is part therapy, part social commentary, his work spans across a spectrum of creative mediums to tell stories exploring how identity is informed by power and mythology. He is well known for his solo exhibition, "Darker Gods in The Garden of The Low Hanging Heavens," which premiered in St. Louis in 2018 and went on to show at Art Basel Miami later that year. The exhibit explored the surrealist manifestations of Black culture by constructing new mythologies in response to tropes of Blackness. In 2010, Davis founded music collective and label, FarFetched, for which he now serves as creative director. Filmmaker Magazine selected him and Sabaah Folayan as part of the "25 New Faces of Independent Film 2016" for their work co-directing the critically acclaimed documentary *Whose Streets?* chronicling the Ferguson uprising of 2014. In 2020, critic Ben Davis cited his project "All Hands on Deck," which captured the hands of people who shaped and upheld the Ferguson movement, as one of the "100 Works of Art That Defined the Decade." Davis is a 2015 Firelight Media Fellow, 2016 Sundance Lab Fellow, 2017 TED Fellow, and 2020-2022 Kennedy Center Citizen Artist Fellow. His work is featured in the permanent collection at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture.



Bill Frisell's career as a guitarist and composer has spanned more than 40 years and many celebrated recordings, whose catalog has been cited by Downbeat as "the best recorded output of the decade."

"Frisell has had a lot of practice putting high concept into a humble package. Long hailed as one of the most distinctive and original improvising guitarists of our time, he has also earned a reputation for teasing out thematic connections with his music... There's a reason that Jazz at Lincoln Center had him program a series called Roots of Americana." - New York Times

His latest recording is *Valentine*, on Blue Note, a trio album with Thomas Morgan (bass) and Rudy Royston (drums) that has been hailed as "a masterpiece" by Downbeat. "They consistently and strikingly play as one, voices intertwined, completing phrases as if sharing a single thought... Even overdubs are so perfect that everything feels utterly organic... the performances represent jazz playing at its most sublime."

Frisell's recent album, *HARMONY* has been described in the New York Times as follows:

"The eminent guitarist improvises in smoky ringlets of melody, drawing the influence of classic jazz guitar into a palette based on early American folk music. *HARMONY* finds Frisell playing smoldering original compositions along with a few covers alongside vocalist Petra Haden, cellist Hank Roberts and guitarist and bassist Luke Bergman."

Recognized as one of America's 21 most vital and productive performing artists, Frisell was named an inaugural Doris Duke Artist in 2012. He is also a recipient of grants from United States Artists and Meet the Composer, among others. In 2016, he was a beneficiary of the first FreshGrass Composition commission to preserve and support innovative grassroots music. Upon San Francisco Jazz opening their doors in 2013, he served as one of their Resident Artistic Directors. Bill is also the subject of a documentary film by director Emma Franz, entitled *Bill Frisell: A Portrait*, which examines his creative process in depth. He has received an honorary doctorate from the Berklee College of Music.

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Thank you to everyone who made

The Downtown Dinner *Reimagined*

such a success behind the scenes.

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About LMCC

Founded as Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, LMCC serves, connects, and makes space for artists and community. Since 1973, LMCC has been the champion for independent artists in New York City and the cultural life force of Lower Manhattan.

We envision New York City as a place in which artists and community in dialogue are creating a more just, equitable, and sustainable society.

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