
Jazz to heal the Rain God

William Parker Quintet comes to Bard

by Jay Blotcher

When you have been dubbed the "father to the followers of free jazz" by The New York Times, you have musical bragging rights until the end of your days. But William Parker is not one to rest on his laurels, even after 100 recordings. Restless and sweetly tormented as were the best of his genius forefathers of the genre, the internationally recognized musician has roamed the globe for three decades and continues to preach the soul of music.

On Thursday, May 6, the William Parker Quintet will perform at Bard College as part of its ongoing Jazz at Bard series. The mere name of the evening program suggests the group's power and scope: "Rocket to the Moon Has Just Injured the Rain God."

The members of the William Parker Quintet are Rob Brown, alto sax; Lewis Barnes, trumpet; Hamid Drake, drums, frame drums, tablas; Parker, bass, gimbire, donson ngoni, double reeds and shakuhachi flute; and Leena Conquest, vocals. They will be joined by cellist Shiau-Shu Yu, a Bard student.

Parker has a peerless musical heritage: He studied music with Richard Davis, Jimmy Garrison, Milt Hinton, Wilber Ware and Art Davis, and has played with Cecil Taylor, Bill Dixon, Maxine Sullivan, Rashid Ali, Don Cherry, Milford Graves, David S. Ware and Matthew Shipp. He has also performed with titan poets Allen Ginsberg, Miguel Piñero and Amiri Baraka.

Organized by two Bard alumnae, Raissa St. Pierre (class of '87) and Sheila Moloney (class of '84), the Jazz at Bard series is an ongoing effort to bring internationally recognized jazz performers to the Hudson Valley.

The William Parker Quintet plays at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, on Thursday, May 6 at 8 p.m., in the Bertelsmann Campus Center's multipurpose room. Admission is \$15, free for Bard students. For tickets and information call (845) 758-7456, e-mail jazzatbard@bard.edu or visit www.bard.edu/jazzatbard. Reservations and advance ticket purchase are recommended.

