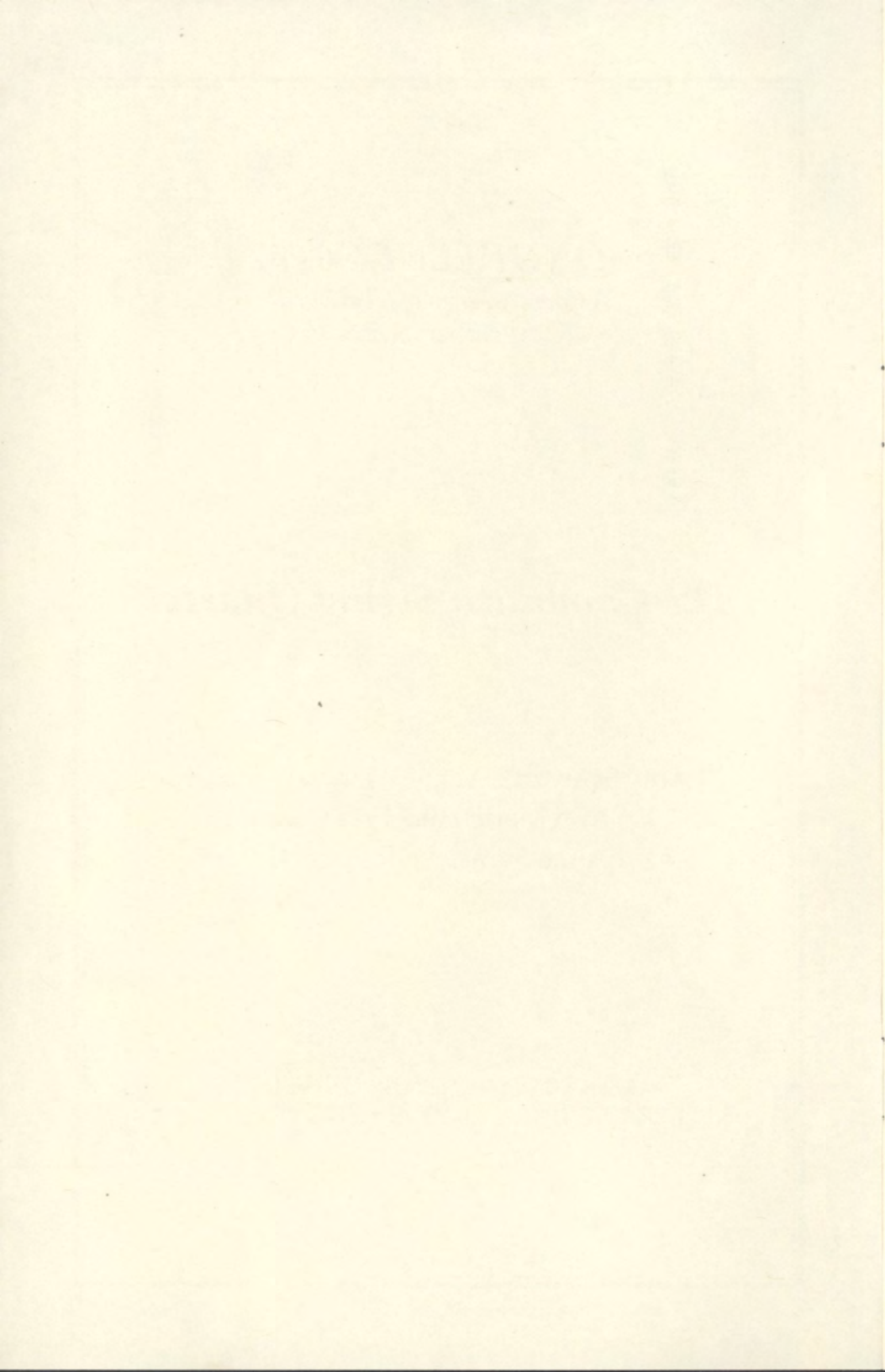


SONOKLECT '01-'02
A Concert Series of Modern Music
Terry Vosbein, Director

Ahmad Jamal

Washington and Lee University
Keller Theatre • 8:00 p.m. • 15 September 2001



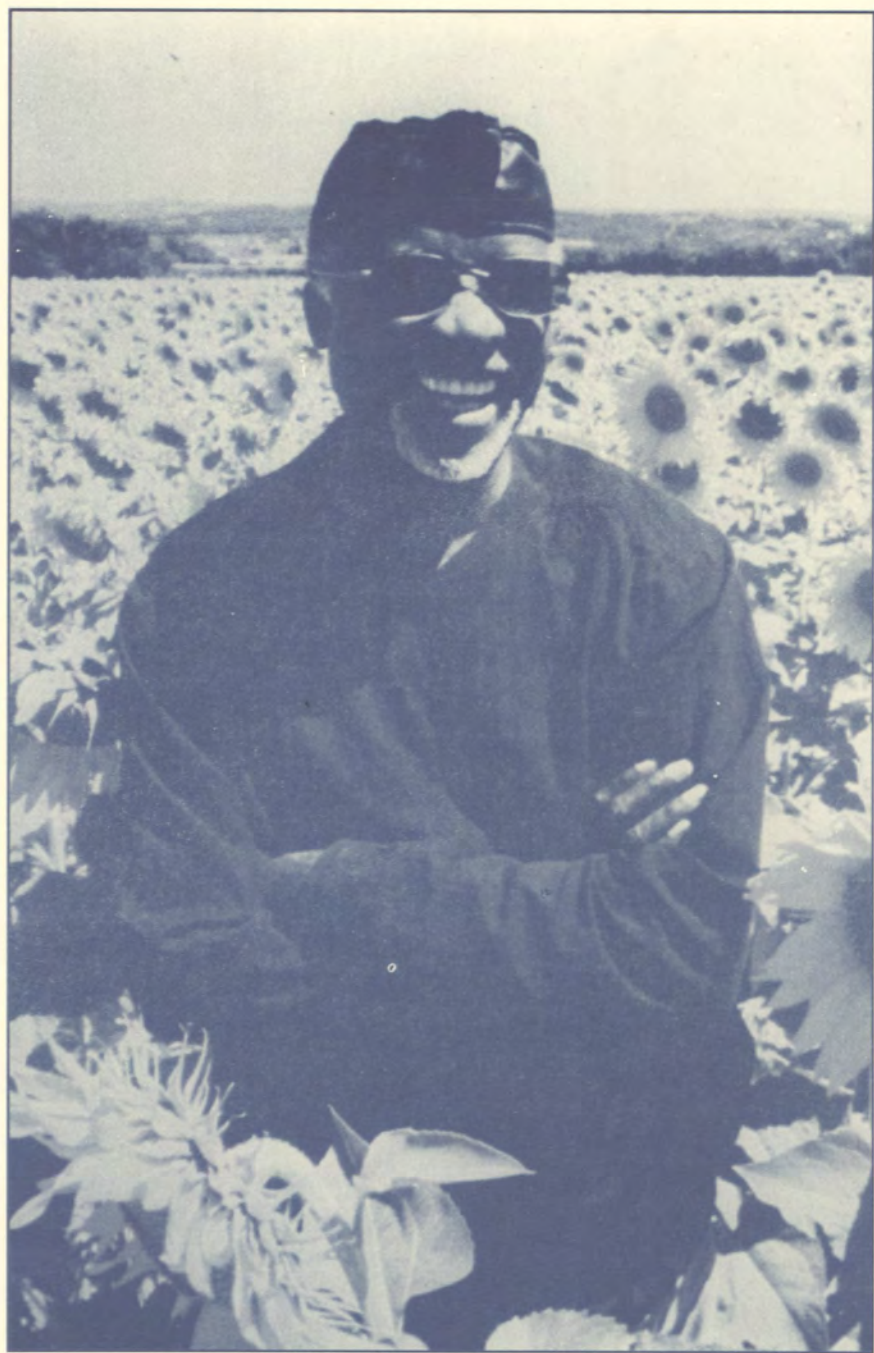
PROGRAM

Set One



Set Two

Ahmad Jamal, piano
James Cammack, bass *James Johnson, drums*



Ahmad Jamal

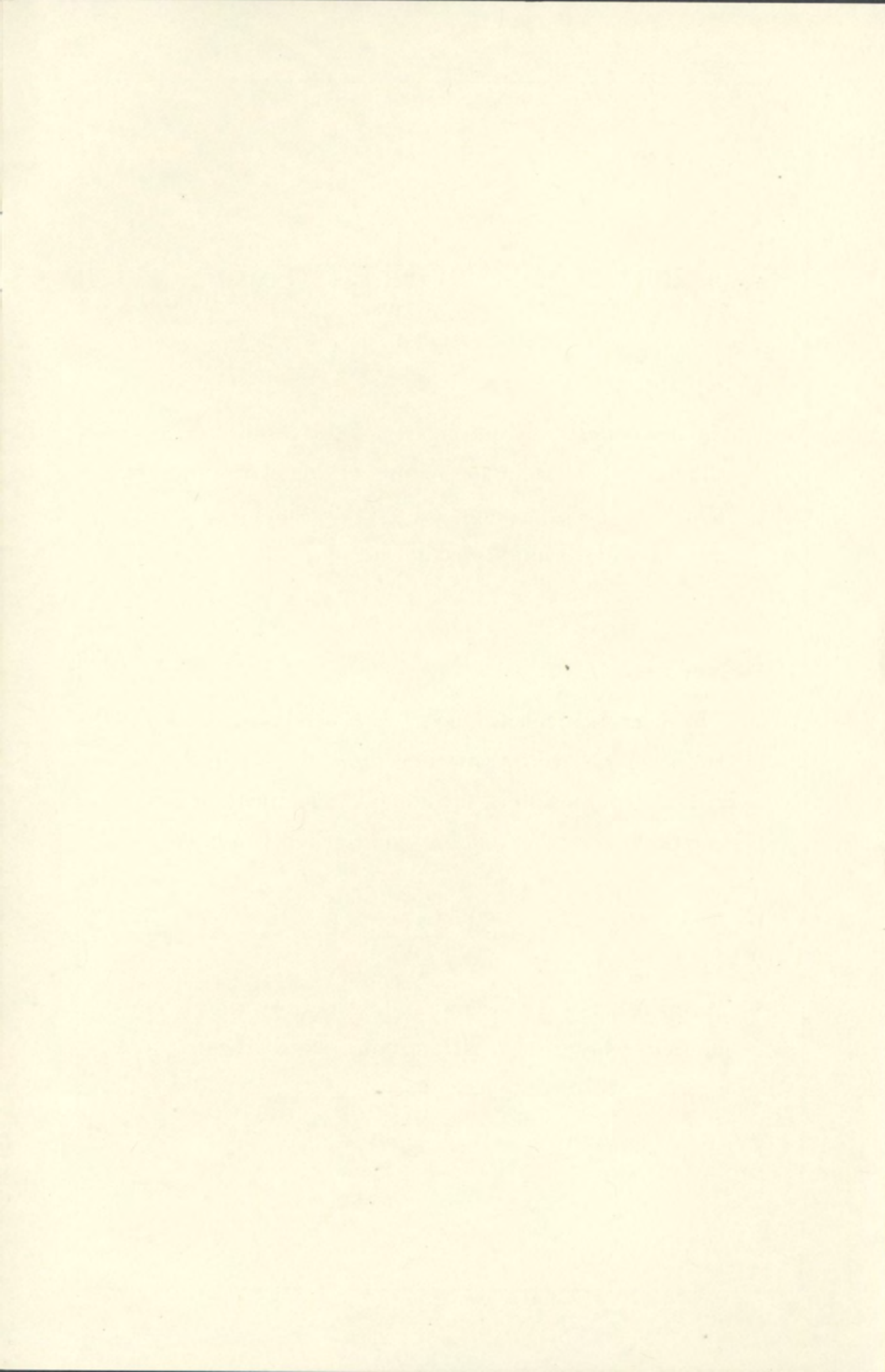
“When people say Jamal influenced me a lot, they’re right.”—*Miles Davis*

Celebrated pianist-composer Ahmad Jamal continues his performance schedule around the world, as he has for more than four decades. Born in 1939 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Mr. Jamal is noted for his outstanding technical command and identifiable sound as a piano stylist. A child prodigy who began to play the piano at the age of three, he began formal studies at seven. While in high school he completed master classes with the noted African-American concert singer and teacher Mary Caldwell Dawson and pianist James Miller. He joined the musicians union at the age of seventeen, drawing critical acclaim for his solos. In 1950 he formed his first trio, The Three Strings. Performing at New York’s The Ember Club, record producer John Hammond “discovered” The Three Strings and signed them to Okeh Records (a division of Columbia, now Sony Records).

In 1956 Mr. Jamal, who had already been joined by bassist Israel Crosby in 1955, replaced guitarist Ray Crawford with a drummer. The trio worked as the house trio at Chicago’s Pershing Hotel in 1958. Drummer Vernell Fournier joined the trio for a live album on Argo Records entitled *But Not For Me*. The album and resulting hit single of “Poinciana” remained on the ten best-selling charts for 108 weeks—unprecedented for a jazz album! The financial success enabled Mr. Jamal to realize a dream. He opened a restaurant/club, The Alhambra, in Chicago. Here the trio was able to perform while limiting their touring schedule, and Mr. Jamal was able to do record production and community work.

Considering his trio "an orchestra," Mr. Jamal not only achieves a unified sound, but subtly inserts independent roles for the bass and drums. The hallmarks of Mr. Jamal's style are: outstanding technical command, rhythmic innovation, colorful harmonic perception, and left hand harmonic and melodic figures. His music also includes parallel and contrary motion, in and out of chordal substitutions, and alterations, pedal point ostinatos and interludes. He incorporates a unique sense of space in his music, and his musical concepts are exciting without being loud. Augmented by a selection of unusual standards and his own compositions, Mr. Jamal creates a musical landscape that is unique.

In 1951 Mr. Jamal first recorded "Ahmad's Blues" on Okeh Records. His arrangements of the folk tune "Billy Boy" and "Poinciana" also stem from this period. In 1955 he recorded his first Argo Record, which included "New Rhumba," "Excerpts from the Blues," "Medley" and "It Ain't Necessarily So"—all later utilized by Miles Davis and Gil Evans on the albums *Miles Ahead* and *Porgy and Bess*. In his autobiography Miles Davis praises Mr. Jamal's special artistic qualities and cites his influence. In fact, the mid-to-late 1950s Miles Davis Quintet recordings feature a large amount of material previously recorded by Mr. Jamal: "Squeeze Me," "It Could Happen To You," "But Not For Me," "Surrey With The Fringe On Top," "Ahmad's Blues," "On Green Dolphin Street," and "Billy Boy."



2001-2002 SONOKLECT Season

15 September

Ahmad Jamal . . . World-renowned jazz pianist brings his trio to the Lenfest for an exciting evening of acoustic jazz. Jamal first made a splash in the mid-50s with his innovative jazz trio and has not slowed down.

19 January

The Stern-Schoenhals Duo . . . Viola and piano team Eva Stern and Joel Schoenhals will perform an evening of 20th-century compositions, including the premiere of a new composition by Washington and Lee's Terry Vosbein.

9 March

Imani Winds . . . New York's top African-American wind musicians bring their exciting music to the Lenfest in a concert that is sure to be a hit.