

About Wadada Leo Smith

Trumpeter, multi-instrumentalist, composer, and improviser **Wadada Leo Smith** is one of the most boldly original and influential artists of his time. Transcending the bounds of genre or idiom, he distinctly defines his music, tirelessly inventive in both sound and approach, as "Creative Music."

For the last five decades, Smith has been a member of the legendary AACM collective, pivotal in its wide-open perspectives on music and art in general. He has carried those all-embracing concepts into his own work, expanding upon them in myriad ways.

Throughout his career, Smith has been recognized for his groundbreaking work. A finalist for the 2013 Pulitzer Prize in Music, he received the 2016 Doris Duke Artist Award and earned an honorary doctorate from CalArts, where he was also celebrated as Faculty Emeritus. In addition, he received the Hammer Museum's 2016 Mohn Award for Career Achievement "honoring brilliance and resilience." In 2018 he received the Religion and The Arts Award from the American Academy of Religion.

Smith regularly earns multiple spots on the DownBeat International Critics Poll. In 2017 he topped three categories: Best Jazz Artist, Trumpeter of the Year and Jazz Album of the Year, and was featured as the subject of a cover story in August 2017. The Jazz Journalists Association also honored Smith as their 2017 Musician of the Year as well as 2017 Duo of the Year for his work with Vijay Iyer. The JJA named him their 2016 Trumpeter of the Year, 2015 Composer of the Year, and 2013 Musician of the Year, and he has earned top billing in two categories in the JazzTimes Critics Poll as Artist of the Year and Composer of the Year.

In October 2015 The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago presented the first comprehensive exhibition of Smith's Ankhration scores, which use non-standard visual directions, making them works of art in themselves as well as igniting creative sparks in the musicians who perform them. In 2016, these scores were also featured in exhibitions at the Hammer Museum, and the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts and Kadist in San Francisco.

Born December 18, 1941 in Leland, Mississippi, Smith's early musical life began at age thirteen when he became involved with the Delta blues and jazz traditions performing with his stepfather, bluesman Alex Wallace. 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).

Smith has released more than 50 albums as a leader on labels including ECM, Moers, Black Saint, Tzadik, Pi Recordings, TUM, Leo and Cuneiform. His diverse discography reveals a recorded history centered around important issues that have impacted his world, exploring the social, natural and political environment of his times with passion and fierce intelligence. *Rosa Parks: Pure Love*, an Oratorio of Seven Songs will be released on February 15, 2019 via TUM Records. His 2016 recording, *America's National Parks* earned a place on numerous best of the year lists including the New York Times, NPR Music and many others. Smith's landmark 2012 civil rights opus *Ten Freedom Summers* was called "A staggering achievement [that] merits comparison to Coltrane's *A Love Supreme* in sobriety and reach."

www.wadadaleosmith.com