

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
MERGE CD Release performances:**

Saturday October 14th

7pm at the Putney School
Houghton Brook Road
Putney, VT

www.putneyschool.org

Free to Putney Students and faculty
Suggested donation \$10/\$5

Sunday October 15th

7:30pm at Center Stage
62 Center for Theater and Dance
www.williams.edu/resources/62center
Williams College
1000 Main Street
Williamstown, MA 01267
Tickets are free

Monday October 16th

2pm Merge workshop with Jazz Theory and Harmony Class/
American Studies-American Music Class
4pm Open to Public Demonstration/Exposition of the Merge Process
Presser Choral Hall
Bernhard Music Center
54 Chapin Hall Drive
Williamstown MA 01267

All above performances feature: MERGE

Cassandra Cleghorn – poetry/voice

Erik Lawrence – saxophones and flutes

Rene Hart – acoustic bass

Allison Miller - drums

Thursday October 19th

Portsmouth, NH

6pm-7pm **Merge Duo/ Cassandra Cleghorn & Erik Lawrence** featured live on Culture Waves, WSCA-LP Portsmouth, 106.1 FM, Portsmouth Community Radio

7pm-8pm **Merge Duo** featured for Beat Night at the Press Room,
77 Daniel St., Portsmouth, NH, (603) 431-5186.

Monday November 20th Merge Duo: Cassandra Cleghorn & Erik Lawrence

Colony Club

22 Rock City Road, Woodstock, NY 12498 Phone 845-679-5342

www.colonycafe.com

Beginning at 7pm Featured artists:

Sunday December 10th

Merge Quartet (Cleghorn, Lawrence, Hart, Miller)

The Turning Point 8pm

468 Piermont Ave. Piermont, N.Y. 10968

(845) 359-1089

www.turningpointcafe.com

Merge

Merge is a quartet comprised of poet Cassandra Cleghorn, reedman Erik Lawrence, drummer Allison Miller and bassist Rene Hart. In the eighteen tracks on their new CD ("Merge"), the band creates a union of word, rhythm and melody that recalls the origins of poetry in voice and song. Marking the release of their CD, Merge will perform on Sunday, October 15th at 7:30 p.m. at Williams College, in the CenterStage theatre at the '62 Center for Dance and Theatre (Route 2 in Williamstown, Massachusetts). The performance is free of charge and open to the public.

David Amram, called by the Boston Globe "the Renaissance man of American music," calls Merge "an exciting and highly creative new collaboration." Amram recognizes the affinities between Merge and his own work with Beat poets: "In an era when Spoken Word has finally come to fruition, the spirit of collaboration, ensemble and spontaneity that Jack Kerouac and I

pioneered in NYC's first-ever jazz poetry reading in 1957 are now reaching new plateaus. Merge is another step forward in celebrating the marriage of poetry and music."

Cleghorn and Lawrence began performing together after meeting at Williams College, in Williamstown, Massachusetts where Cleghorn has taught in the American Studies program and English department since 1990 and Lawrence has taught jazz saxophone and flute since 2002. The success of this collaboration inspired Lawrence to invite Hart and Miller to join them. The quartet shared an immediate rapport, as is in evidence on the recording that they made in March at the Levon Helm Studios in Woodstock, New York. Merge has upcoming performances at The Press Room in Portsmouth, New Hampshire and at The Colony in Woodstock, New York.

Cassandra Cleghorn received her BA in Greek from University of California, Santa Cruz and her PhD in American Studies from Yale University. Her poems have appeared in journals including *The Paris Review*, *Yale Review*, *Prairie Schooner* and *Southwest Review*. She was a finalist for a Massachusetts Cultural Council Artists' Grant in 2000.

Erik Lawrence regularly performs and records with the legendary Levon Helm Band, with Steven Bernstein's Millennial Territory Orchestra and with his own band, Hipmotism, that will perform in April of 2007 in conjunction with the

Williams Jazz Festival at Mass MOCA, in North Adams, Massachusetts. He has appeared at Carnegie Recital Hall and at many festivals including the Northsea Jazz, Montreal Jazz, Greenwich Village Jazz Festival, the Free Jazz Festival in Brazil and Berkshire Jazz Festival. He has performed and/or recorded with jazz drummer Chico Hamilton, Branford Marsalis, Buddy Miles, Sonny Sharrock, The Band, Aaron Neville, The Spin Doctors, John Medeski, Bob Dylan and numerous others. He lives in Putney, Vermont.

New York City-based Allison Miller was chosen as "Rising Star Drummer" in Downbeat's 53rd Annual Critics Poll. In addition to working with her own bands, Agrazing Maze, Boom Tic Boom, and Tilt, Miller is currently playing with Doctor Lonnie Smith, Marty Ehrlich, Natalie Merchant, Kitty Margolis, and Erin McKeown. She is a three-time Jazz Ambassador through the United States government. With over 40 recordings on her discography, Miller has recorded with Pino Daniele, Norah Jones, Kenny Barron, Ingrid Jensen, Michael Feinstein and many others.

Bassist/Composer Rene Hart is a busy member of the New York jazz scene who has recorded and or performed with Julian Priester, Charles Davis, Steven Bernstein, Clark Terry, Sean Lennon, Billy Hart, Bilal, George Garzone and many others. He currently resides in New York City's East Village and is touring with blues/pop sensation James Hunter, with whom he has recently appeared on the

Conan O'Brien Show, Jay Leno and opened for Aretha Franklin.

"Merge" is not a recording of poems with musical accompaniment, nor is it slam poetry, spontaneously generated over a background of looped tracks. The poems are composed by Cleghorn in advance, on the page. The music is largely improvised, with the exception of three tunes on the new CD that were written by Lawrence. Moving beyond conventional roles, the members of this ensemble take part in the true jazz tradition in which each player assumes equal responsibility as supporter and soloist: the drummer plays a melody from a Bach cello suite, the bassist taps on his instrument like a drum, the poet creates an underlying pulse for the saxophonist's vocal line. The results are deeply organic pieces whose forms strike listeners as at once surprising and yet also necessary.

For further information contact:

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