**FINAL**

**MIT Presents *It Must Be Now! --* Advancing social justice actions through music and media**

**Featuring Terri Lyne Carrington, Braxton Cook, Sean Jones, Mickalene Thomas and**

**125 performers of world premiere compositions**

*It Must Be Now!*

Saturday, May 7, 2022 / 8:00pm (EST)

Kresge Auditorium, [MIT Building W16](http://whereis.mit.edu/?go=W16)

48 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA

Registration: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/it-must-be-now-advancing-social-justice-actions-through-music-and-media-tickets-266306017467>

April 5, 2022, Cambridge, MA -- Massachusetts Institute of Technology announces [*It Must Be Now!*](https://arts.mit.edu/projects/it-must-be-now/)*,* a unique immersive music and multimedia event featuring the world premieres of newly commissioned work of three leading jazz artists of our time—**Terri Lyne Carrington, Braxton Cook, and Sean Jones—**and live VJ’ing by renowned visual artist and filmmaker **Mickalene Thomas**. The compositions explore themes such as the resilience of Black women, the concept of Pangea (an ancient supercontinent) as an Afrofuturism vehicle, and the value of healing as we continue to process the collective trauma of the pandemic and racial injustices. They will perform together on May 7, 2022 at MIT Kresge Auditorium in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Proceeds from the concert will be donated to [Artists for Humanity (AFH)](https://www.afhboston.org/).

125 participants will perform, including Carrington, Cook, Jones, Thomas, the **MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble**, **MIT Vocal Jazz Ensemble**, **MIT Wind Ensemble**, other student musicians from **MIT and Berklee**, and an array of artists including arranger/director/vocalist, MIT’s **Laura Grill Jaye**, arranger/orchestrator **Edmar Colón**, dancer **Vinson Fraley, Jr.**, electronic music composer/percussionist/turntablist **Val Jeanty, aka Val-Inc**, music producer/pianist/turntablist **Wendel Patrick**, guitarist **Andrew Renfroe**, and lyricist/spoken word poet/vocalist **Orlando Watson**.

Created during the summer of 2020 and led by Dr. Frederick Harris, Jr., *It Must Be Now!* launched in the spring of 2021 and has since presented seven online events, including an January IAP series engaging the MIT community in conversations around how these artists incorporate social and racial justice into their compositions.

By bringing together members of MIT’s academic and non-academic communities with renowned musicians and multimedia arts, *It Must Be Now!* intends to build a coalition promoting heightened awareness and change.

“This is a project about process and transformation,” notes Harris. “I’m particularly excited for a variety of students across disciplines to engage with these phenomenal artists in shaping the final work. Our biggest objective is to inspire activism and enact change. We want to acknowledge historical perspectives of various injustices, but move toward this moment, imagining what could and should be reality now.”

[**Braxton Cook’s**](https://www.braxtoncook.com/) composition dives into the juxtaposition between the light and the dark as he questions where we find ourselves as a society facing the collective trauma of the pandemic and police brutality while attempting to adjust our perspective to emphasize what we have instead of what we’ve lost.

[**Terri Lyne Carrington’s**](https://www.terrilynecarrington.com/) composition investigates the common struggles, inherent truths and sheer resilience of Black women, born into a world of injustice and tasked with navigating the overt and subliminal burdens placed on them while claiming the right to be free and whole. Carrington’s piece reflects on the legacy of creativity and invention of enslaved Africans and their descendants and aims to find a path forward to abolition, self-determination, and justice.

[**Mickalene Thomas**](http://mickalenethomas.com) will VJ a visual composition in collaboration with Terri Lyne Carrington, using archival photo images to present a live, original montage in response to Carrington's musical score.

[**Sean Jones’**](https://www.sean-jones.com) composition explores the concept of Pangea (an ancient supercontinent) as an Afrofuturism vehicle, probing the question of whether a more geographically linked world would still cause such deep rifts and misunderstandings of who we are as human beings?

**About *It Must Be Now!***

Created and led by *MIT Sounding* series Co-Director Frederick Harris Jr., *It Must Be Now! (IMBN!),* brings together three leading musicians (Terri Lyne Carrington, Braxton Cook, and Sean Jones) to compose large-scale works for MIT musicians on the overall theme of racial justice. Collaborating with multimedia artists, MIT students and community members, and others beyond MIT, this two-year project seeks to address racial and social injustices and their confluences. *IMBN!* explores institutional racism; environmental, economic, and health injustices; police brutality; and abolitionism.

The genesis of the project began to take shape in March 2019, during trumpeter-composer-educator Sean Jones’ successful residency with the MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble. One year later, as a massive racial reckoning swept the country in response to the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and other Black Americans, Music Director and project lead Fred Harris felt that an artistic response was needed, and that a collaboration he had imagined with Jones could be expanded into a larger, multi-disciplinary effort that reflected the magnitude and urgency of the situation.

Duke Ellington, Charles Mingus, Max Roach, Nina Simone, Abbey Lincoln, and many other jazz artists have long addressed racial issues through their music and words. New generations of musicians (including Carrington, Cook, and Jones,) have continued on this path. They are more than poised to address the urgency of the present racial reckoning.

**About MIT’s Center for Art, Science & Technology:**A major cross-school initiative, the MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology (CAST) creates new opportunities for art, science and technology to thrive as interrelated, mutually informing modes of exploration, knowledge and discovery. MIT CAST’s multidisciplinary platform presents performing and visual arts programs, supports research projects for artists working with science and engineering labs, and sponsors symposia, classes, workshops, design studios, lectures and publications. The visiting artists program is a cornerstone of CAST’s activities, which encourages cross-fertilization among disciplines and intensive interaction with MIT’s faculty, students, and researchers. CAST presents the concert series *MIT Sounding* and is based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. <https://arts.mit.edu/cast/>

**About MIT Music and Theater Arts**

MIT Music and Theater Arts invites students to explore these disciplines as artistic practices and as cultural, intellectual and personal avenues of inquiry and discovery. Students may pursue concentrations, minors or majors in either Music or Theater, as well as joint majors with Engineering or Science. Classes are tailored to the prior experiences of students who take them, from introductory classes assuming no previous background to advanced seminars, private lessons and performance opportunities for musicians ready to work at near professional levels. The program integrates and deepens connections between music and technology, science, society and other humanities disciplines, creating an experience that is intensely rich and uniquely MIT. Music and Theater Arts serves nearly half the undergraduate population at MIT with some 2000 students enrolled each semester. <https://mta.mit.edu/music/about>

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