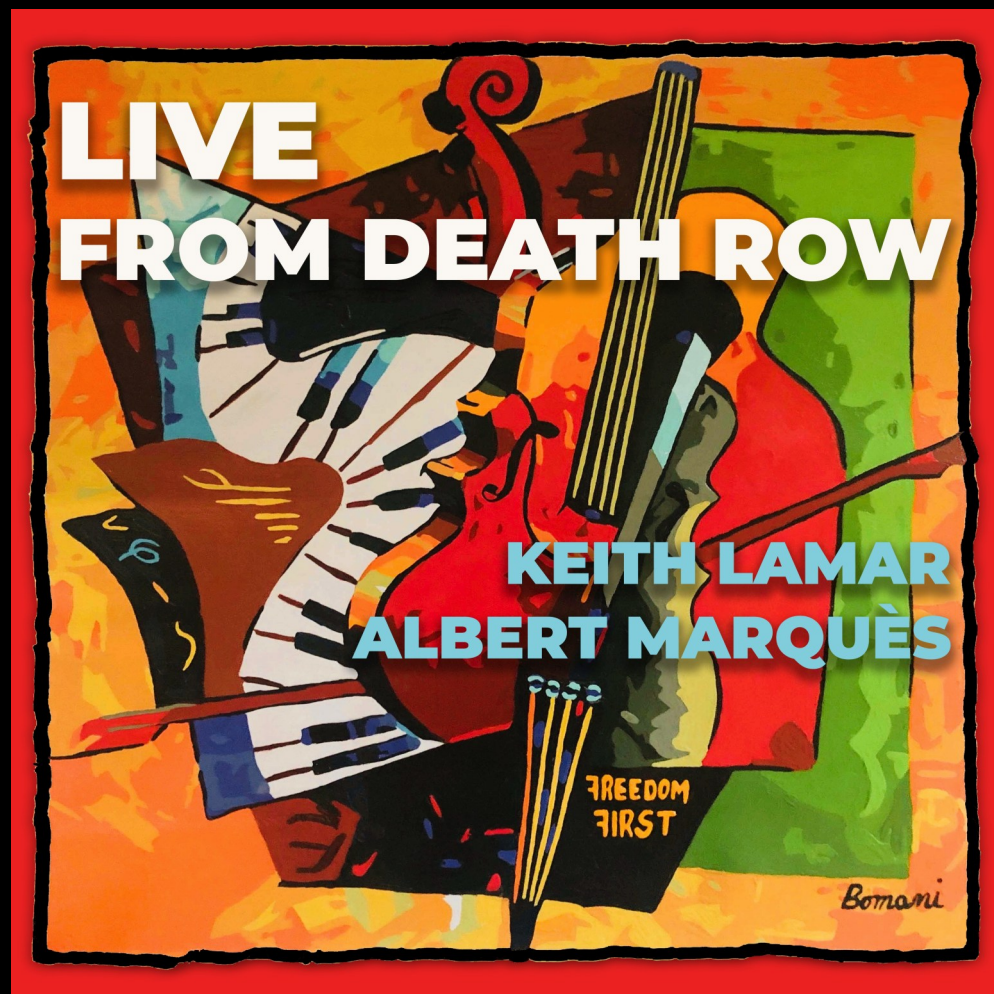


Social Justice in the Arts



SOCIAL JUSTICE INSTITUTE

**CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2025**

CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
OCTOBER 25, 2025

Case Western Reserve University Social Justice Institute

DIRECTOR	Ayesha Bell Hardaway, JD
ADMINISTRATOR	Allison George
POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW	Alireza Nourani-Dargiri, JD
UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCHER	Amrita Saini

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Our co-sponsors: CWRU Local Government and Community Relations Office; the Nathan Wisneski Fund; Inamori International Center for Ethics and Excellence; Social Justice Law Center at Case School of Law; Flora Stone Mather Center for Women; the NAACP Cleveland Branch Prison Committee

Donald Black Jr., Featured Artist

Ananias J. Dixon, Performing Artist

Freedom First featuring Keith LaMar and Albert Marquès

Amy Gordiejew, Campaign Manager of Justice for Keith LaMar

Lisa Langford, Playwright

Martinique Mims, Performing Artist

Mariama Whyte, Performing Artist

The Social Justice Institute Leadership Team

Staff at MediaVision

McKinley Wiley, Photography

Michael Thomas, Sound Engineer

Case Western Reserve University Social Justice Institute

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

It is a pleasure to welcome you to *Social Justice in the Arts*. Months of planning and preparations have all come together for us to share this space and time. Your response has been tremendous. Whether you are a regular attendee of the Social Justice Institute’s lectures and events or you’re joining us for the first time, we are delighted to have you. Tonight marks the Social Justice Institute’s 15th year anniversary. Since its founding, the Institute has worked to examine the root causes of social injustice and to eradicate all systems of oppression. Over the years, our lectures and community convenings have also included a range of artistic expressions—from poetry and art exhibits to a “prose-poetics” lecture by our Founding Director, Dr. Rhonda Williams, and more.

But tonight’s event is uniquely special. Never before have we hosted a four-piece band with two vocalists to deliver a live concert. It would be an understatement to say the purpose of this performance is simply “for a good cause.” As you will hear tonight, the stakes in our shared pursuit of a more just world could not be higher. Mr. Keith LaMar is currently on Ohio’s death row for crimes he did not commit. He and his dedicated team continue their steadfast efforts to ensure that he joins the more than 200 individuals in the United States who have been exonerated from death row since 1973. For those looking to learn more about the injustice that took him there, please visit his [website](#), listen to this [podcast](#), read his book [Condemned](#), or this [animated short film](#) about his story. QR codes on each table provide easy access to these resources and offer ways to support Keith directly.

We also owe a debt of gratitude to Donald Black, Jr., Ananias Dixon, Martinique Mims, and Mariama Whyte for generously sharing their beautiful gifts with us tonight. Each of them – local artists in our community – continuously inspire hope, resilience, and joy through their work. I cannot thank them enough. This evening would not have been possible without the dedicated, behind-the-scenes efforts of the Social Justice Institute’s staff: Allison George, Alireza Nourani-Dargiri, Amrita Saini, and our wonderful volunteers. I deeply appreciate each of you, individually and collectively. Finally, we extend heartfelt thanks to our co-sponsors, who answered the call helped make tonight’s event free and open to the public: Case Western Reserve University’s Local Government and Community Relations Office; the Nathan Wisneski Fund; the Inamori International Center for Ethics and Excellence; Flora Stone Mather Center for Women; and the NAACP Cleveland Branch Prison Committee. We thank you all.

To Freedom,



Saturday, October 25, 2025

Tinkham Veale University Center, Ballroom, 11038 Bellflower Rd, Cleveland, OH 44106

6:00 pm	Guest Check-In
6:10 pm	Welcome and Opening Remarks <i>Ayesha Bell Hardaway</i> , Director Social Justice Institute
6:30 pm	“Dead Wrong” <i>Ananias J. Dixon</i> , Actor <i>Lisa Langford</i> , Playwright
6:40 pm	“To Be Free” <i>Mariama Whyte</i> , Vocal Artist
6:50 pm	Interpretive Dance, <i>exploring resilience, identity, and the journey towards freedom</i> <i>Martinique Mims</i> , Performance Artist
7:00 pm	Freedom First featuring Keith LaMar and Albert Marquès <i>Keith LaMar</i> , Spoken Word <i>Albert Marquès</i> , Piano <i>Chris Coles</i> , Alto Saxophone <i>Zach O’Farrill</i> , Drums <i>Devon Gates</i> , Standup/Electric Bass <i>Eartha A. Terrell</i> , Special Guest Poet
8:45 pm	Closing Remarks <i>Ayesha Bell Hardaway</i> , Director Social Justice Institute



Keith LaMar

Freedom First Co-Creator, Lyricist/Spoken Word Poetry

Keith LaMar is an award-winning author, artist, teacher, poet, and activist who has spent the past three decades fighting a wrongful conviction to death row stemming from the 1993 Lucasville (Ohio) Prison Uprising. He has been held in permanent solitary confinement for all that time. On January 13, 2027, the State of Ohio intends to execute Keith, in spite of his innocence. This is the second date they've set (previously it was November 16, 2023). Keith's conviction rests solely on the uncorroborated and paid testimony of jailhouse informants who received early paroles and/or dropped charges in exchange for their cooperation; withheld evidence that proves his innocence, including a confession of an actual perpetrator to a murder for which Keith faces execution; and an all-white jury in a strategically-chosen and highly racist, rural county in southern Ohio. No forensic evidence connects Keith to any crime whatsoever. His entire ordeal is laid out in his beautiful memoir, *Condemned* (keithlamar.org/condemned).

In spite of the torture he's had to endure, Keith makes living with purpose his primary focus. He encourages people to try to leave the world a better, more beautiful place than they found it. His literacy work with at-risk youth (nativesonsliteracy.org) and his jazz project, **Freedom First**, the first-ever album released from death row, and most recently **LIVE from Death Row**, have allowed him to participate with people in venues all around the world. He's currently in the running for a Grammy nomination (keithlamar.org/grammy). His award-winning short animated film, **The Injustice of Justice**, which he made with world-renowned

artist Molly Crabapple and himself wrote and narrated, is making its way around the international film festival circuit, receiving accolades wherever it is screened.

About Keith and Jazz....

Keith discovered jazz when he turned 25. He enjoyed artists such as Keith Jarrett and Joe Henderson as he describes that "in those compositions, full of nuances, of frequencies, is all the complexity of the African-American experience." Keith started writing poems in his late teenage years; Albert Marquès, a pianist and composer, encouraged him to recite his poems over the music. Keith and Albert formed a friendship and they continue to compose and work on multiple projects. They created 'FREEDOM FIRST', an album comprising of an international group of jazz musicians with Keith reciting poetry

via phone and video calls from prison. FREEDOM FIRST was released in 2022 and it is the first album by an artist on death row. In May of 2025, they released their second album, **LIVE from Death Row**. This New York Times article explains the project in more detail: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/11/arts/music/keith-lamar-death-row-freedom-first.html>. Visit KeithLaMar.org.

Freedom First

Albert Marquès, Freedom First Co-Creator, Composer/Piano

Albert Marquès is a pianist, composer, and political activist from a working class, industrial town outside of Barcelona, where he worked in factories through school. A member of a Catalan anti-capitalist organization as a teenager, he narrowly escaped being detained for his activism.

Influenced by the local punk scene, as well as jazz recordings of musicians like Chick Corea, Brad Mehldau, Michel Camilo and Herbie Hancock, he was self-taught until he attended Conservatori Superior de Música del Liceu. After graduation, he made two pivotal trips which changed his life, spending a month in the West Bank in Palestine and a month in Cuba.

During his four years in Barcelona, he played with the best musicians of the scene, such as Marc Miralta, thanks to his unique, non-academic sound. Upon graduating, he moved to Paris, where he worked in a McDonald's until he learned French. In Paris, he played with musicians such as Remi Vignolo and Pierre Perchaud, and became the pianist in African American drummer Leon Parker's quartet.

At 25, Albert moved to New York City, without knowing even one person, to play jazz. After a year and a half working as a waiter and going to jam sessions every night, he met his mentor Arturo O'Farrill, who gave him his own baby grand piano. In addition to his musical influence and encouragement, O'Farrill hired him to teach with his organization, the Afro Latin Jazz Alliance, a non-profit that gives free Latin jazz music lessons in the most disadvantaged New York City public schools. Albert also plays and collaborates with his sons, Adam and Zack O'Farrill.

In 2014, he married the sculptor Mia Pearlman, with whom he has two children, Aviva and Sol. It is in New York that he finally combined his biggest influences: contemporary jazz, flamenco, Afro Cuban music and social justice by creating **Freedom First**. He has recorded four albums as a band leader, and regularly collaborates with rhythm master Ari Hoenig, Spanish flamenco singer and saxophonist Antonio Lizana, and other American and European musicians.

Marques is the Music Director at the Institute for Collaborative Education in NY, a progressive, public middle and high school in downtown Manhattan.



Freedom First



Chris Coles, *Alto Saxophone*

Christopher J. Coles is a saxophonist from Cleveland, Ohio. In 2009 Chris received his Bachelor Degree in Saxophone Performance from Youngstown State University. It was here that he studied with world-renowned saxophonist and educator Dr. James C. Umble, jazz saxophonist Dr. Kent Englehardt, and jazz bassist and composer Dr. David Morgan. In 2012, Chris received his Master Degree in Saxophone Performance from the University of Akron. Chris is currently on faculty at Kent State University and the Aurora School of Music.

Chris has performed with many local and international jazz musicians such as, Eddie Baccus Sr., Melvin Burks, Kenny Davis, Glenn Holmes, Bill Ransom, and Cecil Rucker, Grammy Award winner Slide Hampton, Ralph Lalama, and Allen Vizzutti. In 2010 Coles was accepted to perform in Italy with the Ohio Youth Jazz Orchestra. In Italy, Coles performed with Wessell Anderson, lead alto saxophonist for the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra.

Some of Chris's recent accomplishments include being a participant at The Banff Workshop for Jazz and Creative music in Alberta, Canada.

Chris had the distinct honor of studying with some of the great pioneers in jazz today such as Vijay Iyer, Mark Turner, Imani Izuri, Tia Fuller, Billy Hart, Ingrid Jensen, Zakir Hussain, Somi, Vosany Terry, and Miles Okazaki to name a few. Chris also played at the North American Saxophone Alliance Regional Festival in West Virginia with the Dana Saxophone quartet, performing at the International Saxophone Symposium in Washington D.C., and premiering a commissioned work by John Hollenbeck at the Whitney Art Museum Composers Workshop. Coles also recorded this work on John Hollenbeck's album *Rainbow Jimmies* released in 2009.

Visit <http://www.christophercolesmusic.com>.

Freedom First

Zach O'Farrill, *Drums*

Zack O'Farrill is a multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-musical artist who doesn't believe in the walls that separate us. Growing up in a musical household, the son of classical pianist Alison Deane and jazz pianist, composer, bandleader Arturo O'Farrill, Zack and his brother, the trumpeter Adam O'Farrill, grew up playing and listening to a wide world of music. From the European-concert-music-influenced Afro-Cuban big band jazz of their grandfather, Chico O'Farrill, to the tongue-in-cheek free jazz of Carla Bley, to having a rotation of the Beatles, Steely Dan, Earth Wind and Fire, and Oscar Peterson in the car on summer road trips, growing up in the hip-hop generation, and extensive study of music in the new world derived from the African Diaspora, Zack has never viewed music with any particular regard to genre.

Zack has performed with a number of artists of various generations and musical viewpoints. He has performed extensively with his father and his brother in many different configurations, including the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra. Zack was the founding drummer for both the Fred Ho-founded Eco-Music Big Band, and the Libertè Big Band. He has collaborated extensively with pianist Albert Marquès, and also performs regularly with saxophonists Livio Almeida and Roy Nathanson, guitarist Jessica Ackerley, and many more.



Zack has studied with incredible musicians such as Dave Meade, Vince Cherico, Victor Jones, Kendrick Scott, Justin Dicioccio, John Riley, Miles Okazaki, Roy Nathanson, Arturo O'Farrill, Joe Gonzalez, and many more. Zack is a reluctantly good academic and received a Bachelor's of Fine Arts from the CUNY Macaulay Honors College at City College. He is currently working on his Master's Degree in Jazz Percussion from the Manhattan School of Music. Zack is also a dedicated educator who has taught in after-school music programs in New York City since 2010. He is the director of the Fat Afro Latin Jazz Cats youth big band, which offers free instruction to talented and deserving high school students from all boroughs. He has been a faculty member of the Flynn Center Latin Jazz for Teens camp in Burlington Vermont for 7 years.

As a composer Zack has had compositions featured on recordings with the Marquès Stinson O'Farrill Trio, the Eco-Music Big Band, and his composition "There's a Statue of José Martí in Central Park" closes the Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra's Grammy-winning record *Cuba: The Conversation Continues* ([listen here](#)). Zack currently leads his own quartet, performing his original music, and is in the process of planning his first record as a leader.

Visit <https://www.wackzilliam.com/about>

Freedom First



Devon Gates, *Standup/Electric Bass*

One of 2024’s Up and Comers of the Year (The New York City Jazz Record), Devon Gates is a bassist, vocalist, and award-winning composer from Atlanta, Georgia, now based in Brooklyn, NY. After studying anthropology and jazz performance at Harvard University and Berklee College of Music, she has worked with esteemed artists including Terri Lyne Carrington, Vijay Iyer, Jen Shyu, Fay Victor, Nicole Mitchell, Susie Ibarra, and Sara Serpa, and performed at venues including The Jazz Gallery, the Monterey Jazz Festival, London Jazz Festival, Montreal Jazz Festival, DC Jazz Festival, and SFJazz. Most recently, she is featured on bass and vocals in Terri Lyne Carrington’s newest release, *We Insist 2025*, a tribute to the seminal Abbey Lincoln/Max Roach 1960 album.

Visit <https://devongatesmusic.com/>



Eartha A. Terrell, *Special Guest Poet*

Eartha A. Terrell is a Youngstown native and an alumna of The Ohio State University. Born with a penchant for storytelling, the business owner and journalist offers a distinct voice with the goal to inspire her generation to live authentically. She will be delivering her stunning spoken word poetry inspired by and in response to the injustice and struggle of Keith LaMar’s ordeal.

Freedom First

**Amy Gordiejew, *Campaign Manager
Justice for Keith LaMar***

Amy Gordiejew is the campaign manager of *Justice for Keith LaMar*, a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization inspired by and named in honor of Keith LaMar, dedicated to helping repair harm caused by wrongful conviction. For the past 14 years, Amy has been Keith’s closest collaborator, helping him carve out the path to his freedom. In their earliest years, and over the course of eight months, Keith wrote and Amy edited his beautifully painful story into book form with *Condemned*; it has since been translated into four languages. Amy travels around the world in effort to advance Keith’s case at diplomatic conferences and arts events. Additionally, she speaks with the media when Keith is unable to, organizes the Freedom First concerts, helps bring Keith’s voice into spaces (art projects, teaching, speaking engagements, etc.), and stays busy behind the scenes raising support for his legal defense fund. She can be reached at info@keithlamar.org and invites all who are able to help to reach out. By day, Amy is a public high school English teacher in Youngstown, Ohio, just 20 minutes away from the prison where Keith LaMar is incarcerated.



Visit and follow/share @justiceforkeithlamar on Instagram and Facebook.

Artists and Other Presenters



Donald Black, Jr. All it takes is for someone to drive through some of the roughest parts of Cleveland to witness the beauty and impact of Donald Black, Jr.'s photography. Black's work is on the ground alongside the people who are from the same environment that he represents. And when you hear his story, with all of its rugged and rough edges, you'll understand why it's so impressive that he was able to maintain the focus needed to avoid falling into the traps that his environment steadily situated and promoted. Here, there are few stories with happy endings, white picket fences, silver spoons or long lists of impressive schools, exhibitions and awards. Instituting himself and tabulating all of his accomplishments isn't as impressive as knowing how serious and meaningful art is to the person who is doing it to stay alive.



Ananias J. Dixon is a passionate professional teaching artist, coach, director and actor, and proud member of Equity/SAG-AFTRA. He started acting at age 14 while attending Cleveland School of the Arts and held his first role in *Antwone Fisher* (2002), directed by Denzel Washington. He has performed professionally throughout Cleveland and regionally, including numerous roles at Dobama Theatre and Karumu House.



Lisa Louise Langford is Buffalo-born actress and playwright based in Cleveland, OH. She's appeared in theatre, television, and film and her credits include: *Seven Guitars* (Center Stage/Pittsburgh Public), *brownsville song (b-side for tray)*, *Witch*, *Skeleton Crew* (Dobama), *Member of the Wedding* (Beck Center), *Law & Order*, *The Mayor of Kingstown*, *Cherry*, *The Spitfire Grill*, and others. Her play *Rastus and Hattie* received a Joyce Award, a Kilroy's List honorable mention, and was published by New Stage Press. Her latest play, *Dear God*, premiered recently at the Different Strokes Performing Arts Collective in Asheville, NC.

Artists and Other Presenters



Martinique Mims is a slam poet, children's book author, and passionate advocate for youth empowerment through the arts. As the author of *Through the Colors of a Butterfly*, she blends creativity with social impact. Martinique has performed in several Mixed Media series. With over 7 years of experience as a teaching artist, she has worked at Rainey Institute, where she taught Storytelling Through Dance, and with Cleveland Public Theatre, teaching movement through theater and drum. When not teaching or performing, Martinique works as a nutrition educator with Case Western Reserve University's SNAP-ED program in Cuyahoga County, striving to improve access to nutritious food and physical activity opportunities. Martinique is dedicated to using the power of art to uplift and empower young people and believes deeply in the transformative power of creativity and wellness.



Mariama Whyte is a creative force as a singer, songwriter, actor, and speaker. Acclaimed and recognized for her versatility and strength on stage, screen, and behind the scenes, Mariama is pulled by her deep desire to inspire, entertain, and empower her audiences. She has performed in the Broadway National Tours of *The Lion King* and *The Color Purple* and on several regional music and theatre stages in Northeast Ohio including Playhouse Square, Severance Hall, Karamu House and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Mariama has shared the stage with world renowned performers and musicians including David Foster, John Legend, and Michelle Williams. From R&B/soul to pop, reggae, musical theatre, singer/songwriter, and inspirational music, Mariama thrives on the joy of performing and writing in various styles of musical expression. As an independent recording artist, Mariama has released multiple music projects, including her latest singles, *To Be Free* and *Eyes On Me*. An alum of Shaker Heights High School and the College of Wooster, Mariama is also a TEDx speaker and enjoys empowering people to live courageously and confidently. Visit www.mariamawhyte.com. "To Be Free" is now available at <https://mariamawhyte.bandcamp.com/track/to-be-free>. All profits from the song will be donated to Justice for Keith LaMar.

Director of the Social Justice Institute at CWRU



Ayesha Bell Hardaway, JD, is a Professor of Law at Case Western Reserve University where she serves as Director of the Law School’s Social Justice Law Center and its Criminal Defense Clinic. Professor Hardaway also serves as Director of the University’s Social Justice Institute. Her leadership role at the Social Justice Institute began in May 2020 after an appointment by then Provost Ben Vincent III.

As Director of the Social Justice Law Center and of the University’s Social Justice Institute, Professor Hardaway serves students and the broader community in the exploration of pressing social justice issues through research, community partnerships and dialogue, engagement with local and national thought-leaders, and curricular offerings.

Professor Hardaway’s academic career also aligns with her strong commitment to serve the community. She has represented individuals who are unable to hire private counsel as a clinician in Case Law School’s Health

Clinic, Civil Litigation Clinic, and Criminal Clinic. As Director of the Criminal Clinic, Professor Hardaway uses a client-centered pedagogical framework to instruct and supervise third-year law students.

Her contributions and engagement extend beyond the Cleveland area. In 2024, Professor Hardaway was chosen to serve as a Gray Institute Fellow for the Fred D. Gray Institute for Human and Civil Rights. The following year, Professor Hardaway was selected to be a Visiting Fellow at the Center for Racial Justice at the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan.

In addition to her teaching responsibilities, Professor Hardaway’s research and scholarship interests include the intersection of race with constitutional law, criminal law, policing, and civil litigation. Her scholarship includes the publication of major articles in the *Georgetown Law Journal*, *Boston University Law Review*, and *Stanford Journal of Civil Rights & Civil Liberties*. Professor Hardaway has written on many topics including reparations, labor law, the Thirteenth Amendment, and policing.

Her work on policing has also made her an influential voice in the field. Hardaway has made several appearances on CNN, including The Situation Room with Wolf Blitzer, and on ESPN’s The Undeclared, and was quoted in papers ranging from *USA Today* to *Rolling Stone* magazine. Professor Hardaway has also been asked to opine on other high-profile incidents in

outlets such as *The Associated Press*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *The Boston Globe*.



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