

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE !!!

HUGH FRASER

&

VEJI

the

Vancouver Ensemble of Jazz Improvisation

will be performing as the feature artists at select Prairie summer jazz festivals including:

Medicine Hat, June 23; Calgary, June 25; and Regina, June 26

These special dates will give a preview to listeners of the incredible artistry and excitement this legendary Canadian organization will be presenting during their 30th anniversary coast to coast Canadian tour in the summer of 2010.

Founded in 1980 in Vancouver by JUNO Award winning trombonist/pianist/composer Hugh Fraser, the small big band (9 horns, rhythm section and sometimes voice and violin) synthesized influences as diverse as Su Ra, John Coltrane, Earth Wind and Fire, and proceeded to add original compositions resulting in VEJI's first self titled vinyl l.p. in 1981. The ferocious energy and entertaining antics (the band often surrounds the audience and creates total sonic and visual chaos then resolves to the roots of the blues on stage) usually brings crowds to their feet in a joyous ovation!

The summer 2009 VEJI line up is half founding members from 1980, and inductees from 2 decades ago to this year. These highly original Canadian artists are all performing and recording leaders in their own right and collectively represent over a dozen Juno Awards for their artistic contributions.

VEJI is:

Hugh Fraser-----piano/trombone/composer/leader----- (founding member-Victoria)

Bill Runge-----saxophones----- (founding member-Vancouver)

Perry White-----saxophones----- (founding member-Toronto)

Bill Clark-----trumpet----- (founding member -Albuquerque, N.M.)

Brad Muirhead-----bass trombone----- (founding member-Vancouver)

Jack Duncan-----percussion------(founding member-Vancouver)

Mike Herriott-----lead trumpet------(since 1995 -Toronto)

Lorae Farrell-----trumpet------(since 2002 -Victoria)

Christine Duncan---voice------(since 1995 -Toronto)

Ken Lister-----bass------(since 1995 - Qualicum Beach)

Dave Robbins-----drums------(since 1995 -Vancouver)

Steve Denroche----French horn------(since 2009 -Vancouver)

VEJI has recorded two l.p.'s, and three c.d.'s of exclusively original Canadian music that has redefined the improvising large jazz based ensemble not only across Canada, but in Europe and the U.S.A. through live, radio and television performances, and extensive educational intersections that include VEJI compositions being used as curriculum in major university programs.

VEJI performed their first international concert as the opening act of the 2007 Jazz Plaza Festival in Havana, Cuba with the legendary Chucho Valdes joining the group for the concert. Other legendary guests that have performed and recorded with VEJI include Slide Hampton, Frank Foster, Joe Henderson, Don Thompson, Julian Priester, Dave Leibman, Dave Holland, Keith Copeland, Ralph Bowen, Jesper Thilo, and Kenny Wheeler.

VEJI has thrilled audiences for 30 years in clubs, concert halls, outdoor stages and a myriad of unlikely situations where their universal message of peace and love through music can be presented with thrilling combination of compositions, as in the Duke Ellington Orchestra, written for the specific artists in the band, and the unbounded creative improvisational energy of the individuals involved.

From blues to be-bop, salsa to Scriabin, free jazz to fusion, VEJI summons the youthful joy from their creation while constantly enriching every performance with the seasoned experience and artistry that the individuals bring to this creative Canadian collective.



The Vancouver Ensemble of Jazz Improvisation, better known as VEJI, is in its 30th year of regular performing and special presentations. VEJI's goal is to present intense passion and sonic diversity by respecting the past, having fun in the present and looking forward to the future. Their most recent CD "V" represents these goals and displays the diversity that makes up the contemporary jazz musician's palette.

On the strength of their live performances at festivals and the recording, "V", Hugh Fraser & VEJI performed at the Jazz Plaza Festival in Havana, Cuba with Chucho Valdes in 2007. This was VEJI's first tour outside Canada since their 1985 appearance in New York City. Looking ahead, a workshop and performance of VEJI is being planned for January 2010 at the Lincoln Centre in New York City as well as an extensive coast to coast Canadian tour.

VEJI has created an energized backdrop for guest soloists Frank Foster, Slide Hampton, Don Thompson, Dave Holland, Dave Liebman, Kenny Wheeler, and Julian Priester. VEJI performs mainly original music, but has performed important works at jazz festivals such as Charles Mingus' "Black Saint" and "The Sinner Lady," and John Coltrane's "A Love Supreme."

Their first album, "VEJI," was released in 1980 after winning the Canadian Stage Band Festival, "Classic VEJI" followed in 1986 on a Toronto label, and "VEJI NOW!" recorded with over 20 musicians was short listed (top ten) for a Grammy in 1990.

More recently, VEJI released "V" and "Big Works" on Hugh Fraser's Boat House Record label and ended their last Canadian tour performing at the Festival de jazz de Montreal for 40,000 people. VEJI also was chosen to represent Western Canadian creativity as one of three landmark Canadian big bands which Rob McConnell and the Boss Brass and Vic Vogel's Montreal Big Band at the IAJE in Toronto. This concert was broadcast nationally on CBC and also internationally out of New York on WBGO.

All of VEJI's members are major forces in jazz performance, composition, and education in the Canadian Pacific North West. Past members are thriving in New York, New Mexico and Toronto, and still VEJIfy when near enough.

Whether VEJI is playing screaming bop, Afro Latin grooves, white noise or death fusion, the combination of horns, drums, strings and voices will transport the listener to another level of bliss through sound, then return them to their environment refreshed and energized.

Leading VEJI is Juno Award winning trombonist/pianist/composer Hugh Fraser. To find out more about this group that redefined the big-band at www.hughfraser.com or contact VEJI at veji@hughfraser.com.