

BANG ON A CAN MARATHON 2009

Opens the River to River Festival

Sunday, May 31, 2009

12 Hours: Noon – Midnight

World Financial Center Winter Garden
220 Vesey Street, NYC

Co-presented by the River to River Festival and
arts>World Financial Center



Bang on a Can All-Stars performing at the 2007 Marathon. By Stephanie Berger.

“Over the course of its 12 (free!) hours, the country's most provocative and consistently entertaining new-music event deftly mixes high modernism and classic minimalism with electronic experimentation and slipstream visitors from the pop fringe.” – *The Village Voice*

Featured performers include the Bang on a Can All-Stars, Tortoise, Ryuichi Sakamoto, Bill Frisell, Wu Man, Sandeep Das, Lionheart & Ethel, Ars Nova Copenhagen, and Athelas Sinfonietta of Denmark

Admission: FREE.

For info, the public should call: 718.852.7755, visit www.bangonacan.org or email info@bangonacan.org

For press requests, contact: Christina Jensen PR, 646.536.7864 or christina@christinajensenpr.com

YouTube playlist of 2009 artists: www.youtube.com/view_play_list?p=7E75562A217AE9B5

High resolution photos available: www.christinajensenpr.com (in the Bang on a Can gallery)

New York, NY— On Sunday, May 31, for 12 hours from noon until midnight, Bang on a Can will present its annual Bang on a Can Marathon, held for the fourth year at World Financial Center Winter Garden and co-presented by the River to River Festival and arts>World Financial Center. Founded in 1987, the Marathon is still FREE and this year brings together more than 30 astounding performers and composers from throughout the world, performing in numerous genres and experimental styles. The Bang on a Can Marathon opens the 2009 River to River Festival, the city's largest summer arts extravaganza.

At least six new works will be premiered on May 31. In the Bang on a Can tradition of presenting the unexpected, this Marathon will include a piece written for nine saxophones, another for a ten-piece steel pan band, one for pipa and tabla with string quartet, and even a new composition for five coffee grinders (Braun KSM2s, to be exact), plus much more.

The Marathon features two world premieres commissioned especially for the occasion – one from Oscar winning-pianist, composer, producer and actor **Ryuichi Sakamoto** and the other from innovative guitarist **Bill Frisell**. Both works will be performed at the Marathon by the **Bang on a Can All-Stars** with Sakamoto and Frisell as guest soloists. Sakamoto, who began his career with the synthpop trio Yellow Magic Orchestra, has gone on to release numerous albums with artists as diverse as David Byrne, Iggy Pop, Brian Wilson, Youssou N'Dour, and DJ Spooky, and score films including *The Last Emperor*, *Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence*, *The Little Buddha*, *Wild Palms*, *Snake Eyes*, and *Femme Fatale*. Bill Frisell has been recognized as one of the world's leading guitarists since the late 1980s, and his eclectic music touches on jazz, progressive folk, classical music, country music, noise and more.

The Marathon will also feature post-rock band **Tortoise**, bringing their signature merging of dub, dance, jazz, techno, rock, and classical minimalism to the Winter Garden. Tortoise will perform selections from their upcoming album, *Beacons of Ancestry* (Thrill Jockey, June 2009), their sixth full-length album and first release of new material in five years.

The 2009 Marathon will include an invasion of Danish composers and performers, including the U.S. debuts of the choral group **Ars Nova Copenhagen** led by renowned conductor **Paul Hillier** and the new music ensemble **Athelas Sinfonietta**. Ars Nova will perform the U.S. premieres of music by Euro-minimalists **Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen** and **Howard Skempton**, plus the U.S. premiere of Bang on a Can co-founder (and Pulitzer Prize winner) **David Lang's** *For love is strong*, from his new CD *The Little Match Girl Passion* on Harmonia Mundi. Athelas Sinfonietta will present excerpts from **Anders Nordentoft's** groundbreaking opera *On This Planet*, and **Jeppe Just Christensen's** experimental *Braun KSM2*, composed for five coffee grinders. Together, Ars Nova and Athelas Sinfonietta will give the U.S. premiere of *Thirst*, a massive new work by Bang on a Can co-founder **Julia Wolfe**.

During the 2009 Marathon, pipa virtuoso **Wu Man** and tabla specialist **Sandeep Das** will perform *Sulvasutra* with string quartet **Brooklyn Rider**. *Sulvasutra*, by composer and Bang on a Can All-Star clarinetist **Evan Ziporyn**, is based on an ancient Sanskrit treatise, dating from 800 BCE, which gives rules for the proper construction of Vedic altars. The piece is influenced by Ziporyn's long involvement with Balinese gamelan. Wu Man and Sandeep Das will also perform solo sets later in the evening.

Two other highlights of the Marathon will be a performance of Bang on a Can co-founder **Michael Gordon's** monumental *Trance* by the New York new music band **Signal** led by **Brad Lubman**, and a performance of selections from **Phil Kline's** *John the Revelator*, a Mass inspired by bluesman Blind Willie Johnson's song of the same name, by the early music vocal sextet **Lionheart** and the string quartet known as **Ethel**. The world premiere recording of *John the Revelator* was released in March on Cantaloupe Music.

Another high point during the Marathon will be a 15-minute set by free jazz icon bassist **Henry Grimes** and avant-garde jazz drummer **Andrew Cyrille**. Other performances will include *Rut* by **Ken Thompson's 9-headed Saxophone Monster**; **Andy Akiho's** music for ten-piece steel pan band; **Meredith Monk's** *Stringsongs* performed by the **Todd Reynolds String Quartet**; electric guitar quartet **DITHER** and friends in **Eric km Clark's** *exPAT: Deprivation Music No. 4*; **Moritz Eggert's** *One Man Band* performed by pianist **Shiau-uen Ding** (selected for the mind-blowing YouTube performance video she submitted to the Marathon's organizers); *The Sinking of the Titanic* by **Gavin Bryars** and *White Man Sleeps* by **Kevin Volans** played by the British **Smith Quartet**; music by **Matthew McBane** performed by **Build**; and appearances by the New York-based all-women new music collective **Victoire**, as well as **Ted Hearne** with his band, **Your Bad Self**.

For artists' biographies, website links, and press clips, please see the Bang on a Can Marathon PDF press kit.

A schedule (still subject to change) of Marathon performances will be distributed on May 1.

Music by: Andy Akiho, Gavin Bryars, Jeppe Just Christensen, Eric km Clark, Joe Cutler, Moritz Eggert, Bill Frisell, Michael Gordon, Ted Hearne, Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen, Phil Kline, David Lang, Steve Martland, Matthew McBane, Meredith Monk, Anders Nordentoft, Ryuichi Sakamoto, Howard Skempton, Kevin Volans, Julia Wolfe, Evan Ziporyn, AND MORE

Performances by: Ars Nova Copenhagen, Athelas Sinfonietta, Bang on a Can All-Stars, DITHER, Ethel, Bill Frisell, Brooklyn Rider, Build, Shiau-uen Ding, Henry Grimes & Andrew Cyrille, Lionheart, Ryuichi Sakamoto, Ken Thomson's 9-headed Saxophone Monster, Smith Quartet, Signal, Sandeep Das, Tortoise, Victoire, Wu Man, Your Bad Self, AND MORE

About Bang on a Can: Formed in 1987 by composers Michael Gordon, David Lang and Julia Wolfe, Bang on a Can is dedicated to commissioning, performing, creating, presenting and recording contemporary music. With an ear for the new, the unknown and the unconventional, Bang on a Can strives to expose exciting and innovative music as broadly and accessibly as possible to new audiences worldwide. And through its Summer Festival, Bang on a Can hopes to bring this energy and passion for innovation to a younger generation of composers and players.

The San Francisco Chronicle has called Bang on a Can "the country's most important vehicle for contemporary music." Over the years, Bang on a Can has grown from a one-day festival to a multi-faceted organization. Projects include festival concerts and the annual Bang on a Can Marathon; The People's Commissioning Fund, a membership program to commission emerging composers; the Bang on a Can All-Stars, who tour to major festivals and concert venues around the world every year; recording projects; the Bang on a Can Summer Music Festival & Institute – a professional development program for young composers and performers; and cross-disciplinary collaborations and projects with DJs, visual artists, choreographers, filmmakers and more. Bang on a Can's innovative and aggressive approach to programming and presentation has created a large and vibrant international audience made up of people of all ages who are rediscovering the value of contemporary music.