

MICHAEL GREGORY JACKSON (Spirit Signal Strata)

is a composer, innovator, guitarist, improviser, sound explorer, educator and poet. By age 20 Michael was an integral part of the fertile New Haven CT music scene, creating music with composers Wadada Leo Smith, Anthony Davis, Gerry Hemingway and others. Upon his arrival in NYC he was widely considered one of the most innovative guitarists to emerge during New York's avant-garde loft scene in the 70s. Michael stands as a pioneer of a new movement, one in which genres and sounds were suddenly mixed in new and inventive ways. Rolling Stone magazine called him "the most original jazz guitarist to emerge since the sixties." Michael embodies the nature of a true and natural artist, perpetually cultivating new ideas and directions.

Spirit Signal Strata is music built around the adaptation of the guitar to contemporary sonics, grooves and extended improvisational techniques. Michael composed this music specifically with these two master musicians in mind; Kenwood and Keith are very present, and able to access deep levels of feeling and creativity with immediacy. Both can draw on the history and origins, socio-political significance, the heart and the soul to be uncovered within expanded blues forms, the rhythms of harmony and joy found inside the rich deep strata of African-American music.

Michael has worked, produced and/or recorded with Julius Hemphill, Oliver Lake, Wadada Leo Smith, Nile Rodgers, Anthony Braxton, Nels Cline, Jack DeJohnette, Steve Winwood, Henry Threadgill, David Murray, Walter Becker, Carlos Santana, Vernon Reid, Patti LaBelle and many others.

Michael taught at California Institute for the Arts, New England Conservatory of Music, Copenhagen Conservatory of Music, DK, Hampshire College, and is a guiding artist at The Creative Music Studio, Woodstock, N.Y.

KENWOOD DENNARD

is a master drummer and musician. He has been a professor at Berklee College of Music for over 15 years and is one of the founding instructors at the Drummer's Collective. His performance credentials are phenomenal, having played with Dizzy Gillespie, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Harry Bellafonte, Joe Zawinul, Sting, Jaco Pastorius, Pat Martino, Maceo Parker, Stanley Jordan, Larry Coryell, Esperanza Spaulding, Tal Wilkenfeld and many others.

KEITH WITTY

bassist, has straddled the worlds of Hip-Hop, popular music forms, and Jazz's Avant- Garde in his young career. He graduated from Wesleyan University and made his recording debut with the Anthony Braxton Quartet.

In 2007 Keith joined the touring band of Grammy-nominated singer and songwriter Amel Larrieux, and contributed to her "Lovely Standards" (2008) and "Ice Cream Everyday" (2013). Keith is also in the band of acclaimed East African vocalist Somi, with whom he has played concerts throughout the United States, Europe, the Middle East and Africa, partaking in the album, "Live at the Jazz Standard". Keith has collaborated with some of the most innovative musicians of Jazz's upcoming generation, playing in bands led by Matana Roberts, Guillermo E. Brown, Taylor Ho Bynum, Pyeng Threadgill, and others.