



"Grover Washington Jr. / Photo by Bruce Turner"

THE REMEDY Remedy Project Mixtapes | [Click Here](#)

NEW SONGS OF THE OPEN ROAD
 Celebrating Walt Whitman
 Join Us Walking & Singing Songs Of Affirmation
[CLICK HERE](#)

Welcome to Philadelphia Jazz Project

Published on September 8th, 2014

The AfroSphere Is Here

Oct 13, 2017



The AfroSphere / How Do You Afro?
 Thursday, October 19 - 7PM
 University of Pennsylvania Museum / Egyptian Gallery
 3260 South Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104
[For Tickets: Click Here](#)

How Do You Afro? is the prevailing question behind **The AfroSphere**: A special night of interactive global arts and unique design marketplace presented by **ArtVolution Cultural Innovation Project**. The event brings together contemporary live music, art, dance, and fashions of the African diaspora at **Penn Museums** awe-inspiring ancient Egyptian Gallery and Chinese Rotunda.

ArtVolution Cultural Innovation Project is an arts, culture and education community empowerment project created to improve the quality of life and life skills in urban communities through arts, cultural preservation, workshops, classes and neighborhood beautification. We encourage self-improvement by utilizing African-American and African heritage healing concepts. **Modern Renaissance Jazz** - Presenting and Preservation. **FLOW Academy** - Future Leaders of the World Youth Initiative



Vena Jefferson is an award-winning cultural events producer, dancer and arts consultant. She has won awards from the **Leeway Foundation, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Children Can Shape the Future**, and a number of other prominent cultural acknowledgments. She has performed and produced shows throughout the United States, Africa and the Caribbean. She is the founder and director of **ArtVolution Cultural Innovation Project**. **Current Project**

2017: The AfroSphere.

PJP spoke with curator, Vena Jefferson about her vision, her approach and the upcoming AfroSphere.

PJP: Can you tell us a little about your direction and your work as a curator and Cultural Event Producer?

Vena Jefferson: My job as a curator and cultural event producer is to promote, preserve and expand the arts and artists of the African Diaspora with a focus on jazz, world music, dance and the visual arts. I performed and taught dance for many years, and those musical traditions have called me in the most liberated direction. My work is steeped in tradition, but also in finding new and exciting ways to present it. In addition, community access to arts education is an extremely important component of our program. We strive to create new ways of building audiences, while remaining authentic in our approach. Folk and contemporary arts are integral components of our program.

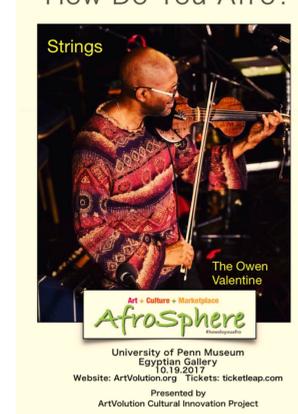
PJP: Can you tell us about the upcoming AfroSphere?

Vena Jefferson: The AfroSphere is a special night of interactive global arts and unique design marketplace, bringing together contemporary music, jazz, art, dance, and fashions of the African diaspora in **Penn Museum's**, awe-inspiring ancient Egyptian gallery and Chinese Rotunda. **How do you Afro? How do you express your art and heritage?** That's the goal for people to come together and share. Featured performers and presenters include, philanthropist, poet, visual artist, **Danny Simmons** of **Rush Arts Philly**, world renowned, saxophone virtuoso, **James Carter**, violinist/vocalist, **Owen Brown, Jr.**, and **The Goree Project** from Senegal. We are especially excited about the wearable art presentation and our interactive dance and drum circle. Just great artists working in various genres presenting African-inspired design trends in fashion, accessories and home decor. Admission to the Egyptian exhibit is included in the ticket.

PJP: Why is it important?

Vena Jefferson: The AfroSphere brings together accomplished artists of African descent, from the United States, and abroad, to share music, dance, visual arts and to fellowship. Many of the arts, genres, artists, and their audiences are divided into much smaller groups, but do not often have the opportunity to convene on a regular basis. Unfortunately, we end up with these fragmented arts communities who are often unaware of each other, and we are missing opportunities to come together to create new and exciting ventures. Equally important as artists of color, we need to be able to convey positive and audience-relatable material that grows into a cultural and unifying experience. **The AfroSphere** was created to celebrate the art and culture of the African Diaspora, and to share with all people. We are also reaching out to former dancers and percussionists of some of the founding and contemporary ensembles and class members to come out and share in the dance and drum circle. It's very important to keep up with people that were founders, supporters and pioneers of the African diaspora dance community. Documentation with correct information is so important our cultural identity and preservation.

How Do You Afro?



PJP: Tell us about the people / artists working with you.

Vena Jefferson: We are very fortunate to have such amazing and noted artists at **The AfroSphere**. This is definitely a spirited concept paying homage to some great African-themed jazz and soul music with saxophonists **James Carter**, **Louis Taylor** on saxes and **Adam Faulk** on piano. **The Goree Project** is made up of Senegalese musicians and artists based in Philly and New York. Our featured speaker, **Danny Simmons, Jr.** will discuss his visual arts studio the importance of arts venues in communities such as North Philadelphia. **Bariq Cobbs'** work in visual and wearable art is an inspiring visual exploration of urban black life and a friend to music-themed art. He is truly an artist that people should know. Visual art and jazz have always had integral connection, so we are just taking natural combinations and making sure they have the opportunity to convene in a great place such as the **Penn Museum** with noted artists.

PJP: Why Jazz? When you could be doing anything else, Why this music?

Vena Jefferson: Jazz has always been a part of my background since I was a child. My grandparents were musicians, but my grandfather was the jazz aficionado. He taught me so much about music at an early age, just by exposure to vintage Black films, and listening to records on Sunday afternoons. So, as I grew up, so has my interest in jazz, and it's impact on popular culture, and how can we preserve its traditions while bringing it to newer audiences. My art has taken me all over the world, from dance, to jazz and world music and has allowed me to open my mind and heart to the beauty and power of life. That's why...Jazz.

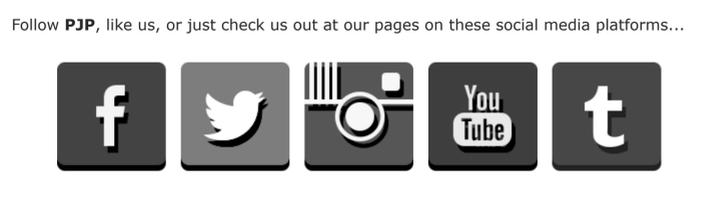
The AfroSphere / How Do You Afro?
 Thursday, October 19 - 7PM
 University of Pennsylvania Museum / Egyptian Gallery
 3260 South Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104
[For Tickets: Click Here](#)

Check Out Saxophonist James Carter in Action At Church of Advocate



Find the **ArtVolution** website: [Here](#)

Follow **PJP**, like us, or just check us out at our pages on these social media platforms...



Philadelphia Jazz Project is a sponsored project of the **Culture Trust | Greater Philadelphia**, with funding provided by The **Philadelphia Foundation** and The **Wyncote Foundation**.

<< [Go back to the previous page](#)

Tags : [HowDoYouAfro?](#) [TheAfroSphere](#) [ArtVolution](#) [CulturalInnovationProject](#) [VenaJefferson](#) [UniversityofPennsylvaniaMuseum](#) [EgyptianGallery](#) [AfricanDiaspora](#) [Fashion](#) [Culture](#) [Marketplace](#) [PennySimmons](#) [DannySimmons](#) [RushArtsPhilly](#) [JamesCarter](#) [LouisTaylor](#) [OwenBrown](#) [TheGoreeProject](#) [PhillyJazz](#)

3

THE REMEDY Remedy Project Mixtapes | [Click Here](#)

NEW SONGS OF THE OPEN ROAD
 Celebrating Walt Whitman
 Join Us Walking & Singing Songs Of Affirmation
[CLICK HERE](#)

Philly Jazz Quotes
 The stuff McCoy Tyner did was earth-shattering for me. The modal thing, the way he voiced chords in fourths, the way he used the pentatonic scale -- all those things were very new.
Kenny Barron

Other Info

[Click Here](#)



Jazz News
 Powered by [Feedity](#)
 * [Watch U.K. Jazz Group Sons Of Kemet Deliver An Explosive Midnight Set](#)
 * ['The Black Messiah' And The Legacy Of Cannonball Adderley](#)
 * [Masego: Tiny Desk Concert](#)
 * [Jacob Collier: Tiny Desk Concert](#)
 Powered by [Feedity](#)

Philadelphia Jazz Project is a sponsored project of the [Culture Trust | Greater Philadelphia](#), with funding provided by [The Philadelphia Foundation](#).