



The Toronto Jazz Orchestra presents
Miles Ahead
With special guest trumpeter Kevin Turcotte
Wednesday, June 8, 2011, 8 pm
The Tranzac Club, Main Hall, 292 Brunswick Avenue

For immediate release – Toronto, May 23, 2011: On Wednesday, June 8 at the Tranzac Club, The **Toronto Jazz Orchestra** is paying tribute to Gil Evans, one of the jazz world's most important composers and arrangers, with a performance of the music from *Miles Ahead*, the groundbreaking collaboration between Gil Evans and Miles Davis recorded in 1957. Outstanding Canadian trumpeter **Kevin Turcotte** will be the evening's featured soloist.

Although Miles Davis and Gil Evans had worked together once before, on *Birth of the Cool*, *Miles Ahead* is recognized as the beginning of an outstanding artistic relationship – one which would produce the *Sketches of Spain* and *Porgy and Bess* albums. The second half of the June 8th performance will feature the music of *Miles Ahead* performed exactly as on the recording, with scores provided by the Gil Evans estate. The first half of the performance will feature music by Gil Evans contemporaries and composers influenced by Evans' writing: Darcy James Argue, Bob Brookmeyer, Maria Schneider and Phil Nimmons.

“Gil Evans' arranging for the *Miles Ahead* recording still stands as some of the most interesting and exciting large ensemble writing in the jazz cannon,” according to Toronto Jazz Orchestra Artistic Director Josh Grossman. “It's an honour to be performing this music, and a pleasure to have Kevin Turcotte – who knows Miles Davis' music better than most trumpeters – joining us as the featured soloist.”

The music from *Miles Ahead* is written for expanded big band: four woodwind players (playing flute, alto flute, clarinet, bass clarinet, alto sax and oboe, the latter of which will be played on soprano saxophone), five trumpets (plus soloist), four trombones, tuba, two French horns, bass and drums. The ten pieces are meant to be played without break, except for after the fifth where, on the original recording, a break was included to allow the record to be flipped.

Toronto-born **Gil Evans** (1912-1988) spent his childhood traveling with his mother and stepfather from one mining site to the next throughout Canada and the United States, finally settling in California in 1922. After attending a performance by Duke Ellington in 1927, Evans decided to devote his life to jazz. Following the second world war (Evans joined the army but remained stateside, performing in various army bands), Evans moved to New York to seek out the developing bebop style. In the late 1940's, Evans and Gerry Mulligan conceived a medium-sized ensemble that would combine the sound texture of the jazz orchestras of the day with the new discoveries of bebop. In 1948, a nonet was formed, with Miles Davis as the leader, and was booked at the Royal Roost on 47th street. The band was dissolved right after this engagement, but still managed to record twelve sides in 1949 and 1950 that would later be compiled in 1953 under the title *The Birth Of The Cool*, an album that is now considered a turning point in the history of jazz writing. In 1956, Evans was chosen by Miles Davis for Miles' first recording with a large ensemble. *Miles Ahead*, released in 1957, was followed by several other collaborations, including *Porgy And Bess* (1958), *Sketches Of Spain* (1960), and *Quiet Nights* (1962), all of which went on to become orchestral jazz classics. During this same period, Gil Evans also recorded several albums under his own name; in 1960, Evans' orchestra was given a six-week residency at



the Jazz Gallery in New York. After a four-year hiatus, during which he concentrated on raising his family, Evans began to record again in 1969, using medium-sized ensembles in which electric instruments now began to play a very important role – an album of jazz arrangements of Jimmi Hendrix compositions performed by the Gil Evans Orchestra was released in 1974. The orchestra began to tour outside the U.S., especially in Europe; beginning in 1984, the orchestra was hired to play every Monday night at Sweet Basil, a New York club where it performed, under the name The Monday Night Orchestra, until Evans' death. In 1985 and 1986, Gil Evans wrote music for several movie soundtracks, most notably Julian Temple's *Absolute Beginners* and Martin Scorsese's *The Color Of Money*. The year 1987 was particularly prolific, marked by numerous recordings as well as several European tours, including a concert with pop star Sting. Gil Evans died of peritonitis on March 20, 1988 in Cuernavaca, Mexico.

Hailed by the *Toronto Star* as “one of the nations leading men on the horn,” Toronto-based trumpeter **Kevin Turcotte** has had the privilege of playing on more than one hundred recordings over the last twenty years with musicians from all across the country. Eighteen of these recordings have garnered Juno Nominations; four were Juno Winners. Since 1993, Kevin has been named Jazz Trumpeter of the Year multiple times by *Jazz Report Magazine* and the National Jazz Awards, and was nominated again in the same category at the 2009 National Jazz Awards. Whether it is recent outings by the Barenaked Ladies and Bruce Cockburn, the funky sounds of Mr. Something Something and Planet Earth, the eclectic nature of the Great Uncles of the Revolution and Jayme Stone or modern collaborations like the Sicilian Jazz Project and Ricochet, Kevin always brings a passion and creativity to each project. A graduate from the University of Toronto, Kevin attended summer jazz sessions at the Banff School of Fine Arts under the tutelage of Dave Holland, Kenny Wheeler, Steve Coleman, Dave Douglas, Anthony Davis and Kenny Werner; he has performed with many Canadian jazz groups including Rob McConnell and the Boss Brass, the Barry Elmes Quintet featuring Ed Bickert, Time Warp, Barry Romberg's Random Access, Andrew Downing's Melodeon and Arts and Letters, the Neufeld Occhipinti Jazz Orchestra (NOJO), the Dave Young Quintet, and the Jean Martin Trio. Kevin taught in the University of Toronto Jazz Performance Program for over a decade, from its inception until 2004, and is now on faculty at York University.

The Toronto Jazz Orchestra (TJO) was formed in 1998 by Artistic Director and Conductor Josh Grossman and is made up of some of the top emerging jazz talent in Toronto. Over the past thirteen years, the TJO has released three recordings and has performed tributes to Phil Nimmons, the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, the Stan Kenton Orchestra, Leonard Bernstein, Duke Ellington and Buddy Rich; featured guest artists have included Kurt Elling, Seamus Blake, Ingrid Jensen and Geoffrey Keezer.

For more information on the June 8th performance please call (416) 899-5299, email thetjo@mnsi.net or visit www.thetjo.com.

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\$20; tickets available at milesahead.eventbrite.com or at the door