



Daniel Bernard Roumain (DBR) honors Black History Month with THE MISSION's SQ Unit and DJ Scientific at Edison Theatre Jan. 26

A Civil Rights Reader to conclude five-city tour at Library of Congress Feb. 9

By Liam Otten

Jan. 4, 2007 -- Cutting-edge composer Daniel Bernard Roumain (DBR) and the string quartet section (SQ Unit) of his band, DBR & THE MISSION, will celebrate Black History Month with a rare performance of DBR's *A Civil Rights Reader* at Washington University's Edison Theatre.



The special, one-night-only concert — sponsored as part of the Edison Theatre OVATIONS! Series — begins at 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 26. Edison Theatre is located in the Mallinckrodt Student Center, 6445 Forsyth Blvd. Tickets are \$30; \$25 for seniors and Washington University faculty and staff; and \$18 for students and children. Tickets are available at the

Edison Theatre Box Office and through all MetroTix outlets.

For more information, call (314) 935-6543 or visit <http://edisontheatre.wustl.edu/>

Dedicated to creating socially and politically conscious music, DBR blends funk, hip-hop and classical music to create a personal sonic vision that critics have described as revolutionary. Rich with cultural references, his works range from classical scores and energetic chamber works to rock songs and electronica.

A Civil Rights Reader collects four of DBR's string quartets celebrating four iconic figures from the American Civil Rights Movement: Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr., Adam Clayton Powell Jr. and Maya Angelou. Performers include DBR as bandleader and violinist as well as special guest DJ Scientific on turntables and laptop. The SQ Unit is comprised of Earl Maneein (violin), Jessie Reagen (cello), Matthew Szemela (violin) and Jon Weber (viola).

String Quartet No. 1 *X* (1993), composed when DBR was in his early 20s, combines Bartok-influenced motifs with a contemporary sense of funk. Having recently read X's famous autobiography, "I was moved to tears and rage and completely related to his struggles," DBR recalls of the work's creation. "I wanted this quartet to change my world."

String Quartet No. 2 *King* (2001), featuring DBR on electric violin and DJ Scientific on turntables, grapples with complex questions and issues surrounding Dr. King's alleged adulterous affairs. "The music illuminates the pillow talk that might have occurred, and what influence these mistresses might have had on him and, consequently, the entire civil rights movement."

String Quartet No. 3 *Powell* (2003) is dedicated to the long-serving U.S. Representative who shaped some of the most important legislation of the 1960s. DBR — himself a Haitian-American living in Harlem, the district Powell served — depicts not just Powell the man but the "feelings of victory and injustice, pride and shame, community and isolation that he felt," combined "with the range of emotions I often experience as a young black person."

String Quartet No. 4 *Angelou* (2004) is the first of DBR's quartets dedicated to a female civil rights icon. "Too often I think we tend to neglect the strong leadership roles black women have had in the Civil Rights Movement," DBR explains. "Powerful though her words and poetry are, in this quartet, it is the wondrous timbre of the sound of her voice that forms the source material" for a series of electronic soundscapes.

The Edison Theatre performance of *A Civil Rights Reader* is part of a five-city tour that will also travel to Oklahoma City; Lawrence, KS; and Fayetteville, AR. The tour will conclude Feb. 9 at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

As a composer, DBR has collaborated with artists ranging from Philip Glass and Ryuichi Sakamoto to Vernon Reid, Savion Glover, Cassandra Wilson and DJ's Radar, Spooky and Scientific. The orchestras of Dallas, Memphis, San Antonio and St. Louis — as well as the Chicago Sinfonietta, the Brooklyn Philharmonic and the North Dutch Orchestra — have performed or commissioned his works. He also serves as music director of the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company and assistant composer-in-residence for the Orchestra of St. Luke's.

DBR's nine-piece band — DBR & THE MISSION, founded in 2002 — is comprised of young, genre-defying musicians and includes drum kit, keyboard, DJ and laptops as well as an amplified string quartet. The group has performed at venues ranging from the



Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and the Cerritos Center in Los Angeles to New York City's Cutting Room, Bowery Poetry Club and Brooklyn's 651 Arts. In 2006, DBR and DJ Scientific debuted DBR's *Sonata for Violin*

and Turntables at the Melbourne Arts Festival.

For more information about DBR & THE MISSION, please visit www.dbrmusic.com.

Edison Theatre: Edison Theatre's OVATIONS! Series serves both Washington University and the St. Louis community by providing the highest caliber national and international artists in music, dance and theater, performing new works as well as innovative interpretations of classical material not otherwise seen in St. Louis. Focusing on presentations that are interdisciplinary, multicultural and/or experimental, Edison Theatre presents work intended to challenge, educate and inspire. Edison Theatre programs are made possible with support from the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency; the Regional Arts Commission, St. Louis; and the Arts & Education Council of Greater St. Louis.