

Pianist, Composer Don Preston

Joins Faculty at South Pasadena Music Center & Conservatory

Walter Zooli, director and founder of South Pasadena Music Center and Conservatory (SPMCC) announced that acclaimed pianist and composer Don Preston has joined the faculty as a master teacher. Best known for his long collaboration with Frank Zappa as keyboardist and one of the original members of the Mothers of Invention, Preston has performed and recorded with many of the most influential artists in the realms of jazz and new music over the past 50 years. Preston will teach piano and improvisation to a select studio of musicians. Preston will also curate a monthly concert series at South Pasadena Music Center.

Often compared to Cecil Taylor for his style of attacking the keys with intense passion, Preston's solos also reflect intellect, technical skills and a storyteller's way with a line. His playing, like his compositions, ranges across panoramas of mood and emotion, all colored with the freedom that comes from possessing remarkable facility.

Don Preston began his career in Detroit during the early '50s, where he was associated with pianist **Tommy Flanagan**. He also sat in with **Elvin Jones** and others at the city's West End Cafe where **Yusef Lateef** conducted twice-a-week jam sessions with Milt Jackson's brother, bassist **Ollie Jackson**.

Preston moved to Los Angeles in 1957 where he hooked up with pianist **Paul Bley**, bassist **Charlie Haden**, and others who were hearing jazz in new ways.

Preston joined **Frank Zappa** as one of the original members of the **Mothers of Invention** in 1964. Preston performed and recorded with Zappa until 1974. At this time he also worked and recorded with **John Lennon** and **Yoko Ono**, **Carla** and **Paul Bley** among others.

He also has scored more than 20 feature film scores and 14 plays. He's the winner of numerous awards, and has performed with the **Los Angeles Philharmonic** and **London Philharmonic**. Known to jazz and keyboard aficionados for his pioneering contributions in the use of synthesizers and piano, legendary clarinetist and composer **John Carter** dubbed Don Preston the "father of modern synthesis."

In 2002, Don Preston joined forces with fellow M.O.I. **Roy Estrada**, and **Napoleon Murphy Brock**, from three very different legacies of Frank Zappa alumni along with guitarist **Ken Rosser**, and drummer/percussionist **Christopher Garcia** to form the **Grande Mothers Re:Invented**.

Since then they have performed at numerous concerts and festivals throughout America, Canada and Europe, including Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, England, Germany, Holland, Italy, Norway, and Switzerland. (In 2005, guitarist, **Miroslav Tadic** replaced Ken Rosser in the lineup.)

