

Composer, Flutist, Humanitarian Visiting AU as Artist-in-residence

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Alfred, NY -- Award-winning musician, composer, and flutist Leslie Burrs is working with Alfred University students during a residency scheduled to include a lunch-hour forum, a presentation on jazz styles, and a Feb. 20 concert with three University music groups. Burrs, whose residency is part of the University's observance of Black History Month, will work closely with students in the Jazz Ensemble, Chamber Orchestra, and Chamber Singers as they prepare excerpts from his commissioned opera *Vanqui*. These rehearsals will give students the unique opportunity to work directly with the composer on works that have not yet been officially premiered, said Lisa Lantz, assistant professor of Strings and Chamber Orchestra conductor. The public events -- all free and open to all -- are: Thursday, Feb. 18, 12:10 p.m. -- Bergren Forum, Nevins Theater, Powell Campus Center. Thursday, Feb. 18, 7:30 p.m. -- Talk and demonstration of jazz styles and the African influence on jazz with jazz pianist Bobby Jones of Buffalo, Room 301, Miller Performing Arts Center. Saturday, Feb. 20, 8 p.m. -- Concert featuring the AU Chamber Singers, Jazz Ensemble, and Chamber Orchestra as well as Burrs on flute, accompanied by Jones on piano. Burrs was born in 1952 in Philadelphia, where he later founded the Creative Artists' Workshop, whose mission is to foster "interest in lesser-known and minority musicians and composers." A virtuoso flutist, Burrs has appeared with the Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Atlanta orchestras and the Duke Ellington Orchestra. His music fuses traditions to create a new idiom he defines as "urban classical music," which combines classical, African-American, and contemporary styles. Burrs and award-winning poet John A. Williams were commissioned by Opera Columbus (Ohio) to create *Vanqui*, an opera inspired by Greek tragedy and the American history of slavery. He has also received commissions from such diverse sources as Hal Roach and Harvard University for works ranging from string quartets to full operas. The residency is being generously supported by the David Miller Performing Arts Fund, the Division of Performing Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Gene and Pam Bernstein Faculty and Student Development Fund.