

## **Word-Beat with Tom Teasley and Charles Williams: Ensemble Biography**

Word-Beat ([www.word-beat.com](http://www.word-beat.com)) is a critically acclaimed collaboration of spoken word and original music, with percussion artist Tom Teasley and singer/actor Charles Williams. They combine history's greatest words about justice, peace, and life with music inspired by the writer's culture of origin. Poetry and prose from Harlem, the Civil Rights Movement, ancient Africa, India, and the Middle East converge with the energy of jazz, folk, and modern music.

In song and speech, Charles Williams brings to life the words of Martin Luther King, Gandhi, the poet Rumi, Langston Hughes and other writers. Song and spoken word join forces with percussionist Tom Teasley's churning rhythms on an abundance of drums and world instruments – from the djembé that emerged from ancient Africa to the hand drum synthesizer and the latest electronics.

Word-Beat's two CDs have garnered national airplay on radio, high praise among music critics. Word-Beat's first recording, *Poetry, Prose, Percussion and Song* was hailed as one of the most important of its kind at the 2007 International Association for Jazz Education conference. IAJE singled out Word-Beat as a leading collaboration in the integration of poetry and music, calling Word-Beat's recordings "must-haves." The duo's second CD, *The Soul Dances*, was nominated for the Washington Area Music Association's Best World Music Release award.

Each Word-Beat performance offers a unique selection of writings, pulled from a growing repertoire including African proverbs, African-American spirituals, mystic writings of the Sufi Hazrat Inayat Kahn, traditional Egyptian dervish folk songs, and writings from American poets Eloise Greenfield and James Weldon Johnson. The music is freshly improvised for each performance, drawing on Tom Teasley's vast collection of world percussion instruments and his virtuoso command of techniques from Brazil to ancient Persia to West Africa.

As an educational program, Word-Beat can include student poetry or creative writing. Writers at all stages enjoy living proof of the artistic value of their own creative efforts, set to music and spoken aloud in live performance.

Word-Beat thrives on live performance, having appeared at these and many other venues:

- Lincoln Center Institute for Aesthetic Education Kennedy Center, Washington, DC
- Berlin, Germany
- Percussive Arts Society International Convention
- Eastman School of Music
- Brooklyn School of Music, Brooklyn, NY
- Presenters' Showcase, New York, NY
- Augusta Heritage Festival - Davis & Elkins College, WV
- Center for Multi-Cultural Experiences of SUNY, Oneonta, NY

- Garret Lakes Arts Festival, Garret Co., MD
- Pennsylvania State University Campuses
- University of Virginia
- East Coast Jazz Festival

Sample Word-Beat's recordings and learn more at [www.Word-Beat.com](http://www.Word-Beat.com).