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For Immediate Release

Damon Locks & Black Monument Ensemble Announce New Album, *NOW*, Out April 9th (Digitally) and July 9th (Physically) on International Anthem

Watch the Video for “[Now \(Forever Momentary Space\)](#)”



Chicago’s **Black Monument Ensemble** announce a new album, ***NOW***, out **April 9th digitally** and **July 9th physically** on **International Anthem**, and present lead single/video, “**Now (Forever Momentary Space)**.” Originally conceived as a medium for Chicago-based multimedia artist/activist **Damon Locks’** sample-based sound collage work, Black Monument Ensemble has evolved into a vibrant collective of artists, musicians, singers, and dancers making work with common goals of joy, compassion, and intention. Galvanized by Locks’s conceptualizing, poeticizing, and guiding vision, the contributors come from all facets of the

diverse wellspring of Black artistic excellence in Chicago, bringing their unique perspectives and experiences to uplifting, anthemic, and highly animated musical performance.

BME is a genuinely multi-generational collective; ages of the members range from 9 to 52 years old. In addition to Locks, current and consistent BME members include: musicians **Angel Bat Dawid, Ben LaMar Gay, Dana Hall,** and **Arif Smith**; singers **Phillip Armstrong, Monique Golding, Rayna Golding, Tramaine Parker, Richie Parks, Erica Rene,** and **Eric Tre'von**; and dancers **Raven Lewis, Cheyenne Spencer, Mary Thomas, Bryonna Young, Tiarra Young,** and **Keisha Janae.**

NOW, the follow-up to their debut album ***Where Future Unfolds***, was created in the final throes of Summer 2020, following months of pandemic-induced fear and isolation, the explosion of social unrest, struggle and violence in the streets, and as the certain presence of a new reality had fully settled in. Set up safely in the garden behind Chicago's **Experimental Sound Studio**, the music was recorded in only a few takes, capturing the first times members of BME had ever played or sang the tunes. For Locks, the impetus was more about getting together to commune and make art than it was about producing an album. In his words: *"It was about offering a new thought. It was about resisting the darkness. It was about expressing possibility. It was about asking the question, 'Since the future has unfolded and taken a new and dangerous shape...what happens NOW?'"*

For lead single "Now (Forever Momentary Space)", Locks was inspired by *"a short story by writer Cadwell Turnbull called, 'Jump.' The story is about a couple who experience something seemingly impossible and the lengths one of them would go to control that. It ultimately is an investigation in acceptance and imagining what is possible and taking a leap towards it. 'Now (Forever Momentary Space)' is about the moment outside of the timeline where everything is possible. That moment is Now."* The video combines Locks' artwork, documentary footage and photography shot by **Brian Ashby** at the outdoor recording session, and animation by **Rob Shaw**. The video blends the visual world of Locks' art with the very present documentary footage of recording in the heat of the late Summer 2020. *"The video captures the artistic other worldliness that can be invoked through sound and visuals, yet the reality of the present danger of COVID can be seen in the masks everyone has,"* says Locks. *"It is my hope that the video feels rooted in our reality but suggests that we have the materials to manifest something new in the immediate."*

[Watch the Video for "Now \(Forever Momentary Space\)"](#)

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NOW Tracklist

1. Now (Forever Momentary Space)
2. The People Vs The Rest Of Us
3. Keep Your Mind Free
4. Barbara Jones-Hogu And Elizabeth Catlett Discuss Liberation
5. Movement And You
6. The Body Is Electric

Praise for Black Monument Ensemble's debut album *Where Future Unfolds*:

“uplifting activist jazz for tumultuous times.” - *Pitchfork*

“a stunning achievement” - *Bandcamp*

“ [an] extraordinary vocal, rhythm and dance troupe guided by the history of gospel music (especially its role as soundtrack to and conduit of change) and by Chicago’s rich tradition of Black consciousness and socially informed creativity.” - *Afropunk*

“you can let the BME’s joyously uplifting mix of sounds—which includes spiritual-jazz sonorities, hip-hop grooves, gospel harmonies, and sampled field recordings of African folk music—carry you away.” - *Chicago Reader*

[Download hi-res images and jpegs of Black Monument Ensemble](#)



NOW Cover Artwork by Damon Locks

[Bandcamp](#) | [Instagram](#)

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