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EARSHOTJAZZ

A Mirror and Focus for the Jazz Community

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Performing Arts



Cultivating Black Brilliance: A Conversation with Langston's Tim Lennon

Photo by Daniel Sheehan

Actual Optimism

We hope that you and yours are safe and healthy. Congratulations on getting through this past year! Spring comes each year, but this one feels a LOT better than the last one. Here's hoping that the warmer winds will carry a sense of progress and positivity, and the longer allotment of daylight will help us see the way to better circumstances for all. We've still got a long way to go, but it feels like we're getting "on the good foot," as the Godfather of soul would say.

Our livestream concert series this spring has been gratifying on a few levels. We're always glad to engage Seattle's great jazz artists in paid performance opportunities, but these performances have been sweetened by creative reunions that have taken place onstage. In many cases, it has been the first time that musicians have worked together in person for a year or more. And the comments from our audience members during the streams have proven that the joy of the connections is also felt by the viewers. AND, we're finally beginning to invite a small number of audience members into our Town Hall events for May. As always, the health and safety of audience, artists, and crew is foremost. Stay tuned for details.

I've also recently attended a few of the Tuesday night jam sessions at the Owl N' Thistle on Post Alley, downtown, and have been warmed by the music and spirit of connection among the cross-section of musicians. The long-running sessions at Owl N' Thistle absolutely embody the greater jazz continuum, providing a chance for younger musicians and those new to the scene, to meet each other, make music, and learn on the bandstand from the more established masters of our community. It's a quality hang, to be sure, and jazz to the bone.

We'd like to extend a special welcome to Rayna Mathis, who joins the Earshot team this month as the new editor of this magazine. Welcome, Rayna!! This will be fun!

Earshot Jazz is proud to be an active part of this resilient jazz community, and of Seattle's greater cultural community. The work that we do, whether through concert production, artist support, or this monthly *Earshot Jazz* magazine (which has been available around the city all through the pandemic), is all about supporting the artists, audiences, educators, and presenters of this incredible jazz community. And, we do it with your financial support. We hope that you'll join us again this month when the GiveBIG campaign sweeps across the city.

Please make a donation to Earshot Jazz this month, whether through GiveBIG, the mail, or on earshot.org. Become a member and we'll hook you up with the monthly Earshot magazine and discounts to our concerts.

As always, we thank you for your support!

—John Gilbreath, Executive Director



John Gilbreath photo by Bill Uznay

A Mirror and Focus for the Jazz Community

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MISSION STATEMENT

To ensure the legacy and progression of the art form, Earshot Jazz cultivates a vibrant jazz community by engaging audiences, celebrating artists, and supporting arts education.

New Earshot Jazz Editor

Earshot Jazz Magazine is excited to announce their new editor, Rayna Mathis. Rayna (she/her) is a graduate of The University of Washington with a Bachelor of Arts in History. Her work at the Seattle Art Museum as a museum educator seeks to amplify the work and voices of teen artists and activists. In her spare time, Rayna can be found tending to her Little Library in Beacon Hill, outside of The Station Coffee Shop.

Stepping down from her post as editor, Lucienne Aggarwal continues in her role as Marketing and Development Associate for Earshot Jazz.

John Dimitriou, 2021 Seattle Jazz Hero

John Dimitriou, the owner and visionary behind Seattle's famous concert and restaurant venue Jazz Alley, is the recipient of the 2021 Jazz Journalists Association Jazz Heroes Award. Open for just over 40 years, Jazz Alley features notable jazz artists from across the nation and the globe. Originally located in the University District, in the mid-80's the club moved to its current location at 6th and Lenora. As well as showcasing word-class jazz, Dimitriou is known for his community service efforts. With the nonprofit Pacific Jazz Institute, Dimitriou offered "Meet the Masters" weekend workshops, especially aimed at low-income students. More recently, when the pandemic hit and Dimitriou was forced to close Jazz Alley, he re-tooled his expansive restaurant kitchen, and in conjunction with Northwest Food Alliance, the Seattle Council of Churches, and other public service organizations, utilized the space to produce and distribute nearly 100,000 free meals to those in need.

Dimitriou is eager to restart concerts once COVID-19 restrictions have been sufficiently eased. With safety in mind, Dimitriou recently remodeled the venue with a new ventilation system, privacy shields on the stage, more spaced out seating, hands-free faucets and soap dispensers in the bathrooms, among many other measures. Upcoming concerts from

June onwards include Lisa Fischer with Taylor Eigsti, Najee, Kenny G, and Maceo Parker, among others. To find out more about John Dimitriou and Jazz Alley visit jazzalley.com.

Roosevelt High School Jazz Selected for Essentially Ellington

Roosevelt High School, along with their band director, Scott Brown, was the only Seattle area school to be selected for the 26th annual Essentially Ellington Festival. In previous years, several area schools have been selected. While Garfield High School

Jazz did not enter themselves for selection this year, it's easy to speculate that the pandemic-induced shutdown of schools has made it difficult for bands to practice together. This year's Essentially Ellington Festival will be broadcast virtually, from June 4–5. For a full list of finalists, visit academy.jazz.org/ee.

Vivian Hua and Northwest Film Forum Receive Mayor's Award

Mayor Jenny Durkan awarded Vivian Hua and Northwest Film Forum (NWFF) the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

"Earshot Serves as Platform for Thriving Seattle Scene" —DOWNBEAT



Josh Hou, Sara Heng, Raymond Larsen, Mark Hunter



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Cultivating Black Brilliance: A Conversation with Langston's Tim Lennon

PAUL RAUCH

The professional résumé of Langston Director, Tim Lennon, reads like an honor roll of groundbreaking, difference-making cultural organizations in Seattle: The Vera Project, One Reel, Seattle Center Foundation, and the Office of Arts & Culture are among the nonprofit and public sector organizations that have benefited from his caring expertise and dedication to task.

The task he faces as Director of Langston is to cultivate Black brilliance by sharing Black culture, promoting artistic expression and excellence, facilitating cultural education, and inspiring leadership in a thriving self-determined community. Housed in the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute in Seattle's historically Black Central District, jazz has played an integral part in exemplifying the values Lennon, Program Manager Jazmyn Scott, and the Langston organization as a whole have strived to portray.

The challenges faced while traversing life during what feels like a 100-year pandemic falls especially hard on organizations like Langston, whose service to the community is so largely based on in-house creative participation. Lennon and the Langston staff wrestled with how to present programs outside of the physical space and how to begin to transition to an online identity.

The organization notably postponed the 2020 Seattle Black Film Festival from its traditional April dates to July in order to gather the necessary tools and expertise to pull off a virtual transition. Unsurprisingly, the event was a huge success thanks to the patience and dedication of the Langston staff. It enabled them to present the festival virtually with a degree of expertise that only experience can lend. "It turned out to be a huge success. What we found out through going online was that not only



Tim Lennon photo by Daniel Sheehan

were we able to connect with our regular audiences, but we actually expanded our audiences in quite a few interesting ways," recalls Lennon.

The benefits of the virtual presentation became immediately apparent. Gone were travel and lodging expenses for performers. Artists from all over the world became more accessible. Most importantly, it enabled Langston to reach a wider audience than a live performance would have allowed. Patrons with accessibility issues could receive the programming at home, relieving them of the difficulty of accessing the multi-tiered Langston building. Those who

found it difficult to make it into town from outlying areas could now join as well. "We invested a lot in internet infrastructure, and worked out some of the kinks of live streaming programming," says Lennon.

The resulting success created a means to provide hybrid programming going forward. They gained the ability to plan a live event, and switch at the drop of a hat to virtual if the need were to arise again, a skill set that plays large in the uncertainty of the months ahead in 2021. The 2021 Seattle Black Film Festival was also a streaming event. The 18th edition of the festival ran April 16–26.

Over the course of 2020, Langston partnered with renowned author, Ijeoma Oluo, to form the Seattle Artist Relief Fund with the aim of mobilizing community support for local artists in light of the pandemic and venue shutdowns. The fund has been able to provide emergency cash assistance to artists unable to perform on area stages. “In the past twelve months, we have been

for the better part of a century. The very essence of Langston’s jazz programming is the simple fact that jazz is Black music, a cultural truth not always represented on area stages and in the local award-winning high school programs that feature mostly white musicians. Exposing young Black artists to the likes of Bartz, Maupin, and Horn is a huge step in bringing jazz music

a daily basis, Langston struggled whether to put out anything at all in terms of a statement. “We didn’t need to say Black Lives Matter, because our whole M.O. has been to cultivate black brilliance and to focus on Black arts, Black artists, and Black audiences. We didn’t feel any need to preach to the choir, because we were the choir. We’re going to keep doing what we do, which is making and holding space for Black art and Black artists,” states Lennon.

By gathering together the remarkable diversity of ideas that define Langston’s strong and positive presence in the Seattle arts community, its stated aims can really be stripped down to one essential characterization: to provide a home for the entire Black diaspora. At a time when there is a wealth of Black artistry in the city, they provide not only space and opportunity, but the focus of community elders to provide guidance and inspiration for Black culture to thrive generationally. It does so with an open armed and welcoming approach that invites participation and innovation. Lennon is the perfect guiding and facilitating force due to his personal awareness of, and

“In the past twelve months, we have been able to raise and distribute over 1.1 million dollars to individual artists in Washington state”

able to raise and distribute over 1.1 million dollars to individual artists in Washington state,” says Lennon happily.

Langston has celebrated Seattle’s rich jazz history in the Central District by presenting a number of performances annually during the Earshot Jazz Festival. Jazz presented in the magnificence of Langston’s unique sanctuary of sound is emblematic of the rich history of the genre in Seattle dating back to the nation’s earliest fully integrated jazz scene on Jackson Street in the 1920s. Modern jazz masters from Seattle and around the globe have graced the institute’s stage. The past two years alone have seen international stars such as Jazzmeia Horn, Gary Bartz, Eric Revis, Nasheet Waits, Bernie Maupin, Brandee Younger, and Sullivan Fortner appear on the Langston stage. Local stalwarts Kassa Overall, D’Vonne Lewis, Deems Tsutakawa, Gary Hammon, and Alex Dugdale are among Seattle’s jazz masters who have also dazzled on this stage.

In addition to the Earshot Jazz Festival, Langston lends support to the annual Jackson Street Jazz Walk, featuring an all-Seattle cast. The programming supported at these two events clearly underscores the Black roots and, in turn, the Black future of jazz music. It reminds us that jazz is social music, nurtured by fellowship and community. This very sophisticated and expressive art form has been sustained by the oral tradition in Black communities across America

back to young Black audiences.

Langston’s Program Manager, Jazmyn Scott, serves as the perfect counterpoint to Lennon’s directorship. She has deep roots in the Central District and Seattle’s hip-hop scene, both in modern and historical terms. Her energy and diverse skill set is

“Our whole M.O. has been to cultivate black brilliance and to focus on Black arts, Black artists, and Black audiences”

an elemental force in Langston’s impact in the community. “She basically grew up in this building. She’s really the heart and soul of everything we do here. She’s the next generation of arts leaders in this community. It’s a privilege to work with her on a daily basis,” remarks Lennon. “The two of us are the Bert and Ernie of this organization, and I’m definitely the Bert!”

While the arts world—Langston included—was focused on innovation to survive the impact of the pandemic, the death of George Floyd and the resulting fight for justice per the Black Lives Matter movement emerged. The nationwide movement took center stage, prompting statements from arts and culture organizations from coast to coast. During the months of May and June, at a time when Seattleites had taken to the streets by the thousands on

commitment to, the enduring cultural legacy of the historically Black Central District community and beyond. Lennon believes the very first step is to create a welcoming vibe to all that enter the building or access programming online. “Whether you are in the LGBTQ community, a refugee, a recent arrival from Africa or from Oakland—we want you to feel as at home here as much as somebody whose family was in the CD fifty years ago,” he says. “Black culture is Black survival. Whether we’re talking jazz, any of the performing arts, visual arts, church, or a cookout. It’s all how we’ve survived this country this long. Keeping space open for Black art, a room available for a community to gather in celebration and mourning, in mind-blowing new experimental art, or just to see an old movie together—that’s a revolutionary act.”

Paul Rucker: Preserving Black History in the Central District

The Central District is often acknowledged as a historically Black neighborhood. And, to a degree this is true. The Central District was also known for its thriving Jewish and Asian communities, and before that, as we know, the lands originally belonged to the Duwamish peoples. Yet, over time, as the tech industry boomed, it meant that through economic violence those same communities were pushed out of the neighborhoods they had called home for generations. However, what has survived despite these acts is a small, but mighty, community that still advocates for the preservation of its history and maintaining Black presence in this legendary neighborhood. One of those advocates is Paul Rucker.

In 1998, South Carolina-raised composer, musician, and visual artist, Paul Rucker, moved to Seattle where he first settled in the Central District. In 2019, his building was sold and Rucker moved his studio to White Center after 19 years on Jackson Street. His artistic practice is devoted to investigating community impacts, human rights issues, historical research, and basic human emotions. “As a self-proclaimed civilized society, we need to understand that economic violence is the most socially acceptable form of racism,” says Rucker.

Between 1900–1980 segregation and the redlining of Seattle restricted and separated communities, but despite that, Jackson Street was one of the few spaces that those barriers seemed to melt away.



Photo by Lara Swimmer

It saw the comingling of people from all communities. Rucker seeks to disrupt the Eurocentric standard that for so long has controlled the narrative for what is and isn't seemingly important enough to discuss, remember, and honor. The intentionality behind his work makes it more than just a visual piece to be admired for a fleeting moment. It is an invitation for all, whether you grew up here or not, to dig deeper into the history of this neighborhood.

So now, let's take a journey up Jackson Street. Board the #7 or the streetcar that will take you part of the way up the long, steep street. There, at 23rd & Jackson, you will find a 12-foot-wide granite 78rpm record and turntable embedded into the concrete plaza of the Jackson Apartments. 78 is a public art piece dedicated to the

legacy of the 70 artists and 32 venues that once existed along Jackson Street. Rucker was especially intent on honoring the lesser-known performers that were still vital contributors to the city's jazz scene. Next, take a seat on the 2,800-pound tonearm bench or stand in the center of the record. Pause for a moment, let the world around you slow, and witness each name that is etched into the ground (or, the grooves of the record).

Rucker's piece was the last to be installed at the Jackson Apartments, which are owned by Vulcan Real Estate. Now, 78 sits proudly among the other publicly accessible works by the additional artists commissioned by Vulcan, including Yadesa Zewge Bojia, Marita Dingus, Esther Ervin, Ari Glass, Aramis O. Hamer, Preston Hampton, El-

Paul Rucker: *FOREVER* at BIMA

Paul Rucker's *FOREVER* series is now on display at the Bainbridge Museum of Art. Inspired by the Forever stamps produced by the United States Postal Service, Rucker created the series to acknowledge and memorialize civil rights martyrs who have not and might not appear on U.S. postage stamps. One of the subjects of Rucker's work in this series is Edwin T. Pratt, a civil rights leader from the South who moved to Seattle and was the head of the Seattle Urban League until he was murdered at his home in 1969. Rucker also explores the lives of Carole Robertson, Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley, and Denise McNair—the four girls who were murdered at the 16th Street Baptist Church bombings in Alabama in 1963. The *FOREVER* series is available to explore until June 15. Visit biartmuseum.org for details.

isheba Johnson, Ashby Reed, and Xavier Roache. The website 78onJackson.com includes an interactive image of the art piece that expands on each name in 78 along with an artist talk. The research for the project was assisted by Paul de Barros, a historian, journalist, and legend in his own right who brought this story to the public's attention in the 1990s, with his book, *Jackson Street After Hours*. Rucker's current exhibition, *FOREVER*, is also on view at the Bainbridge Island Museum of Art through June 15. To learn more about Paul Rucker visit his website at paulrucker.com or keep up with him on social media.

—Rayna Mathis



CATCHING UP WITH GORDON BROWN

When Life Gives You Lemons: Gordon Brown's Big Pandemic Pivot

"The pandemic has been devastating to me as a musician," saxophonist Gordon Brown doesn't sugarcoat. "I know, through talking to others that I'm not alone." Brown's saxophone has been in its case for much of the last year because of COVID, despite being a prolific performer and member of several outfits including his own band, The True Loves, and touring groups like The Dip and the Polyrythmics.

"Before the pandemic I was in love with the stage and performing for people." Brown, in fact, has played for a lot of people, including during his time as a band member of the Atlanta Falcons football team. "When [performing on stage] was taken away it felt like I lost part of my identity," he says. He doesn't sugarcoat, at all. "Even hearing music has become a painful reminder of a former life. I miss it terribly."

What does one do in the absence of the thing you do that you love more than anything? How does one adapt from being a live musician to not being able to perform live music at all? For Brown, instead of putting his fingers on his saxophone's keys, he put them on a keyboard and a mouse. Doing so, he created LoudSwell, a site designed to help struggling artists. Through the pandemic, he says he witnessed many musicians, such as himself, adapt and embrace technology that enables remote collaboration and performance. With LoudSwell, that adaptation and embracing is in full swing.

The site grew out of necessity. As Washington began enforcing lockdowns at the beginnings of the pandemic, Skerik Band, for which Brown also plays, had a sudden cancelation and the tour, for which they had put money into, ended abruptly. To recoup costs they livestreamed from Skerik's home studio to encourage donations. And thus, LoudSwell was born. With lemons, Brown had made lemonade.

"I leaned on my background in technology," he says. It was a career, ironically, Brown



Gordon Brown photo by David McGraw

gave up to become a full-time musician. “I built a website that makes livestreams free to watch without any registration and can take tip donations via PayPal in a couple of clicks.” Additionally a chat moderator acknowledges donations and provides information about the show in real-time. Simultaneously, the show is broadcast to all of the artist’s social media channels.

After the initial Skerik Band livestream, Brown began receiving calls from local musicians eager to tap into his expertise. He incorporated and built a team around the site. Now, his focus is to help other musicians livestream and earn money doing so.

As of this writing, LoudSwell has helped

over 200 bands, artists, and venues livestream and earn over \$195,000 for shows that have been viewed by 375,000 people. Brown notes, “Artists have been earning an average of \$750 an hour by streaming with us, which is astonishing.” Artists, through LoudSwell, have relied on audiences to earn a living and the ever loyal scene has delivered. Relying on the generosity of viewers has been a success. “We rarely see this kind of transparency in artist compensation,” Brown says. “We hope it has a lasting positive effect on musician pay.”

Perhaps the end of COVID is in sight as vaccines continue to be rolled out. Lockdowns are easing up, and gradually being lifted. Brown cannot wait to

play again. “I’ve been dreaming about the first post-COVID gig.” He imagines countless musicians are having the same dream—one that feels surreal but that he knows will bring about ultimate euphoria. Despite LoudSwell being a product born of the pandemic, Brown assures it’s not going anywhere. No, he expects LoudSwell to swell and swell again. “The approach really works,” he says. “I’m eager to bring more artists and venues to the platform.”

Silver linings to the pandemic? Brown didn’t find many. No silver, perhaps, but thirsty artists, thanks to his LoudSwell site, have at least seen some green. Lemonade, indeed.

—Jonathan Shipley

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CENTRUM.ORG/JAZZ

Photo: Anat Cohen

**2021
ONLINE**

Earshot Jazz Livestream Series at The Royal Room

Each Friday evening our livestream concert series continues, airing directly from the Royal Room, Columbia City. Celebrating some of Seattle's most talented musicians, the series is free to air on the Earshot Jazz YouTube channel. Check earshot.org for details.



Josh Hou photo by Rosanna Sze

Friday, May 7, 7:30pm PDT
Josh Hou Quartet

Josh Hou is an accordionist, keyboardist, and composer who explores multiple musical genres including Chinese jazz, swing, and funk. Two of his projects include How Short, a swing band with vocal harmonies and the Tiny Funk Band. A recent Golden Ear Award-winner as founder and co-host of the podcast series Jazztalk Seattle, Hou is adamant about amplifying the voices of fellow-local jazz artists. Joining Hou are talented musicians—bassist Kelsey Mines, trumpeter Ray Larsen, and drummer Tai Taitano—who accompanied him on his most recent release, *Feeling of Home*.



Kelley Johnson photo by Ziggy Spiz

Friday, May 14, 7:30pm PDT
Kelley Johnson

Known for her lithe, velvety voice and her dynamic arrangements, Kelley Johnson is a sought after-vocalist both here and abroad. “Kelley Johnson has an uplifting brightness in her vocal delivery...Her lovely voice stands out for its emphatic clarity and for its direct approach” (J. Santella, AllAboutJazz.com). Keen to pass on her skills, Johnson served as a professor at Cornish College, and now teaches privately. An award-winning vocalist, Johnson will be joined by these stellar artists—pianist John Hansen, bassist Michael Glynn, and drummer Xavier Lecouturier.



Hans Teuber photo by Daniel Sheehan

Friday, May 21, 7:30pm PDT
Hans Teuber Trio

A mainstay in the Seattle jazz scene for over 30 years, Hans Teuber, who was recently inducted into the Seattle Jazz Hall of Fame, performs admirably and expertly across multiple jazz genres on numerous instruments including the alto and tenor saxophone, clarinet, and flute. “One of the things I have always admired most about Hans’ playing is that he always sounds like himself. It doesn’t matter what kind of gig he’s playing, or what style of music” (Thomas Marriott). Joining Teuber are the inimitable bassist Geoff Harper and one of Seattle’s first-call drummers, Byron Vannoy.



True Loves photo by Morgen Schuler

Friday, May 28, 7pm PDT
True Loves

Celebrating the release of their newest album *Sunday Afternoon*, the Seattle-based funk and soul octet, True Loves will be delivering some hard funk and energetic grooves. The ensemble includes drummer David McGraw, bassist Bryant Moore, and guitarist Jimmy James, as well as percussionist Iván Galvez, along with trombonists Jason Cressey and Greg Kramer, and saxophonists Gordon Brown and Skerik. Unlike the previous events listed, this event will be livestreamed from the Royal Room Seattle through LoudSwell.

Earshot Jazz Live at Town Hall

Earshot Jazz and Town Hall Seattle continue their livestream collaboration. Hear from resident and nationally renowned artists, two Saturdays a month. Tickets start from \$15 and free tickets are available for youth 22 and under. All Town Hall concerts are available to watch/rewatch for 5 days from air date. For more information go to earshot.org.



Thomas Marriott photo courtesy of the artist

Saturday May 15, 7:30PM PDT

Thomas Marriott Quartet

Top-tier Seattle jazz at its finest. Trumpet sensation Thomas Marriott leads an all-star quartet featuring Marc Seales on piano, Chuck Deardorf on bass, and Stefan Schatz on drums. Marriott's rise, from the Garfield High School and University of Washington jazz programs and on to national prominence, embodies the excellence of Seattle's respected jazz ecosystem. After a solid Seattle start, Marriott earned his chops living in New York, playing with jazz greats such as Tito Puente, Chico O'Farrill, and Maynard Ferguson. Marriott continues to collaborate with contemporary masters like Orrin Evans and Joe Locke. Back home in Seattle, as well as steering his own ensembles, Marriott has played as a soloist with the Seattle Repertory Jazz Orchestra for over 20 seasons. Marriott's undeniable talent and versatility shine through on every occasion.



Marina Albero photo by Daniel Sheehan

Saturday May 29, 7:30PM PDT

Marina Albero Trio

Raised in Barcelona, now a Seattle resident, the piano virtuoso Marina Albero navigates thrillingly among Spanish, flamenco, Cuban, and jazz styles in her inventive trio with bassist Jeff Johnson and drummer D'Vonne Lewis. Endlessly creative as a composer and improviser, Albero is also a master of the hammered dulcimer. Committed to the local jazz community Albero, recently received a special Golden Ear Community in Action Award for her efforts to support her fellow musicians afflicted by the demise of live music by producing "The Quarantine Sessions," a streaming concert series. Expect expressive and dynamic excellence from this well-honed trio who've played on albums and performed together for years.

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Lake Chelan Wine and Jazz Festival

May 20-23

Various venues

Lake Chelan Wine Valley, WA

As life gradually emerges from pandemic-induced confinement, the Lake Chelan Wine and Jazz Festival celebrates its third anniversary with a top-notch lineup of nationally and globally renowned jazz artists. Festival pass holders revel in four days of 23 outdoor musical offerings held at ten idyllic wineries and venues nestled along the picturesque Lake Chelan Wine Valley. Lake Chelan AVA wines and various food options are available at each music venue during the performances.

Launching the festivities, nationally acclaimed flugelhornist **Dmitri Matheny** with fellow Earshot Jazz Golden Ear Award winners **Bill Anschell** (pianist), **Jeff Johnson** (bassist), **D'Vonne Lewis** (drummer), and vocalist **Holly Pyle** set alight the stage highlighting the music of Stevie Wonder. As the festival continues into the evening, hear from fabulous vocalist and Golden Ear Award winner **Stephanie Porter**, whose soulful and silky voice has been appreciated at clubs and festivals throughout the Northwest.

On Friday, the fearless, immensely talented, and boundlessly versatile **Greta Matassa** takes the stage. Matassa has toured across the globe and was voted best Northwest jazz vocalist seven times and inducted into the Seattle Jazz Hall of Fame. With 11 albums to her name, her latest release *Portrait* is receiving rave reviews. Seattle pianist **Collin Provence**, who plays with the Jim Cutler Jazz Orchestra, Smith Staelens Big Band, and Roadside Attractions Band, leads a trio at Lake Chelan, melding an eclectic mix of jazz standards, upbeat melodies, and modern tunes. The **Kobie Watkins Grouptet** is a surge of musical groove and melody. Chicago native drummer, percussionist, and mentor Watkins has cultivated dynamic relationships with his peers in and out of the jazz, Latin, and



Greta Matassa photo by Ziggy Spiz



D'Vonne Lewis photo by Daniel Sheehan

gospel communities. He toured internationally and collaborated with many jazz legends including Sonny Rollins, Bobby Broom, Kurt Elling, Joe Lovano, Branford Marsalis, and Terence Blanchard.

Next, we head into the weekend with **Doctorfunk**. Established in 1995, they have set the standard for new soul music in the Pacific Northwest. Echoing the legendary passion of famed horn band Tower of Power and channeling that "Bay Area Sound," this 10-piece ensemble has maintained

the tradition and more. **Deseo Carmin** also graces the Saturday stage. Carmin is a dancer, singer, songwriter, guitarist, and percussionist showcasing Flamenco-infused jazz and funk. At age 15, she joined the National Ballet Folklorico Municipal of Asuncion, Paraguay and became a principal dancer. She represented her country as an ambassador of the Paraguayan culture in festivals worldwide.

Seattle Jazz Hall of Fame inductee **Bill Anschell** returns with his brilliant trio

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on Sunday. Then, the 18-musician **Ellensburg Big Band** takes the festival home by creating sounds energized by the sheer joy of making good music with good friends. Most band members are alumni of Central Washington University's outstanding jazz program.

Whether straight-ahead jazz, soul, funk, or international rhythms, the festival offers a rich palette of sounds to concert guests.

Complying with COVID-19 guidelines, all events are held outdoors with social distancing measures in place and attendance capped at 50 percent. Masks are required at all times, unless eating or drinking.

Thursday night's performances are 21+ while Friday, Saturday, and Sunday concerts are open to all ages. Sunday shows are free.

Visit chelanwinejazz.com for a complete schedule, artist, ticketing and other information.

—Marianne Gonterman



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FESTIVAL LINEUP

THURSDAY, MAY 20

Dmitri Matheny Quartet
The New Triumph
Stephanie Porter
Danny Quintero

FRIDAY, MAY 21

Dmitri Matheny Quartet
Cascadia Groove
Stephanie Porter
Collin Provence Trio
DoctorfunK
Kobie Watkins Grouptet
Danny Quintero
Greta Matassa

SATURDAY, MAY 22

Cascadia Groove
Greta Matassa
Collin Provence Trio
Kobie Watkins Grouptet
Susan Robinson
Deseo Carmin
DoctorfunK
BroHamm

SUNDAY, MAY 23

Bill Anschell Standards Trio
Ellensburg Big Band

2021 Mayor's Film Award for Outstanding Achievement in Film. Hua, a writer, filmmaker, organizer and executive director of NWFF since October 2018, is noted for her passionate efforts to preserve cultural space, center work in equity and inclusion, and disrupt oppressive structures. NWFF, a nonprofit film and arts center, presents hundreds of films, community events, and multidisciplinary performances each year. Additionally, during the past year in response to the pandemic, NWFF developed critical online programs and webinars to help support filmmakers. For details follow the link to seattle.gov/filmandmusic/film/mayors-film-award.

Save the Date for the 2021 Vancouver International Jazz Festival

The Coastal Jazz and Blues Society in Vancouver, B.C., will be holding their annual festival from June 25–July 4. Last year, Coastal Jazz canceled their festival due to the onset of the pandemic. In a bid to abide by local public health restrictions, the 2021 festival will have a strong streaming focus and feature mainly artists from B.C. For more information visit coastaljazz.ca.

ArtsFund New COVID-19 Relief Grants

ArtsFund, contracted by the State of Washington Department of Commerce, will administer a one-time Nonprofit Community Recovery grant program, which will offer over \$10 million to support Washington nonprofits. This program will target nonprofits with critical operation needs to help prevent their closure and provide support for their reopening. As well as offering relief to arts, cultural, science, and heritage nonprofits, organizations such as neighborhood associations and youth sports and recreation organizations will be eligible to apply. The application portal is due to open on May 10, and will be open for two weeks, with grant decisions announced in June. For details visit artsfund.org.

4Culture Capacity Building Grants

The 4Culture Building For Equity: Capacity Building Grants help to invest in

an organization's development by allowing them to secure their long-term facility needs. Grants of up to \$25,000 are intended to help organizations lease, acquire, repair, remodel, or construct suitable space for their programming. This fund prioritizes historically underserved communities in King County. To be eligible, organizations must have 501(c)(3) status or be fiscally sponsored by such an organization. The application for this grant is due May 28; for details, visit 4culture.org.

Washington Blues Society Announces Awardees

The Washington Blues Society held their 30th Annual Best of The Blues Awards on April 18 and have now announced the awardees. The Male Vocalist Award was granted to Joel Astley, the Female Vocalist Award went to Lady A, the Electric Blues Guitar went to Rafael Tranquilino, the Blues Piano/Keyboard Award went to Jimmy Holden, and the Best Virtual New Blues Act was awarded to High Note Group. For a full list of recipients visit their website at wablues.org.

Solarium Creative Works—Artist Residencies

Owner of Crybaby Studios, Leigh Stone founded Solarium Creative Works, a nonprofit that offers Crybaby Studios Residencies—a quarterly residency that provides an artist or group with a rehearsal studio and resources. With a focus on

underrepresented groups, the residency provides creatives studio space, without the burden of paying rent. Potentially, this offers artists the opportunity to perform independent work or to record an album. The residency also offers to help artists with grant applications. Crybaby Studios, located in Seattle, was established in 1999. To find out more about the residencies, visit solariumcreative.works.

Shuttered Venue Operator Grant Delayed

Signed into law in December 2020, the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) was due to open for application on April 8, but was delayed until April 24. Administered by the Small Business Association, the delay was attributed to technical glitches. The SVOG program includes over \$16 billion in grants to shuttered venues, with grants offered on a first come, first served basis. For details visit sba.gov.

Earshot Jazz Writers

Earshot Jazz invites you to join our team of dedicated writers who contribute each month to documenting the rich Seattle jazz scene. With each issue, we celebrate the talent of our resident artists and the vibrancy of our city's arts and culture—but we need your help.

Earshot Jazz seeks writers of all levels and backgrounds to help us continue to tell our stories. Get in touch at editor@earshot.org.

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Photo by Richard Walker

MEET THE BOARD

John W. Comerford

Continuing our series, Earshot Jazz would like to introduce you to our board members. They're a group whose work often goes unnoticed by the broader public, but we value their expertise and their dedication to Earshot Jazz. This month, please meet John Comerford.

Board Member since '14 Sentient Being (born into this world as he/him)

During my tenure of service at Earshot Jazz I have served as vice president and now serve in a general board capacity after moving out of the Salish Sea region, which was my home for more than two decades. Now in the Bay Area I am further experiencing the art form's West Coast offerings.

My journey onto the board began with interviewing our longstanding Executive Director John Gilbreath for our documentary series and feature film, *Icons Among Us: Jazz in the Present Tense*. John joined a chorus of artists and advocates such as Robin Kelley, Paul de Barros, Wendy Oxenhorn, and Ashley Kahn who chimed in on the state of the music in the post-Ken Burns *Jazz* era at the turn of the millennium.

A decade down the road from our initial release the series has now surfaced again on Quincy Jones' QWEST TV with the interviews and performances by: Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Dianne Reeves, Terence Blanchard, Wynton Marsalis, Robert Glasper, Esperanza Spalding, Ravi Coltrane, Jason Moran, Greg Osby, Tineke Postma, The Bad Plus, Brian Blade & The Fellowship Band, Anat Cohen, Charlie Hunter, Vijay Iyer, Jessica Lurie, Richard Bona, Medeski Martin & Wood with John Scofield, and Dirty Dozen Brass Band to name a few.

Filming for a decade with local co-directors Lars Larson and Pete Vogt along with co-producers B.e. Dahlia and Theo Ianuly, we assembled sounds and images from familiar local venues such as Dimitriou's Jazz Alley, the Moore Theatre, and eclectic festival mainstay Bumbershoot. Outside

of weaving John Gilbreath's voice into the tapestry of our four-part series, we were able to present a number of post-release "Icons Among Us" concerts at MoPOP's



John Comerford with Anat Cohen photo courtesy of John Comerford

Level Three Theater including both local artists such as Industrial Revelation and featured unit players from the series such as Kendrick Scott, Gerald Clayton, and Ben Williams.

As of late, in addition to a digital series archive collaboration with Earshot, I helped shepherd a multi-year commitment to provide youth audience development. As a filmmaker who has served on the boards of SIFF, Northwest Film Forum, and currently on the KNKX Community Advisory Council, Earshot has a special place given my predilection for the intersection of music and motion pictures.

My childhood growing up in New York City in the '70s and '80s set the stage for a lifelong desire to engage the life affirming benefits of live music. Starting with the punk rock vanguard which included stalwarts such as San Francisco's Dead Kennedys and Washington D.C.'s Minor Threat and journeying into electro-jug

band sojourns such as the Grateful Dead, I found myself on a spring evening at the Village West with a two-drink minimum for my first jazz performance ushered in by

Ron Carter & Jim Hall. Knowing by night's end this was a golden thread of music—authentic, skilled, passionate, and voraciously engaging—I followed it right down the rabbit hole to the second line brass of New Orleans and ultimately co-created a volume of work with *Icons Among Us* that elevates a number of living generations of jazz musicians.

Since the art form is permanently tied into the NOW, I believe that my work as a filmmaker and arts advocate will always be in the key of jazz. The notes of presentism, reliance on heat of the moment discoveries, are all backed by a desire to release storytelling energy

via observation, conversation and discovery. An elder jazz performer was heard to say that in showbusiness nothing happens, till something happens, then everything happens! That could not be truer in this day-and-age with a side note that communities like Earshot are lynchpins to regional culture and creativity. All attributable to our devoted audiences who possess notable listening skills and are prepared at the drop of hat to navigate good times and not so good times with the gift of jazz music.

P.S. Pianist and Small's New York club owner Spike Wilner gets the coda here from a 2018 Jazz Congress panel at Jazz at Lincoln Center. When it came time for him to speak after twenty-minutes of other panelists weighing in, he met the eyes of most everyone in the room and in an extended silence and let loose "we all know what's really going on here, it's a spiritual pursuit." Join us for an Earshot performance and judge for yourself...

FOR THE RECORD

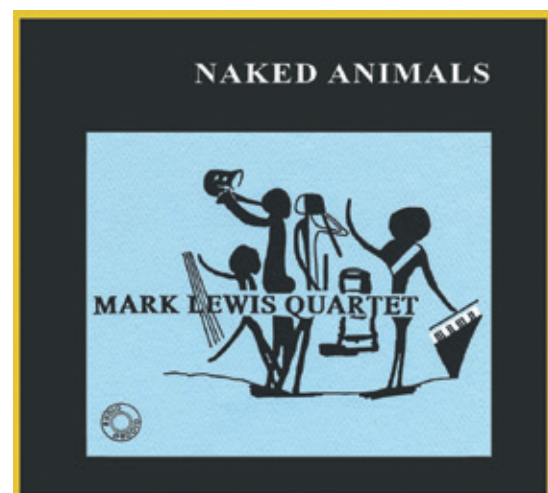
Mark Lewis Quartet *Naked Animals*

AUDIO DADDIO

Born in Tacoma in 1958 and raised on a farm outside Gig Harbor, reed man Mark Lewis began to make a name for himself locally as a quietly avant-garde player in the mid '70s. In 1978, he moved to Holland, where he stayed 14 years before returning to the Northwest. *Naked Animals* features tracks recorded in Holland in 1990 by one of Lewis' European bands, with Willem Kühne (piano), James Long (bass), and Frans van Grinsven (drums).

A distinctive original who doesn't hew to traditionally choppy, chromatic bebop lines, Lewis plays alto with a light, golden sound and legato phrasing that occasionally recalls Paul Desmond or Art Pepper. He produces a full, robust, silvery tone from the flute. *Naked Animals* features eight tracks, all originals. It starts out low-key,

with the pretty "Moon Flower" and the waltz, "Mercurian Romance," builds energy on "Ghost of a Chance" (not the standard with a similar name), then explodes on the title track, also in three, as Lewis wails in the high register over rumbling bass and drums. The lovely ballad, "A Dance With Monique," shows off the luster of Lewis' flute sound, which includes a breathy little "catch" in the manner of Rahsaan Roland Kirk. "City Slicker" slows things back down, "4-D" features speedy walking bass and a couple of Pepperish clusters. The closer, "The Seven Angels" moves from a happy, pretty melody to a conversational, avant-ish double solo by alto and piano before coming home to the melody. Pianist Kühne is by turns lively and atmospheric, bassist Long plays with crisp vigor (though his sound can be a bit nasal at times), and the always-supportive drummer van



Grinsven creates an exciting skein of sound with Long's vamp on "Naked."

Before the pandemic, Lewis was performing regularly in Ballard. Hopefully, when it's over, he'll be playing some of this music there.

—Paul de Barros

Meridian Odyssey *Second Wave*

ORIGIN RECORDS

All five musicians in the marvelous new quintet Meridian Odyssey are familiar in Seattle, but fans may be surprised to learn that the group got together not here, but in Alaska, where guitarist Martin Budde grew up, the son of a bush pilot. Making the best of the musical shutdown forced by COVID-19, the five young men joined Budde up north, where they set up an ad hoc recording studio in an airplane hangar. There, they recorded an album that soars, free-falls, does the loop de loop and a whole lot more.

With a mysterious, distant, quietly electrified sound that evokes the '60s and '70s work of such figures such as John Abercrombie and Jack DeJohnette, Meridian Odyssey essays six originals and one composition by veteran Seattle composer Jim Knapp. The music is complex, deftly arranged and delivered with grace and relaxed abandon.

All of the tracks exude that ineffably soulful quality the Spanish call *duende*, but bassist Ben Feldman's gorgeous "For Antongiulio," has an especially Andalusian feel, with guest musicians Lucas Winter and Gus Carns contributing guitar and piano, respectively. "Quarantine Blues" captures the loneliness and yearning we have experienced over the past year and builds to a dramatic climax. The group takes Knapp's "Looking Ahead" at a fast clip, with tenor saxophonist Santosh Sharma burning up the place. Drummer Xavier Lecouturier, snappy but never overbearing, shines in a solo at the end on Santosh's "Second Wave."

Budde and electric keyboardist Dylan Hayes create a watery landscape on the varying tempos of Lecouturier's "Interlake" and Sharma passionately busts through the edges of notes, à la Dewey Redman, on "F Minus," composed by Budde, who adds glowing single-note lines. The pretty



"NT," by Budde and Hayes, features the guitarist's jangly, atmospheric side—no doubt enhanced by the recording environment—over a steady-state beat.

Two of the five players here—Feldman and Sharma—are now based in New York, but let's hope all five reconvene to play live in Seattle when the pandemic finally ends.

—Paul de Barros



Tim Lennon photo by Daniel Sheehan

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