



PRESS RELEASE

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Hartford Public Library To Re-start 2020 Kaman Charitable Foundation Baby Grand Jazz Series Virtually

HARTFORD – Hartford Public Library will continue its 2020 Kaman Charitable Foundation Baby Grand Jazz series virtually in November and December.

Performances take place each Sunday from November 1 through December 6 at 3 pm and can be viewed on HPL's Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube pages.

The popular jazz series was postponed because of the global pandemic. Before the library's closure, Baby Grand Jazz smashed previous attendance records, with over 9,000 people attending the 10 performances both in-person and online.

"I am delighted that our popular Baby Grand Jazz series will continue in 2020. Libraries provide a lot of things for people – educational opportunities and exposure to new ideas perhaps most importantly. But one thing we as a library can do is offer people opportunities to experience joy. The Baby Grand Jazz series is just that – a chance for us to immerse ourselves in the joy of great jazz," said Bridget Quinn-Carey, HPL's president and CEO.

"HPL is pleased to be able to continue the 2020 Baby Grand Jazz season with performances from six dynamic bands. It is important that Hartford continues to celebrate local and regional jazz and for us to come together in music. We will miss our lively Sunday jazz crowd, but hope to see jazz fans online!" said Liz Castle, HPL's programming manager.

The season re-start will begin on November 1 with local performer Haneef Nelson who honors his mentors with his style of music. Taeko, a singer with a stunning four octave range and deep soulfulness reminiscent of Anita Baker with sophisticated scatting like Ella Fitzgerald, will perform November 8. Trumpeter Ricky Alfonso will perform his Miles Davis-inspired modern jazz on November 15. Envisage Collective offers its socially conscious jazz music on November 22. Guitarist Joe Carter, performing on November 29, has a sound and style based in "Samba Jazz." The 2020 season will conclude with Iris Orning, one of the most original female voices in New York City's jazz scene.

For more information about the 2020 Baby Grand Jazz series, visit <https://www.hplct.org/classes-seminars-exhibits/baby-grand-jazz>

ARTIST BIOS

November 1, Haneef Nelson

Known for his commitment and versatility trumpeter Haneef N. Nelson is continuing to make his mark on the music of his mentors. Composer/Arranger, Bandleader, Sideman, Musical Curator, and Educator, Haneef continues to solidify his place as one of the pillars in his community.

Haneef has taught at The Artist Collective, Community Music School of Springfield in addition to his time spent working as a teaching assistant at the Jackie McLean Institute of Jazz within the Hartt School along with a private studio. He currently serves as Professor of Jazz History at Keene State College as well as Teaching Assistant at UMASS Amherst where he is the Assistant Director of Jazz Ensemble I, Jazz Trumpet Instructor, Co-Director of the Jazz Lab, and Chamber Ensemble Instructor. Haneef has given masterclasses and workshops in various educational and professional settings and has spent time recording with various Gospel and Jazz Artists. Haneef curates the Jazz Monday's event at Black Eyed Sally's in Hartford.

Haneef is the Founder/Artistic Director of the following groups: the Haneef N. Nelson Quintet; the Neefet; the Hartford Legacy Jazz Orchestra; the Hartford Jazz Composers Collective; the Paul Brown Legacy Ensemble. Trumpeter and soloist for the New London Big Band and the Makanda Project.

November 8, TAEKO

Japan-native, Taeko, moved to New York City from Shiga, Japan in the late 90's. She quickly garnered the nickname "Songbird" from NYC's Jazz elite. With a stunning four octave range, she sings with deep soulfulness reminiscent of Anita Baker with sophisticated scatting a la Ella.

Taeko recently released "Contemplation," her 4th album as a leader. It features works by Jazz greats such as Cedar Walton, Chick Corea, Bill Evans, and McCoy Tyner. The album received a full-page feature in Hot House Jazz Magazine and has been gaining rave reviews.

Pianist Sharp Radway is a Hartford-native and protégé of the late Dr. Randy Weston. Sharp has been accompanying Benny Golson for over 10 years and has toured with renowned Jazz vocalists Diane Shuur and Nnenna Freelon. He is also the author of the book "Musicianship 101 (*What They Don't Tell You In School*)". Born in Panama, Alex Blake has a revolutionary playing style and technique distinctly his own. Alex has played with Dizzy Gillespie, Sonny Rollins, Sun Ra, Art Blakey, Freddie Hubbard, Manhattan Transfer to name a few. Victor Jones is an internationally acclaimed drummer known for his consistent, subtle and stylish drumming.

November 15, Ricky Alfonso, The Jazz Unit

Trumpeter and vocalist Ricky Alfonso has been a mainstay on the East Coast jazz scene since the early 1970s. A product of the modern jazz movement with a trumpet style reminiscent of Miles Davis, Clark Terry and Freddie Hubbard, Ricky has worked with many area jazz luminaries including Mario Pavone, Michael Mussillami, Bill Lowe, Ed Blackwell, Tom McClung, Tom Chapin and was protege of the late Bill Barron. Ricky also recorded and toured with R/B great Joe Cocker leading the horn section in Cocker's return to prominence following the great Woodstock Festival of 1969 and toured with Stevie Winwood and Traffic.

Ricky's present group, The Jazz Unit, features classic and original jazz tunes, and includes the top notch rhythm section of Chris Casey on piano, Steve Bulmer on bass and Tido Holtkamp on drums.

November 22, Envisage Collective

Envisage Collective is a cooperative ensemble that was founded in 2012 by Kris Allen (alto saxophone), Chris Dingman (vibraphone), Noah Baerman (piano and organ). Along with co-founders Johnathan Blake (drums) and Jimmy Greene (tenor and soprano saxophones), these established composer/performer/bandleaders were brought together by a shared vision of socially conscious jazz music that would speak prophetically, aid practically, and inspire thoughtfully. With each successive year the Collective (Initially known as the Jazz Samaritan Alliance) crafted all-new programs of works drawing thematic focus from and raising awareness about the important issues of hunger and food justice, domestic violence, and healthcare access, while raising funds for local charities working on the front lines of these efforts.

November 29, Joe Carter

Having performed, recorded and taught in such diverse places as Rio de Janeiro, Curitiba and Recife in Brazil, Bombay, Bangalore and Goa in India, Trossingen and Stuttgart in Germany and Paris and Corsica in France, Joe Carter has used these experiences to form a sound and style based in "Samba Jazz", a style that combines the improvisational nature of North American Jazz with the lyrical and rhythmical aspects of Brazilian Bossa Nova, Samba, Choro, Baiao and MPB but also flavored with the lyrical and rhythmical aspects of all the places he's played, recorded and taught.

Joe Carter has recorded and performed with Jazz artists such Art Farmer, Lee Konitz, Cecil Payne, Rufus Reid and others and with Brazilian artists such as Luiz Eca, Mauricio Einhorn, Robertinho Silva, Paulo Russo and others. In addition, he has recorded several CDs through the years, his most recent is Both Sides of the Equator, with bassist David Finck and percussionist Ze Mauricio.

Joe Carter is currently the Director of the Academic Music Program at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, CT, where he teaches The History of Jazz, The Music of Latin America and directs the Jazz Ensemble.

December 6, Iris Ornic

Bassist & composer Iris Ornic is one of the most original female voices on today's New York jazz scene. Since her arrival in New York City in 2003 from Germany, she has played with an impressive roster of some of the most influential contemporary jazz musicians in New York including Gretchen Parlato, Ambrose Akinmusire, Joel Frahm, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Mike Rodriguez, Rebecca Martin, Allison Miller, Sachal Vasandani, Helen Sung, Marcus Gilmore, Dan Tepfer, among others.

The band consists of Kenny Warren trumpet, Gregg Belisle- Chi on guitar, Iris Ornic on bass/composition and Michael Davis on drums.

About Hartford Public Library

Now celebrating its 126th year, Hartford Public Library remains at the forefront of redefining the urban library experience in the 21st Century. With seven locations throughout the city, the library provides education, intellectual enrichment and cultural development for thousands of children, youth and adults

every year. Hartford Public Library has also gained local and national recognition for its wide range of new initiatives and partnerships designed to meet the needs of a diverse and dynamic city and region, including immigration services, employment assistance and youth leadership training. www.hplct.org.