



For Immediate Release
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HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY'S BABY GRAND JAZZ SERIES RETURNS JANUARY 8TH



Ronnie Burrage performs during last season's Baby Grand Jazz series. (Maurice Robertson photo)

Free concerts have been held annually since 2004

(Hartford, CT) – Baby Grand Jazz will return to Hartford Public Library for another season on Sunday, Jan. 8, 2023, when the AA Team will perform for an in-person audience at the Downtown Library and virtual viewers across the globe.

After a season of online performances in 2020 and limited audiences in 2021, the highly popular jazz concerts will be back in full swing in 2023. Concerts will run Sundays at 3 p.m. in January, February, March and April (except Easter Sunday, April 9th). The performances will be held in the Center for Contemporary Culture at the Downtown Library, 500 Main St., Hartford.

In-person seating is on a first come, first seated basis beginning at 2 p.m. No registration is required. Shows will continue to be streamed online on Hartford Public Library's Facebook page (facebook.com/HartfordPublicLibrary) and YouTube channel (youtube.com/hplct).

Last season's shows began with small in-person audiences that were slowly expanded over the course of the series in accordance with the library's health and safety protocols.

"Providing free access to the arts to the Hartford community is a key part of Hartford Public Library's mission and we look forward to another successful season of Baby Grand Jazz," said **Hartford Public Library President and CEO Bridget E. Quinn**. "I would like to thank the Kaman Foundation for its continued support of this series, as well as our dedicated partners and the staff at Hartford Public Library who have adapted each of the last two years to continue to bring high-quality jazz performances to music lovers in Greater Hartford and beyond."

This season the library is offering a wide array of jazz expression. From Latin jazz to hot jazz to covers of classic and contemporary composers, the Baby Grand Jazz series has something for everyone.

Baby Grand Jazz at Hartford Public Library is sponsored by the Kaman Foundation. Longtime partners include the Hartford Jazz Society and WWUH 91.3 FM. For more information, visit: www.hplct.org/classes-seminars-exhibits/baby-grand-jazz

2023 Season Schedule

Jan. 8: AA Team

Jan. 15: The Michelle Tucker Quintet

Jan. 22: UConn Jazz Faculty Ensemble

Jan. 29: The Blue River Jazz Band

Feb. 5: Ken Serio Quartet

Feb. 12: Caio e Jess

Feb. 19: Alden Hellmuth Quintet

Feb. 26: Ladies Day Jazz Ensemble

March 5: Mixed Company

March 12: Zwelakhe-Duma Bell le Pere Quartet

March 19: Skyler Hagner Nonet

March 26: Simón Willson Quartet

April 2: Michael Feinberg

April 16: Blackman Murray Russo

April 23: Sarah LeMieux's 'Jazz for the End of the World'

April 30: Matt Dwonszyk and the Dwonztet

About The Artists

AA Team

Jan. 8

Puerto Rican born master Latin percussionist Anthony Carrillo has joined with New York-based pianist and midwestern import Amy Quint-Millan in creating the Latin jazz ensemble AA Team as well as the larger band, YÁMBAWA. Upon first meeting in 2015, the unlikely duo has fervently produced music of diverse styles and rhythms drawing from their extensive musical experiences including that of American jazz, Puerto Rican bomba, plena and salsa, Cuban guaracha and Santeria, Colombian salsa and folkloric rhythms, Brazilian samba/bossa nova, pop, metal rock and most recently southeast Asian music. In 2018, their larger fusion band released an EP including jazz standard “I Will Wait for You” and pop hit “Time after Time/I Can See Clearly” as well as Puerto Rican reggaeton/lembon and salsa with a timba flair. AA Team is a more intimate ensemble and has recorded original music as well as standards with their own personal twist as can be heard in their interpretation of “Dust in the Wind” featuring tabla and Cuban percussion. Their YouTube channel contains a treasure chest of rich arrangements featuring solo piano meditations, batá and Santeria, rumba, jazz and salsa. Together they have combined their extensive experience and diverse talents to create a rich and fresh repertoire loaded with powerful musical chemistry.

Amy Quint Millan – piano

Anthony Carrillo – percussion

Ariel Robles – bass

The Michelle Tucker Quintet

Jan. 15

Michelle Tucker is a Boston based percussionist and music educator trained in jazz, orchestral and rock/pop styles. In addition to teaching drum set and percussion at Indian Hill Music, Michelle performs throughout New England leading her own jazz groups – The Michelle Tucker Quintet and The Luna Collective – as well as freelancing as an orchestral timpanist and percussionist. The Michelle Tucker Quintet was assembled from members of The Luna Collective, the group that Michelle co-founded to play a weekly session at The Luna Theater in Lowell, Massachusetts, from 2015 until the COVID shutdown of 2020. The Luna Collective featured a different theme each Thursday night, often based on an album or specific member of Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers. The MTQ builds off of the knowledge Michelle gained from five years spent transcribing, arranging and rehearsing the music of The Jazz Messengers. Currently, all compositions and arrangements are Michelle’s. Michelle is a transgender woman, and while that does not have any direct bearing on her ability to play the drums, she feels it is important to be visible as a trans woman, with the hope that her leading a life in jazz will contribute to the normalization of trans identities.

Sam Spear – alto sax

Kathy Olson – bari sax

Miguel Landestoy – piano

Sahil Warsi – bass

Michelle Tucker – drums

UConn Jazz Faculty Ensemble

Jan. 22

The stellar roster of musician-educators from the state's flagship land-grant research university share a like-minded, post-bop aesthetic. Each player has a distinctive, contemporary improvisational voice and a wealth of international playing experience. This is no derivative jazz sextet. Expect "smart, economical writing and fabulous blowing." (Marc Myers, JazzWax)

Earl MacDonald – piano, UConn Director of Jazz Studies (pictured)

John Mastroianni – alto saxophone

Sean Nelson – trombone

Christopher Morrison – electric guitar

Steven Bulmer – string bass

Jonathan Barber – drum set

The Blue River Jazz Band

Jan. 29

The Blue River Jazz Band, presenting here in a duo, plays America's traditional, classic, "hot" jazz music from the early 20th century. For the Baby Grand Jazz Series 2023, they will present a lively selection of songs composed or made famous by the masters of the piano including James P. Johnson, Fats Waller, Earl Hines, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Donald Lambert, and Lil Hardin Armstrong. Both musicians are from Connecticut. Chris Coulter on saxophone/vocals is a teacher/lecturer/writer/performer of early jazz/swing and New Orleans jazz music, and teacher/performer Matt DeChamplain is considered one of the finest proponents and performers of jazz piano in many styles, and here will be featuring the stride style.

Chris Coulter – saxophones/vocal

Matt De Champlain – piano

Ken Serio Quartet

Feb. 5

Drummer Ken Serio and bassist Jedd Chlebowski started to play together in 2016, soon after guitarist Sinan Bakir joined and they have been playing, touring and recording regularly as a unit since then. They play with intense energy and grace and their repertoire is eclectic, covering tunes from jazz standards and compositions to rock and contemporary music as well as originals. Tomoko Ohno, born in Tokyo, began piano studies at the age of 4. As a teenager, she began playing professionally in the Tokyo-area jazz scene. She has performed at Lincoln Center, Weill Recital, Carnegie Hall, The Blue Note and Birdland, in addition to appearing on live radio broadcasts by WBGO and WNYC, and ABC's "Good Morning America." Ohno also leads her own group, and has released three CDs on the Japan-based Tokuma label. She is also active as a composer, and has been the recipient of a grant from The Meet The Composer Foundation.

Sinan Bakir – guitar

Tomoko Ohno – piano

Jedd Chlebowski – bass

Ken Serio – drums

Caio e Jess

Feb. 12

In Northern Brazil, a natural phenomenon occurs called “Encontro das Águas” translating to “The Meeting of Waters.” Two distinctly different rivers meet and flow side by side, unmixed for miles, before heading toward the ocean as one. Caio e Jess strive to embody this philosophy. Caio Afiune, born in São Paulo, Brazil, and Jessica Curran, in Boston, uniquely blend their backgrounds in Brazilian music, pop and jazz to create organic and lush compositions. With awards such as the ASCAP Young Composers Award and John Lennon Songwriting Contest under their belts, the two provide an honest, intimate show of virtuosic electricity with either full band or duo. Currently, the two are gearing up to release their debut full-length album, “Encontro das Aguas”, featuring some of the finest musicians from around the globe including guests such as Raphael Barata, Bertram Lehman, Henrique Eisenmann and Marrisol Mwaba.

Caio Afiune – guitar

Jessica Curran – vocals

Henrique Eisenmann – piano

James Heazlewood-Dale – bass

Bertram Lehman – percussion

Alden Hellmuth Quintet

Feb. 19

Alden Hellmuth is a saxophonist and composer originally from Hartford, CT and based in NYC. She has performed, as both a leader and sideman, at venues and festivals all over the North East, including Smalls, Smoke Jazz & Supper Club, Le Poisson Rouge, The Sidedoor, and the Composers Now Festival. In 2021 she was selected for the prestigious Focusyear Band based in Basel, Switzerland, where she performed with greats like Lionel Loueke, Aaron Parks, Kris Davis, Jorge Rossy, and Larry Grenadier, and in 2022 was selected as a New Music USA Next Jazz Legacy semi-finalist. She has performed in bands led by Dezron Douglas, Josh Evans, David Bryant, Nat Reeves, Pablo Held, and many more, and in 2017 toured with Jeremy Pelt and Louis Hayes. She has also arranged pieces for Moses Sumney, Brandee Younger, and other artists.

Alden Hellmuth – alto saxophone

Josh Evans – trumpet

Lucas Kadish – guitar

Tyrone Allen – bass

Tim Angulo – drums

Ladies Day Jazz Ensemble

Feb. 26

The Ladies Day Jazz Ensemble is dedicated to discovering and performing the works of classic and contemporary female jazz composers, played by a crackerjack ensemble of women jazz musicians. Our repertoire includes music by Mary Lou Williams, Peggy Lee, Iola Brubeck, Marian McPartland, Ana Caram and Abbey Lincoln, to name a few, as well as original compositions by members of the ensemble. We have performed in New York City at Jazz at Kitano, Club Bonafide; and at a variety of commercial and community settings.

MJ Territo – vocals

Linda Presgrave – piano

Iris Ormig – bass

Lucianna Padmore – drums
Wendy Luck – flute

Mixed Company

March 5

Formed with the intention to reach higher planes, Mixed Company uses jazz and R&B influences to do just that. This quartet exudes infectious grooves and emotive vocals to get the point across. Let us be your guides as you are in Mixed Company.

Taylor McCoy – vocals
Conway Campbell, Jr. – acoustic bass
Michael Carabello – piano/synth
Akin Hobson – drum

Zwelakhe-Duma Bell le Pere Quartet

March 12

On May 3rd, 2019, in his debut at Firehouse 12, Zwelakhe-Duma Bell le Pere showcased a body of work entitled "Sapphire". Featured on his forthcoming release, this repertoire blends ancestral images with a rich textural density that represent his identity as a denizen of two worlds. Originally from Johannesburg, South Africa, Zwelakhe-Duma relocated to New Haven to study with Jeff Fuller at New Haven's Educational Center for the Arts, leading to receiving both a BA and MM from New England Conservatory in Boston. While he was at NEC, he studied acoustic bass with Cecil McBee & Don Palma, as well as improvisation and composition with Jason Moran, John McNeil and Jerry Bergonzi. Zwelakhe-Duma has performed and recorded with acts such as Christian Scott, Dave Holland, Randy Weston, Dave Liebman and Jason Moran, as well as performed at the Monterey Jazz Festival, Charlie Parker Jazz Festival, Panama Jazz Festival, Lagos Jazz Festival, Osaka Jazz Festival, Joy of Jazz Festival and MoMA's "Summergarden" series. He was a recipient of the 2011 Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead Fellowship and is also a teaching artist for Jazz at Lincoln Center's "Jazz for Young People," Litchfield Jazz Camp and New England Conservatory Jazz Lab. Zwelakhe-Duma currently resides in New York City and continues in private study with legendary bassist Ron Carter.

Dakota Austin – alto saxophone
Michael CaraBello – piano
Jonathan Barber – drumset
Zwelakhe-Duma Bell le Pere – double bass

Skyler Hagner Nonet

March 19

Since 2015, the Skyler Hagner Nonet has performed from Philadelphia to Portland, Maine, bringing their innovative chamber sound and ambitious programming to clubs, festivals and private events. The performances are influenced by modern jazz and contemporary classical music, highlighting tight ensemble work and fiery soloists. Living in the liminal space between structure and spontaneity, Skyler Hagner's music frequently features pairings of performers and the juxtaposition of soloists in various settings. Originally from Guilford, Skyler holds a MM in jazz composition from William Paterson University, where he was the Gerry Mulligan Foundation Fellow. He is currently the director of Penn Jazz at The University of Pennsylvania, and was adjunct faculty at the University of New Haven. Skyler is the recipient of a Jazz Road Tours Grant, a national initiative of South Arts, which is funded by the Doris Duke Charitable

Foundation, with additional support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Skyler was commissioned by the Guilford Performing Arts Festival through their artist awards program for “[Invisible Cities] Humanity, Memory, and Decay: A suite for a Jazz Nonet,” which was premiered at the 2021 edition of the festival. His work has further been supported by Pathways to Jazz and The New England Musicians Relief Fund.

Elijah Thomas – soprano saxophone, flute
Chris Lewis – tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone
Skyler Hagner – baritone saxophone, bass clarinet
Elliot Bild – trumpet
Nick Lombardelli – trombone
Morgan Walbridge – vibraphone
Andrew Boudreau – piano
Sandy Eldred – bass
Dan Monaghan – drums

Simón Willson Quartet

March 26

The Simón Willson Quartet consists of Kayvon Gordon on drums, Andrew Boudreau on piano, Kevin Sun on tenor saxophone and Simón Willson on bass and compositions. Their music focuses heavily on the intersectionality of Afro-diasporic musical traditions such as the blues, jazz, Cuban and Brazilian music, fused with different elements of the Western classical tradition, the experimental avant-garde and an awareness and interest in rock and pop expressions. In these compositions you will find a reciprocal relationship between the canonical and the new, one in which the new defines itself against what is already established, while at the same time the established reconfigures itself in response to the new. The band plays regularly at New York City venues such as Bar Bayeux, Ornithology Jazz Club, Lowlands Bar and Fiction Bar.

Kayvon Gordon – drums
Andrew Boudreau – piano
Kevin Sun – tenor saxophone
Simón Willson – bass and compositions

Michael Feinberg

April 2

Michael Feinberg is a bassist and artist who has appeared across the globe as a band leader and side man with some of the leading voices in jazz. His latest release, 2021’s “Hard Times,” features legendary drummer Jeff Tain Watts, Orrin Evans, Leo Genovese, Randy Brecker and Godwin Louis and was declared as “a top 10 album of the year” by legendary critic Bill Milkowski. Feinberg’s music is rooted in the traditional jazz band but incorporates elements of world grooves and beyond. Music critic Chad Radford describes Feinberg’s sound as “embracing elements of pop music and the avant garde with a strong flair for jazz music if the here and now.”

Michael Feinberg – bass
Leo Genovese – piano
Godwin Louis – sax
Jongkuk Kim – drums

Blackman Murray Russo

April 16

Baltimore based pianist and award-winning composer. He and his various groups have performed at Blues Alley, the Kennedy Center and many festivals and venues from San Francisco to New York. Recent performances have been with Donny McCaslin, Gilad Hekselman, Vardan Ovsepian, Ferenc Nemeth, Mike Pope, Tom Guarna, Joe Locke, Warren Wolf, Tim Green and Michael Formanek among others. He was selected to be part of the prestigious Betty Carter Jazz Ahead program at the Kennedy Center. Additionally, he has received grants from Chamber Music America New Jazz Works, Maryland State Arts Council in jazz composition and performance for the years 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019 and Baltimore Creative Fund grants for 2009 and 2010. Original arrangements and performances of his music have been featured on NBC's "This is Us," NPR's "Talk of the Nation" and "Grey's Anatomy," as well as Stephen King's film, "1408."

Alan Blackman – piano

Max Murray – bass

Frank Russo – drums

Sarah LeMieux's 'Jazz for the End of the World'

April 23

"Jazz for the End of the World" began as a conversation about ennui and the apocalypse around a bonfire in August 2019. Sarah LeMieux, Ethan Foote and Aaron Wyanski had all met at the Vermont College of Fine Arts, and played together in a variety of strange and delightful configurations. The next logical step was clearly to make a jazz record that leaned into the apocalyptic underpinnings of the Great American Songbook. So, that's what they did. Bringing in seasoned drummer Andy Chatfield to round out the group, they recorded nine songs, feeling out the emotionally dissonant roots of cherished American classics like "Darn That Dream" and "These Foolish Things." LeMieux's restrainedly emotional vocals glide atop Wyanski's scathing, glittery piano and Foote's wicked bass. Chatfield's drumming is solid pocket with flights of eerie fantasy. LeMieux's original tune "Goodbye, Paris," accentuates the existential while somehow also channeling Vince Guaraldi at Christmastime.

Sarah LeMieux – vocals, guitar

Andy Chatfield – drums

Ethan Foote – bass

Aaron Wyanski – piano

Matt Dwonszyk and the Dwonztet

April 30

The Dwonztet, consists of all Hartford based musicians that attended either the Artist Collective, the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts or the Hartt School of Music (Jackie McLean Institute of Jazz). Matt Dwonszyk is the leader of the Dwonztet but every member is a leader in their own right. They all have a trust and love for one another and continue to nurture their relationship through performing and recording together as the Dwonztet.

Shenel Johns – vocals

Ghazi Omair – spoken word

Andrew Renfroe – guitar

Kris Allen – saxophone

Taber Gable – fender rhodes
Jonathan Barber – drums
Matt Dwonszyk – bass

About Hartford Public Library

With roots dating to 1774, 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.