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JUNE + JULY 2024

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With Brandon Draper

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Charlie Parker

The Jazzmen

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VOLUME 35, NO. 4

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CLARIFICATION

In the Duke Ellington Tribute Story. It was mentioned that the Duke Ellington Family contributed \$13,000 to the April 30th event at the Gem Theater. Part of that money was also used for a similar event with Barrie Lee Hall Jr and Clark Terry at a UCLA Event with Kenny Burrell for the Students and Audience who participate in Kenny 's Ellington Educational program.

JAM wrongly credited this story to former KCJA board member Tom Alexios. The April-May issue story was written by David Basse from Tom's recollections. Editor *Editor*

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We'd sincerely like to thank the family of trumpeter John Booth for encouraging us to create the John Booth Legacy Fund last month to help musicians in need with end of life expenses. Read in this issue, about a prestigious LIVE clinic program we've partnered with Jamey Aebersold. Our board members include Lynn Abrams, Joe Dimino, Jason Goudeau, Mikole Kaar, Linda McShann, Dan Sturdevant, and Amber Underwood.

Stay hip,
David Basse, President and Editor

ALL IN THE FAMILY WITH VETERAN KC DRUMMER BRANDON DRAPER



For all of the woe the pandemic wrought on the jazz community, silver linings have infused creatives to hatch new albums and ventures. Veteran Kansas City Drummer & Educator Brandon Draper is the benefactor of hard pivots to get a bevy of new material out in a banner 2024 year.

“I’m a Zildjian artist and I was at their Factory right outside of Boston in Quincy Massachusetts on March 13, 2020 doing a lecture on the music business at Western Connecticut University. The campus closed right after my lecture,” Brandon

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noted. “I packed it up and went back to the hotel and there was no traffic at all.”

Five years prior to the COVID halt, he decided to slow his touring life down so that he could be a committed dad and wake up each day in his own bed. His father Paul is a deeply gifted Hammond B-3 Organist who did the exact same thing when Brandon was young. History repeating itself.

“My dad was invited to audition for The Rolling Stones in 1981 when I was just two years old. He turned it down because he was worried that the lifestyle could potentially lose him from a family,” Brandon noted. “That is not an easy decision for him to live with his entire life.”

As they gear up to release their long-awaited debut of the Draper Family Band, the group includes his father and a host of family and friends, making it a true family affair. The long road to creatively construct this album makes the release sweeter.

“We started playing together from my childhood. I was thumping my leg in the crib as a baby,” Brandon noted. “My dad had a studio in the basement and we were always jamming.”

From that young age, he knew that music was in his DNA and that his life would be dedicated to creating music. Yet it has always been this specific album that he has been gearing up to release.

“We kept putting it off because I didn’t have all of the assets needed to fully honor the release of a record,” Brandon noted.

That would be the beginning of this current collective journey. He runs a label called Looking Up Productions, and that label will also be releasing a host of albums in different genres.

“There are a handful of other albums that will be coming out,” Brandon noted. “Amongst others, there is an album I made with the Grammy-nominated Hammond Organist Mitch Towne, who is from Omaha.”

He will also have a couple of meditation albums that feature the Indian tabla and hand pan drums. On top of all that, there will be Drum Safari-re-

lated albums done as passion projects to provide education and enrichment for kids.

He is always on the lookout for new talent for his label from his Lawrence, KS base. “I am always checking out new bands in Lawrence. So, there will be new bands that I will be the producer for the projects,” Brandon said. “By the end of the year, there will be 10-15 different artists released on this label.”

All of this is possible due to connections, and to the music market that makes streaming and accessibility so much easier than it would have been back in 2014 when he was incubating these projects and ideas.

“I have an overwhelming feeling of gratitude and thankfulness for all of this coming out. None of this would be possible without relationships,” Brandon said. “It’s almost like I am cashing in all of my chips and playing all of my cards with the folks I have made relationships with over the years.”

Essentially, he has warmed the eggs and put a lot of love into their creation. Now, in this post-COVID 2024 world, it’s time to let the birds free to fly.

“It’s flattering and humbling. At the minute level, the feeling is an excitement and a very controlled comfortable urgency that manifests in my morning routine,” Brandon said. “Rather than hitting a snooze button and sleeping in, I am waking up these days before my alarm and before the sun comes up.”

by Joe Dimino

Everything Brandon Draper:

<https://www.lookingupproductions.org/>

Full Brandon Draper Neon Jazz Interview Links:

<https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/joe-dimino/episodes/Multi-Instrumentalist--Producer--Songwriter--Educator-Brandon-Draper-on-the-2024-CD-Aim-All-Around--Other-Projects-e2fbil3>

<https://youtu.be/SxQSebXCZ6Q>



SPOTLIGHT:

Charlie Parker

11TH ANNUAL AUGUST CELEBRATION

August includes the birthdates of several important jazz musicians. John Coltrane, William “Count” Basie, and Bobby Watson to name a few. For the past 11 years Kansas City has dedicated the entire month to Charlie Parker . . . why not?

Bird was famously born in Kansas City, KS and was transplanted to the Westport area by his mother at an early age. Finding his calling in the famous nightspots of the day, International fame was his by the time he was 21. Over the following 13 years, Charlie Parker burned-bright.

With jam sessions, musical tributes, tours, lectures, exhibits, panel discussions, workshops, and concerts, Spotlight: Charlie Parker 2024 celebrates the jazz icon’s 104th birthday with our city’s annual tribute. Developed to honor Charlie Parker, also known as “Bird,” and his outrageous legacy.

Bird had a lasting impact on jazz in Kansas City. Worldwide his recordings are still popping up. “This is Charlie Parker” recorded off the cuff at jam sessions and nightclubs. He had a habit of dropping in before, during, and after his paid events; such as concerts, recording sessions dates & tours with other well-respected musicians. Now those unearthed recordings are giving students and scholars alike a fresh look at perhaps the most important musician in history.

The month-long celebration will take place in August of 2024 at various locations, including The

Folly Theater, the downtown Kansas City Public Library, the 18th & Vine Jazz District, and the many poppin’ nightclubs around the city. Highlighting this year’s Spotlight: Charlie Parker will be a new partnership with the Kansas City Jazz Orchestra and their Gala performance on August 24th at the Folly Theater.

“We are excited for this new strategic partnership with the Kansas City Jazz Orchestra . . . and for Kansas City.” said B.J. Jansen saxophonist & Chair of Spotlight: Charlie Parker. “We look forward to working together to create a memorable and impactful event, for Kansas City and by Kansas City, to celebrate Bird’s legacy and his significance in today’s jazz scene.”

There are MORE events loaded daily at www.spotlightcharlieparker.org . High points include annual favorites like the Bird Salute. This year it will be on August 17th at 3pm at the Charlie Parker Monument, located just north of 18th and Paseo.

Bird Lives: Charlie Parker’s Lasting Impact on Music

At 5:30pm on August 20th the Bird Celebration annual panel discussion continues with the Vivid Vision Panel on the 5th floor of the Kansas City Public Library, located at 14 West 10th Street in downtown KC. Steve Kraske will be joined by drummer Carl Allen, author Carolyn Glenn Brewer, and saxophonist Houston Smith.

continued

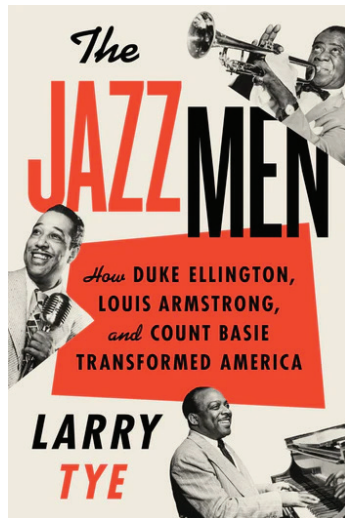
The Jazzmen

Larry Tye

REVIEW

It was Pullman Porters who brought seasoned Boston-based author Larry Tye to Lonnie's Reno Club on May 16th, 2024. While Mr. Tye didn't ride the rails to Kansas City on his continuing book tour, the idea of writing a book about the 3 most popular passengers riding the rails in the mid-twentieth century, Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, and Duke Ellington, came directly in a request from some of the 100 surviving Pullman Porters in the year 2004. That's when Tye was making a case for the beloved Black men who served First Class travelers of all races in the Golden Age of rail travel in the United States of America.*

A packed house sat in rapt attention as author Chuck Haddix interviewed Mr. Tye about "The Jazzmen" at the Reno Club. And when asked why he picked this trio to honor all of jazz, Mr. Tye responded, "Imagine these beloved entertainers having to abide by strict Jim Crow laws when they toured the American South in the 1930s and 40s."



He continued, "When they could afford it, the bandleaders would rent an entire Pullman Car. They could come "home" to a railroad siding, enjoy a delicious meal prepared by the cooks, sleep in luxurious beds, and entertain the Porters with a Jam session later that evening." In conclusion, Mr. Tye offered, "Imagine a private jam session for the porters, cooks and maids at 2am, by the Duke Ellington Orchestra."

The May 16th interview turned into a fast-paced conversation on the subject of jazz. Haddix, who is a foremost expert on the vast subject, and Tye, who had recently interviewed some 250 famed jazz people including Grammy-winning author Ricky Riccardi, Jon Batiste, and Wynton Marsalis himself. Both authors were in fine form and Rainy Day Books provided a clear path for all participants to purchase a book, grab an autograph and spend a few quality moments with Mr. Tye. The Ambassador Hotel supplied the

continued


BIRD CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

The expansive festival concludes on August 24th at 10am with the annual 18th and Vine Charlie Parker Historic Walking Tour. Beginning at the American Jazz Museum, 1616 East 18th

Street, the tour boasts Geri Sanders and Chuck Haddix as your hosts. At 7pm that same evening you'll hear The Spotlight: Charlie Parker Celebra-

tion Concert with the Kansas City Jazz Orchestra and special guests.

Tickets and information at www.spotlightcharlieparker.org

About Charlie "Yardbird" Parker: Charles Parker is a trademark of the Estate of Charles C. Parker, Jr. 

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space and the American Jazz Museum sponsored the signing event.

The Jazzmen is sure to be a must-have resource for anyone with an interest in the history of jazz. It not only chronicles the musical escapades of Tye's subjects, it offers intimate facts about the lifestyle of these internationally known Americans.

All 3 of these famous musicians traveled for the State Department, represented everything good about our country, prayed in deep faith, and were very patriotic, yet they couldn't escape the permeating racism of the times. Tye gives us a vivid portrait of America's beloved Jazz Royalty without sugar-coating the details.

—David Basse

"The Jazzmen tells an uplifting and unifying story that is especially important now, when times are so fractured." —Sonny Rollins

*"Rising From the Rails, Pullman Porters and the Making of the Black Middle Class" Larry Tye —released June 1st, 2005.

"A valuable window into a long-underreported dimension of African American history."—Newsday

*When George Pullman began recruiting Southern blacks as porters in his luxurious new sleeping cars, the former slaves suffering under Jim Crow laws found his offer of a steady job and worldly experience irresistible. They quickly signed up to serve as maid, waiter, concierge, nanny, and occasionally doctor and undertaker to cars full of white passengers, making the Pullman Company the largest employer of African Americans in the country by the 1920s. :||

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Jamey Aebersold & Jazz Ambassadors Co-Present 2024 Jazz Clinic Concert Series



The series began earlier this year with the Jazz Ensemble at Sumner Academy, trumpeter Carmel Jones, Nathan Davis, Founder and Director of the Jazz Studies Program at the University of Pittsburgh, Melvin Butler, of the Frost School, and Kansas City Jazz Orchestra pianist Charles Williams are among the world-class musicians who attended Sumner.



If there is anyone in your household that has ever attempted to master the art of jazz music chances are you have heard of Jamey Aebersold. His name is long synonymous with jazz, and the education of jazz. His music minus one method is THE tried and true way to make sense of improvising on any instrument.

Thanks to the efforts of Mike Parkinson, an internationally renowned jazz educator, we are very pleased to announce that the Kansas City Jazz

Ambassadors, who have been vitally supportive of jazz education sponsoring concerts, special events, and scholarship programs throughout our region for 40 years, has partnered with Jamey Aebersold for the first time to present the Kansas City Jazz Ambassadors-Jamey Aebersold Jazz Clinic and Concert Series.

The series began earlier this year with the Jazz Ensemble at Sumner Academy, an academic magnet school in the Kansas City Kansas School

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Club Scene

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AEBERSOLD CONTINUED FROM 11

District with a long and celebrated history of jazz. Trumpeter Carmel Jones, Nathan Davis, Founder and Director of the Jazz Studies Program at the University of Pittsburgh, Melvin Butler, of the Frost School, and Kansas City Jazz Orchestra pianist Charles Williams are among the world-class musicians who have called Sumner home over the years.

The new venture is founded in an entrepreneurial spirit by several individuals who are equally devoted to jazz education. They are honored to announce that this ongoing series is fully funded by Jamey Aebersold, the internationally respected jazz educator and a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master. He has begun bringing professional

jazz artists to area schools that in most cases could not afford such programs.

The Series Coordinator is Mike Parkinson, former Director of Jazz Studies at UMKC, who returned to the metro area in June 2020. Mike remains vitally active as an educator, clinician, and performer internationally.

The Series Music Director is Stan Kessler, a widely acknowledged trumpeter, composer, educator, and bandleader who has represented the best of Kansas City jazz for many years.

Working directly with David Basse and the Jazz Ambassadors Board of Directors, Mike and Stan have created a unique program that has already made a major impact on the lives of students and educators in our region.

This ongoing series is fully funded by Jamey Aebersold; the internationally respected jazz educator and NEA Jazz Master has begun bringing professional jazz artists to area schools that in most cases could not afford such programs.



“Mike Parkinson and I go way back,” said Jamey Aebersold. “He has been a true jazzier and educator of our American music for many years. He’s spent his life immersed in it. We always meet for lunch or breakfast in New Albany when he and his wife are traveling through. Last year when we met, I brought up the jazz concert series that I am underwriting in Lexington, Louisville, Cincinnati, and Nashville, and I asked Mike if we could do something like this in Kansas City.”

Parkinson immediately said yes. But he wanted to add clinics for high school and college aged students led by a professional group of Kansas City based musicians. Aebersold agreed wholeheartedly, and thanks to Mike’s persistence, and the help of the Jazz Ambassadors, the series is underway.

“I am excited to see where it goes from here,” continued Aebersold. “I know that Kansas City’s (rich) jazz heritage will be well served by Mike, Stan, the Jazz Ambassadors, and everyone that is involved, and I am so happy to be a part of it.”

In the Fall of 2023 Parkinson first spoke to Mark Keltner, Sumner Academy Director of Bands, about the possibility of bringing a group of professional jazz musicians from the Kansas City area, with the financial support of Jamey Aebersold, to perform for and do clinics with his students. “Unfortunately, as with many urban school districts, funding for special events like these are a challenge,” said Keltner. “With Jamey Aebersold’s support and Mike Parkinson’s vision and tenacity, we were able to host the inaugural session of the “Kansas

Clarence Smith is the current Missouri Association of Jazz Educators President. His former students include Logan Richardson, bassist Seth Lee, and B3 organist Ryan Howard, now based in Austin.



AEBERSOLD CONTINUED

City Jazz Ambassadors-Jamey Aebersold-Jazz Clinic-Concert Series on February 6, 2024.”

“In my nearly forty years of teaching,” said Stan Kessler, “this was one of the days I will never forget.” The quintet, led by Kessler, gave a brief performance and then a question-and-answer session, followed by a clinic with the Sumner Jazz Band.

The interaction between the students and performers went far beyond being educational. “Watching the young jazz musicians onstage, performing for, and building relationships with working jazz musicians was inspiring for them and for me,” said Kessler. “And, at the conclusion of the clinic, each of the guest musicians chose to stay for a while and to continue talking with the students.”

They stood in small groups around the stage, talking about their own life stories and showing these young people that there is a path from the practice room to the professional stage. One of the musicians, pianist Charles Williams, told them about his journey, one that started on that very same stage and on that very same piano, that took him from Sumner Academy in the 1970’s, “around the world and back.”

“We are deeply honored to have hosted the inaugural clinic and we hope that this partnership between the Jazz Ambassadors and Jamey Aebersold will continue for many years,” said Keltner. “It has already made a huge difference in the lives of my students at Sumner Academy!”

continued on page 22

KC Jazz Orchestra pianist Charles Williams, his journey took him from Sumner Academy “around the world and back.”





"With the production of his first Jazz "Play-A-Long" recording in 1967, a new form of jazz education began, one that allowed novice or professional students to practice improvisational skills alongside professionals and noted jazz musicians without a classroom or a teacher--one that made practicing fun. For close to 50 years, Aebersold has produced 133 volumes of jazz recordings and books, along with various supplemental items, carving out a new avenue for jazz education."

Jamey Aebersold, 2014 NEA Jazz Master



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18TH & VINE JAZZ FESTIVAL

This summer, on Sunday afternoons, in the American Jazz Museum Atrium, the Ambassadors-Jamey Aebersold-Jazz Clinic-Concert Series presents 4 concerts @ 3pm, a 60-70 minute program with time at the conclusion for Q & A and to mingle with the musicians.

Sunday, June 2

"Paganova" - an excellent quintet led by pianist Michael Pagán

Sunday, July 14

"Beneath Missouri Skies" - Pat Metheny in Kansas City, 1964-1972

With author Carolyn Glenn Brewer and the Tim Brewer Trio playing music by Pat Metheny

Sunday, August 14

"Celebrating Bird & Miles" - a tribute to Charlie Parker & Miles Davis

JAZZ Spoken Here featuring pianist Charles Williams.

Sunday, September 9

Kansas City's Taste of Brazil,
The Sons of Brasil

∥



Tim Brewer



Michael Pagán

For the Record

We Need the Wind

Brian Scarborough

REVIEW

Brian Scarborough, local KC trombonist/bandleader, has a new album, “We Need the Wind” (2024). It’s an album of all-Scarborough originals—catchy, contemporary, chiefly straight-ahead. Scarborough and his all-KC quintet take their time. Laid back, but always engaging, the album perhaps harkens to classics, like Chick Corea’s “Return to Forever.” With the Render Rhodes electric keys (Roger Wilder), the album often has that 1960’s-’70s feel.

There’s a cohesive, communal sense of togetherness on this album, including a freer round-like section on the title track that includes lightning-like drive from the drummer (Brian Steever) in the form of propulsive, staccato cymbal work. Jeff Harshbarger (bass) also anchors the group.

Scarborough (trombone) and Matt Otto (sax) have strong presence, both on the head and in their solos, melodic and attention-keeping, with sweet, full round tones. Scarborough’s solo chops and acute musical sensibilities are on display throughout. He’s often out front. A former J.J. Johnson Jazz Trombone Competition award winner, he’s a pro as well as a staple of KC, as an educator, mainstay jazz performer, and as a musical theatre performer, having performed in over 50 productions.

Scarborough’s second album as a leader, Chicago Jazz Magazine calls “We Need the Wind” “simultaneously stimulating and accessible, refreshingly modern and rooted in tradition,” and it is, including KC tradition, Scarborough’s home.

In a recent interview with Joe Dimino (“Neon Jazz”), Scarborough said, “This album was a prod-



uct of feeling all of the emotions of the pandemic...challenging emotions, trying to cope with the situation...Recording this project with my band in KC...has been healing, and it’s exciting to get it (the album) out into the world...It’s nice to be playing again.”

“In the Buddhist tradition, there are the Buddhist prayer flags...(representing) hope and possibility...healing, empathy...The wind is carrying the messages off these flags...an organic dispersal of these ideas...As I started to think in that space, that title came to mind...an appropriate title for not only one of the songs, but the album.”

“It’s a great line up (RE: the quintet)...They could live anywhere, so we’re very lucky,” said Scarborough. “There’s an organic nature that I like to the music. Allowing people’s personalities to shine through just demonstrates their artistry and musicianship, a core to the sound.”

“The Fender Rhodes was definitely something I was interested in utilizing. Always a sound I’ve really loved. But not actually a sound I’d heard on a trombone small group album, with one exception. There’s this trombonist by the name of Andy Hunter, who did a small group album, maybe 10-15 years ago, and he had the Rhodes on it...I love that sound. I’m not sure why we haven’t explored that sound more...It’s a perfect pairing of what I hear in my head...Pair that with Roger Wilder, and you’ll be very pleased with the results.”

With its novel and unique trombone-plus-Rhodes sound, its mainstream approach, and cadre of KC luminaries, the album is a winner. It breaks new or overlooked ground. Get it. You too will be pleased and entertained. And you’ll have another piece of KC.

—Kevin Rabas

continued

HAPPY HOUR AT THE PIANO SHOP

4:30-7:30PM

David Watson Trio

JULY 2

Main St, KC



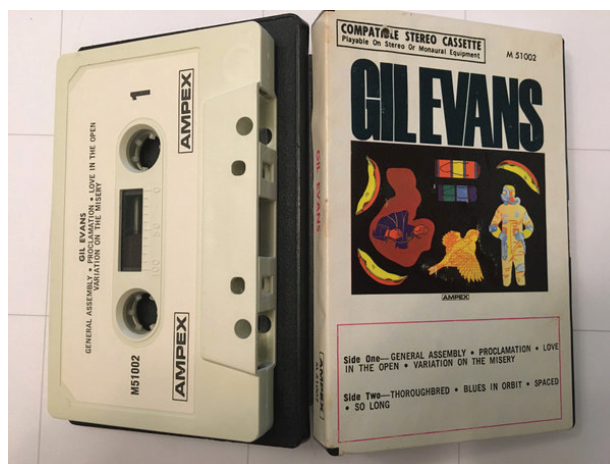
Upcycle Piano Craft

[The Gil Evans "Copenhagen Sights" Cassette]

Gil Evans

REVIEW

I was playing with the top band at New England Conservatory in Boston, a band called "Medium Rare." We did a concert on Valentine's Day of my freshman year. I was 17. Usually in big bands I played tenor sax, but, in this band, I played baritone sax and bass clarinet. Gil Evans came. He brought a wide variety of music. There were Gershwin tunes from "Porgy & Bess." There were Jimi Hendrix tunes, like "Stone Free." Gil had the broadest tastes--from Louis Armstrong and Jelly Roll Morton all the way up to Hendrix and forward. I knew some of the tunes we were playing from Gil's records, but there was one tune we were playing that I'd never heard, "Copenhagen Sights." That piece resonated with me--with its beautiful voicings and mysterious minor key vibes. At the end of one of the rehearsals, on stage at Jordan Hall, I went over to Gil, and I mustered some courage and spoke to him. I said something like, "Gee, Mr. Evans, it's such an honor to play with you. I really loved this piece 'Copenhagen Sights.' Is it on a record?" At that point, it would have been vinyl or cassette. There were no CDs just yet. And I think he said, "No," and then he handed me a cassette. "But it's on this tape. Just take it, dub it, and bring it back to



me tomorrow at rehearsal." And so Gil, as far as I knew, was letting me copy unreleased material, the holy grail. "Copenhagen Sights" was released years later, it appears, as part of a series of live sessions at The Public Theater in Lower Manhattan. So, when Gil laid it on me, it was unreleased. I was struck by his kindness and

generosity to a kid he didn't even know. ¶

—Rob Scheps with Kevin Rabas

AEBERSOLD CONTINUED FROM 14

The Jazz Ambassadors Board is now pleased to announce that the partnership will also present a series of free monthly concerts to take place in the American Jazz Museum Atrium on select Sunday afternoons this summer.

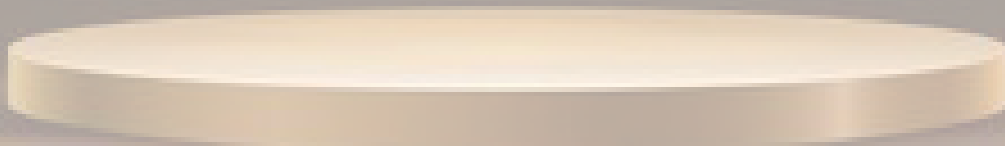
This summer, on Sunday afternoons, in the American Jazz Museum Atrium, the Ambassadors-Jamey Aebersold-Jazz Clinic-Concert Series presents 4 concerts @ 3pm, a 60-70 minute program with time at the conclusion for Q & A and to mingle with the musicians. ¶

Kansas City Jazz Ambassadors 2024 JAM Jazz Awards Nominations are NOW OPEN!

The JAM Awards honors your favorite Kansas City jazz musicians. Jazz lovers are invited to nominate their favorite local jazz musicians in a variety of a categories.

This is a people's choice award, so it's a chance to honor your personal favorites! Nominations will be announced in the September issue of JAM, when voting for your favorite jazz artists will begin. Winners will be announced at the Jazz Ambassadors annual meeting/ party in December. Nominate your favorites today:

www.kcjazzambassadors.org/jamjazzawards



My Neo-Soul Addiction

My skin convulses to the sound of chords
notes and pings of an acoustic guitar,
saxophones screaming in my head
swirling my hands like a mad conductor.

My body gyrates to a song by Minnie
Riperton that I play over and over again,
followed by Nelson Rangell, Jill Scott
and Erykah Badu. I'm strung out
like a broken bass guitar.

I need a fix for my moods.
It's my stimulant, my cocaine
and crack that percolates my soul
and keeps me feigning for more.
When I want a downer,
I slit my wrists with Coltrane and Mingus.

I need to be high as a redwood to float
into a sublime submission with a syncopated
back beat reverberating sound until
I overdose or my grooves are worn.

I jerk in and out of rhythm
look around for the next puff of voices,
snort of cool steel from the reed
of instrumental melodies.

Is there a place for music addiction?
Hi, my name is Janet and I'm an addict.
The group of addicts greet me
in a cappella.

by Janet Banks

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David Basse

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Chamber Orchestra - Friday, June 21st @ 7:30 P.M.

Chamber Ensembles - Saturday, June 22nd @ 7:30 P.M.

Jazz Night w/David Basse - Monday, June 24th @ 7:30 P.M.

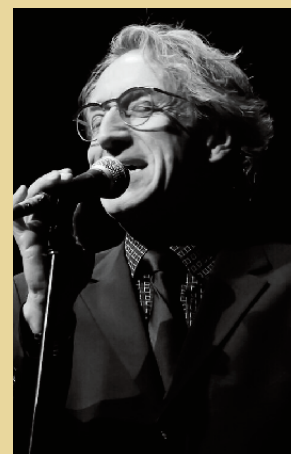
Chamber Ensembles - Tuesday, June 25th @ 7:30 P.M.

Chamber Orchestra - Wednesday, June 26th @ 7:30 P.M.

Chamber Ensembles - Friday, June 28th @ 7:30 P.M.

Blanche Bryden Concert - Saturday, June 29th @ 3 P.M.

Chamber Orchestra - Saturday, June 29th @ 7:30 P.M.



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