

Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz Festival Celebrates 35th Anniversary With World Renowned Headliners, June 30 & July 1



The Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz Festival, one of the most celebrated and longest-running jazz events in the world, will celebrate its landmark 35th Anniversary at Saratoga Performing Arts Center, June 30 and July 1, with a dynamic lineup of more than 20 acclaimed artists and ensembles on two stages. Festival headliners include Diana Krall, Chris Botti, Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Esperanza Spalding "Radio Music Society," Hiromi Trio Project, Yellowjackets, and Maceo Parker, among others. Ticket sales for the Festival are on sale online now for SPAC members; online sales to the public begin March 12. Tickets and information are available at www.spac.org

Located in Saratoga Springs, New York, Saratoga Performing Arts Center has been the site of the Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz Festival since 1978. With an inside seating capacity of 5,200, lawn seating of 20,000, world class jazz talent performing on two stages and an idyllic State Park setting located just three hours driving time from either Boston or New York City, the festival draws thousands of fans from across the Northeast and throughout North America.

"Over the past 35 years, more than half a million fans have experienced the extraordinary combination of music and atmosphere that has made the Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz

Festival into one of the longest-running and most celebrated music events in the world," said Marcia J. White, SPAC's President and Executive Director. "Founded by jazz impresario George Wein in 1978, the festival has featured a 'Who's Who' of jazz greats that includes Ray Charles, Dave Brubeck, Miles Davis, Tito Puente, Sonny Rollins, Joshua Redman, Wynton Marsalis and dozens more. George had the vision to realize that if he 'built it, they would come.' 35 years later, his dream lives on; this festival remains a mecca for jazz and music lovers across the Northeast."

"Throughout all of these years, the high quality music and the audience's dedication and enthusiasm for the music have been consistent," stated Danny Melnick, President of Absolutely Live Entertainment, which co-produces the festival with SPAC. "This year's festival has been programmed to celebrate this."

Melnick cites the Gazebo Stage programming as a testament to this. Billed as "Encore Series at the Gazebo," featured artists will include (with their respective, previous SPAC appearance): Jeremy Pelt Quintet (2004), Sachal Vasandani (2007), Trio of Oz featuring Omar Hakim & Rachel Z (2010), Pedrito Martinez Group (2011), Mario Abney & The Abney Effect (2010), Edmar Castaneda (2006), Sarah Morrow Elektrik Air (2004), Catherine Russell (2006), Steve Kroon Sextet (2010), and Brian Mitchell Band (2011).

"For the Gazebo Stage, this is the first time in the history of the festival where we've brought back artists that have previously played there," added Melnick. "In that regard, the encore series is really a gift to the festival's longtime fans who have asked us to 'bring back' these artists. This is our way of thanking fans for their continued support."

In addition to performances on SPAC's Amphitheatre and Gazebo stages, the festival features a fine arts and crafts fair, CD signings by artists, a full-service bar in the Hall of Springs, southern style barbeque and other food vendors, and a children's craft area. Guests may also bring in their own food

and beverages, as well as blankets, tents and lawn umbrellas. Parking for the event is free.

“As it’s been for 35 years, this festival is still all about ‘the hang’ – that fabulous vibe produced by the combination of amazing music, dedicated fans and a laid-back atmosphere. That experience is what truly sets our festival apart,” said White.

New this year, Stella Artois joins the festival as the lead sponsor of the lawn experience, often referred to by fans as “the hang.” The upscale Belgian beer brand sponsors many high-profile arts and cultural events including the Chicago Jazz Festival, the Singapore Jazz Festival and the Sundance Film Festival.

“Our idyllic State Park setting is an asset that enhances the whole jazz experience. Our lush lawn, framed by majestic pines, is the perfect place to stretch out and relax. Gourmet picnics and lively conversations create a welcoming atmosphere and children dance between rows of colorful blankets. Once people discover this festival, they return season after season. It becomes a destination they look forward to all year long,” said White.

2012 Freihofer’s Saratoga Jazz Festival Headliners

Saturday, June 30, Starting at Noon

Trumpeter CHRIS BOTTI is the largest selling American jazz instrumental artist, with nearly three million albums sold worldwide. His success has crossed over to audiences usually reserved for pop music and his ongoing association with PBS has led to four #1 Jazz Albums, as well as multiple Gold, Platinum & GRAMMY® Awards. This will be Botti’s fourth appearance at the festival. His last appearance was in 2008.

In 2007, the festival featured bassist, vocalist and composer ESPERANZA SPALDING on the Gazebo Stage, preceding her breakout, self-titled 2008 album/debut on Heads Up International. Since that time, Spalding has emerged as one of

the brightest lights in the musical world. Releasing her best-selling 2010 album *Chamber Music Society*, listeners were well aware that the young musician from Portland, Oregon is the real deal, with a unique and style-spanning presence, deeply rooted in jazz yet destined to make her mark far beyond the jazz realm. That judgment was confirmed on February 13, 2011, when Spalding became the first jazz musician to receive the GRAMMY® Award for Best New Artist. The festival is proud to have recognized and presented Spalding's talent early in her career and is thrilled to present her for a second time, on the Amphitheatre Stage, in 2012 with "RADIO MUSIC SOCIETY" (in support of her new album of the same name).

Saxophonist MACEO PARKER's name is widely considered "synonymous with Funky Music" and his band, "the tightest little funk orchestra on earth." Parker grew to become the lynchpin of the James Brown enclave for the best part of two decades. His signature style helped define James' brand of funk, and the phrase: "Maceo, I want you to Blow!" passed into the language. He's still the most sampled musician around simply because of the unique quality of his sound. Known for his powerful stage presence, Parker will perform Saturday night's closing set. This marks his third festival appearance and first in 12 years.

Hailed as one of the "best jazz orchestras in the world" by The Washington Post, the GRAMMY® Award winning MINGUS BIG BAND features 14 virtuoso members, celebrating the music of legendary composer/bassist Charles Mingus, who died in 1979. In 2011, the band won a GRAMMY® Award in the category of "Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album," for *Mingus Big Band Live at Jazz Standard*, the 10th Mingus Big Band recording, seven of which have been nominated for GRAMMY® Awards. The Mingus legacy is no stranger to SPAC. In 1978, on the first day of the first annual festival, George Wein presented a salute to Mingus, featuring a 24-piece big band directed by Paul Jeffrey. The ensemble included musicians such as saxophonist

Michael Brecker, guitarist John Scofield and baritone saxophonist Cecil Payne, among others. The festival celebrated the 15th anniversary of this tribute in 1993 with another Mingus-themed program.

GRAMMY® , Emmy® and Two-Time Latin GRAMMY® Award Winning pianist and composer MICHEL CAMILO will make his fifth festival appearance, this time debuting "Mano a Mano," a project comprised of master conguero Giovanni Hidalgo and bassist Charles Flores. The group released an eponymous album in 2011 that bridges the genres of jazz, classical, and Afro-Caribbean music (favorably reviewed on PRI's "The World"). Camilo's last festival performance was in 2001.

GRAMMY® Award-winning bassist extraordinaire, composer, arranger, educator, curator and former Creative Chair for Jazz at the Los Angeles Philharmonic, CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE is one of the most omnipresent figures in jazz. He has performed and recorded with legends including McCoy Tyner, Herbie Hancock, Pat Metheny, Diana Krall, Chick Corea, Wynton Marsalis and Joshua Redman as well as with hip-hop, soul, pop and classical artists such as Sting, Questlove, and soprano Kathleen Battle. At this year's festival, he will perform with his esteemed working ensemble INSIDE STRAIGHT. The group released their debut album, Kind of Brown, on Mack Avenue Records in 2009. McBride has since released two projects on the label: his GRAMMY® Award winning big band project, The Good Feeling and Conversations with Christian. This will be his second festival appearance as a leader and fourth overall (he last appeared in 2003). Additionally, McBride made his first appearance at the festival in 1991 with the young all-star group, "Jazz Futures," featuring Roy Hargrove, Antonio Hart, Carl Allen, Tim Warfield, Mark Whitfield and Benny Green.

With a sound that draws equally from the inspiration of Miles Davis and New Orleans' second line brass band tradition, trumpeter MARIO ABNEY is emerging as a major new voice in 21st century jazz. Abney and his band, THE ABNEY EFFECT, are one of

the most sought after jazz groups on New Orleans' vibrant jazz scene. Abney has performed as a sideman and leader with everyone from Erykah Badu to Wynton Marsalis and has also been a musical guest on the acclaimed HBO dramatic series, Treme. Abney made his SPAC debut in 2010.

Sunday, July 1, Starting at Noon

Pianist and vocalist DIANA KRALL – known for her graceful contralto vocals – will make her fourth festival appearance. Krall's success has been evident by her ability to top both pop and jazz charts, win GRAMMY® Awards, play sold out amphitheaters around the world and sell millions of records worldwide since her debut in 1993. In 2009, she released her 12th album, Quiet Nights (Verve), combining Brazilian and West Coast jazz styles as well as featuring three recordings of songs by bossa nova legend Antonio Carlos Jobim. She appears on Paul McCartney's new album; on the Chimes of Freedom: The Songs of Bob Dylan Honoring 50 Years of Amnesty International compilation; and is currently working on her next album. Krall made three consecutive appearances at the festival, from 1999-2001, and the festival is proud she's returning for this special 35th Anniversary.

Called the "Jimi Hendrix of the Trombone" in a recent profile by Rhythms' magazine, trombone/trumpet phenomenon Troy "TROMBONE SHORTY" Andrews, along with his band ORLEANS AVENUE, will make their SPAC debut by closing the festival on Sunday with their signature "Supafunkrock" sound – a combination of New Orleans' funk, rock, R&B and hip-hop. The New Orleans born and bred musician has had a meteoric rise since the 2010 release of his GRAMMY® nominated 2010 debut album, Backatown and recently released follow up album, For True (released in September). He was invited to perform at The White House on February 21, 2012 as part of the Black History Month celebration.

Over the past nine years since her debut recording, Japanese pianist and composer HIROMI has created quite a buzz within

the greater creative music community. Mentored by keyboard giants such as Ahmad Jamal and Chick Corea, and working with artists such as Stanley Clarke and Lenny White, she has a truly unique musical world-view and dynamic piano style. The diversity of her music runs the gamut of rock, jazz, and classical creating a truly cross-cultural experience. Now with seven albums to her name and critical acclaim, the festival is proud to have presented her in 2003 at the beginning of her career on the Gazebo Stage, and welcomes her back for a second appearance – this time on the Amphitheatre Stage, leading her TRIO PROJECT featuring renowned bassist Anthony Jackson and extraordinary drummer Simon Phillips (The Who, Toto, Jeff Beck).

Pianist, composer, educator and winner of the Latin Jazz USA Outstanding Achievement Award for 2003, ARTURO O'FARRILL was born in Mexico and grew up in New York City. In 2002, O'Farrill created the AFRO LATIN JAZZ ORCHESTRA for Jazz at Lincoln Center due in part to a large and very demanding body of music in the Latin and Afro Cuban genres that deserved to be much more widely appreciated and experienced by the general jazz audience. Now in residence at New York City's Symphony Space and Birdland, O'Farill and the orchestra are currently celebrating their 10th Anniversary season. They have received one GRAMMY® Award and two additional GRAMMY® nominations (including one this year for their most recent project, 40 Acres and a Burro). In early February, the orchestra was featured on the CBS Evening News. O'Farrill and the Orchestra will make their festival debut. Their appearance at this year's 35th Anniversary festival is timely; the first festival in 1978 presented a who's who of nine great big bands, including bands under the direction of Woody Herman, Buddy Rich, Count Basie, Maynard Ferguson, Thad Jones/Mel Lewis, Stan Kenton, and Mercer Ellington (and the Duke Ellington Orchestra), among others.

Recently celebrating their 30th anniversary as a recording and

touring group, the GRAMMY® Award winning YELLOWJACKETS will make their third SPAC appearance and first in 24 years. Known for their unique musical identity, the band's sound is a blend of funk, fusion, and straight-ahead jazz. Comprised of longstanding keyboardist Russell Ferrante, saxophonist Bob Mintzer, and drummer Will Kennedy, the band recently announced that bassist Felix Pastorius, son of legendary bassist Jaco Pastorius, has been selected to fill in for co-founder Jimmy Haslip (who recently announced that he will take a yearlong hiatus). Their festival performance will be one of their first North American performances with Pastorius. Timeline, the band's recent release and debut on Mack Avenue Records, received two nominations for the 54th Annual GRAMMY® Awards (marking the group's 18th GRAMMY® Nomination overall).

TRIO OF OZ featuring OMAR HAKIM & RACHEL Z returns to the festival following their 2010 SPAC debut. Featuring world renowned drummer Hakim (who has performed with artists such as Herbie Hancock, Miles Davis, Weather Report, Sting, and David Bowie) and pianist extraordinaire Rachel Z (whose work with such artists as Wayne Shorter, Steps Ahead, and Peter Gabriel has earned her international recognition and acclaim), the group has been recognized for its unique arrangements of jazz standards and chart topping Rock hits of the past 30 years.

Tickets

Tickets for the festival begin at \$55 for general admission adult. Children 12 and under are free on the lawn. Tickets are on sale online for SPAC members now; online sales for the public start on March 12.