

Celebrating two of jazz' most distinguished octogenarians, the Jazz at Lincoln Center with Wynton Marsalis fêted **McCoy Tyner** and **Charles McPherson** at Rose Hall (Apr. 5th). Tyner, seated in the audience, received a standing ovation when introduced by Music Director/alto saxophonist Sherman Irby. The music began with orchestra pianist Dan Nimmer swinging Tyner's "Inception", accompanied by the composer's regular rhythm section of bassist Gerald Cannon and drummer Joe Farnsworth. The full orchestra, with members of the saxophone section doubling on clarinets and flutes, was heard to great effect on Chris Crenshaw's powerful arrangement of "Man From Tanganyika" and Ted Nash's beautiful orchestration of "Ballad For Aisha". Cannon and Farnsworth joined the band for Irby's soulful take on "Blues On The Corner" before the first half of the show ended with Victor Goines' tour de force scoring of "Fly with the Wind". The orchestra kicked off the McPherson section of the show slipping into classic big band mode, with Nash's Ellington-ian arrangement of "Jumping Jacks", followed by guest arranger Papo Vazquez' pulsating AfroCaribbean outing on "Marionette". McPherson joined the band for Goines' arrangement of "Horizons", he and Marsalis blowing potently. Orchestrations of "Nightfall" and "7th Dimension" by Marcus Printup and Kenny Rampton, respectively, underscored McPherson's composing talent while closer "Bud Like" showcased his bebopping alto. —*Russ Musto*

"We're just going to do some standards tonight," Dave Liebman explained from his seat at Jazz at Kitano's bar (Apr. 6th). "With this group, we'll let it go where it goes. The less said," he added with a sly grin, "the better." The barely veiled promise of jazz classics taken to parts unknown was most welcome. Of course, the definition of "standard" itself becomes fluid in such hands. John Abercrombie's "Vertigo" (dedicated to the composer by bandleader/drummer Michael Stephans), a lilting piano melody against a soft double-time gallop, demonstrated the breadth of **Quartette Oblique**. Bassist Drew Gress, as always, drove from under, dropping accented octave-leaps that colored Liebman's soprano and the ringing Bill Evans-like harmonies of pianist Marc Copland. Later, the quartet utterly nailed "In a Sentimental Mood", with Stephans' timpani mallets drawing out lush depth from his tomtoms and cymbals and Liebman's tenor forging a new voice to the legendary Coltrane lead. But Ellington's iconic riff was replaced with the pure atmosphere that the evening expected. Still, the center work was a fascinating rendition of "Milestones" with Kurt Weill's "Speak Low" as its B section. Pushed at a wonderfully fast tempo, a pulsating ultra-sensitive simmer that built into a smoking climax, Stephans' whipped ride cymbal inspired Liebman to drop in unexpected strains of "Autumn Leaves". "That's why we named the band Oblique," the drummer later explained. "We approach every move from a side angle." —*John Pietaro*



Charles McPherson & Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra @ Rose Hall



Dave Liebman @ Jazz at Kitano

Bronx native **David Valentin** frequently performed at Hostos Center, so it was no surprise to find it filled with fans of the late flute player for a tribute set by his longtime pianist Bill O'Connell (Apr. 6th). Joined by fellow Valentin band members, bassist Lincoln Goines and drummer Robby Ameen, along with flutist Andrea Brachfeld and conguero Román Díaz, O'Connell rekindled the sound of Valentin's popular Latin jazz group with swinging arrangements of pieces from the band's repertoire. Things began with driving takes on Paul McCartney's "Blackbird" and Wayne Shorter's "Footprints" on which Brachfeld proved herself to be the rightful heir to Valentin's esteemed place in the pantheon of flute players, soaring over the band's exhilarating rhythms, then digging deep down on a stirring rendition of "I Loves You, Porgy". Ameen and Díaz opened up "Afro Blue" with a raucous percussion dialogue that powered the group through the piece. O'Connell's compositional skills came to the fore on set closer "Oasis" and throughout the second set, which debuted his AfroCaribbean Ensemble, adding the alto, tenor and baritone saxophones of Craig Handy, Ralph Bowen and Gary Smulyan, along with trumpeter Alex Sipiagin and trombonist Adam Machaskee, to the mix. Opening with "Wind Off The Hudson" and "Gospel 6", O'Connell confirmed he had much to add to the Latin jazz lexicon. He memorialized Jerry Gonzalez with his "Jerry's Blues", then ended with "Oye Como Va" and "C Jam Blues". (RM)

"Caribbean Roots of Jazzin' & Jammin'", presented by the Bronx Music Heritage Center (Apr. 13th), was a visceral celebration of West Indian heart of jazz. The three-hour presentation opened with duets by percussion master Andrew Cyrille and Bobby Sanabria, Latin drumming icon and Co-Artistic Director of the space. The two sat at opposing drumsets, but this was no face-off. Pulses locked and both became embedded in the engrossing communal cross-rhythms. Sanabria fired away like a machine gun, but Cyrille was a slower cooker, championing the rolling heartbeat over his entire kit, demonstrating the sheer musicality that has made him a legend. During a lengthy improvisation based on the Cuban traditional "Babalu", Sanabria took the lead, adding Spanish vocals, playing congas with his left hand as the right danced over cowbells. Cyrille bored through the rollicking pulsations and between the two, they summoned the war gods. A panel of Wilson Decembre PhD, Lois Wilcken PhD and pianist Miguel Andres Tejada offered historic and political context: the role played by Haitian musicians, brutally enslaved, forcibly brought to New Orleans during the Haitian Revolution, was vital to the development of jazz. Music of Vodou culture was put on powerful display by La Troupe Makandal, a freewheeling multicultural ensemble featuring the traditional three-drummer frontline augmented by piano, bass and guitar/vocals. Messrs. Cyrille and Sanabria joined in for the tumultuous finale. (JP)

WHAT'S NEWS

The 2019 **Herb Alpert Award in the Arts** ceremony and 25th anniversary celebration will take place in New York on May 13th where the \$75,000 unrestricted prize will be given to five "risk-taking, mid-career artists". For more information, visit herbalpertawards.org.

The **Jazz Gallery's Annual Gala** will take place May 13th and honor Jack DeJohnette and Manfred Eicher (Lifetime Achievement Award), Wendy Oxenhorn (Contribution to the Arts Award) and Savion Glover (Trailblazer Award). For more information and to purchase tickets, visit jazzgallery.org.

SEED Artists' **Freedom of Sound** annual festival will take place at Montclair's arts-magnet middle school May 3rd-4th with a roster of Warren Smith, Andrew Cyrille, Billy Hart, Glen Velez, Susie Ibarra, Cyro Baptista, DD Jackson, Adam Rudolph/Ralph Jones, Kalun Leung/Adam Vidiakis, Ravish Momin/Val Jeanty, Roopa Mahavedan and others plus a wide array of community activities. For more information, visit seedartists.org.

Saxophonist **Wayne Shorter** will receive an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree as part of the 2019 Rutgers University commencement ceremony May 22nd.

The 24th annual **Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Band Competition** will take place at Jazz at Lincoln Center May 9th-11th. Local participants are Newark Academy (Livingston, NJ) and William H. Hall High School (West Hartford, CT). For more information, visit jazz.org/ee.

Making the Jazz Gumbo: An International Conference on Repertoires that Influenced and were Influenced by Early Jazz—Marking the 100th Anniversary of the death of James Reese Europe, presented by the Historic Brass Society, will take place at CUNY Graduate Center May 8th, with participants including Jimmy Owens, Bobby Sanabria, Jeff Nussbaum, John Graziano, Jason Moran, Ehud Asherie, Frederick Starr, Jack Stewart, Michael Dinwiddle, Ned Sublette, Krin Gabbard, Ralph Barrett, Graham Haynes, Paul Niemisto, Thomas Garcia, Laura Moore Pruett and others. For more information, visit historicbrass.org.

The Jazz Journalists Association has announced its **2019 Jazz Heroes**. Local recipients are Marjorie Eliot of ParlorJazz and promoter/publisher/booker Jim Harrison. For more information, visit jjazzawards.org.

Guitarist **Julian Lage** was awarded the 2019 Paul Acket Award by the North Sea Jazz Festival. Trumpeter **Leroy Jones** was awarded the 2019 Ascona Jazz Award by the JazzAscona Festival.

The New School's College of Performing Arts presents the ninth edition of **(Un)Silent Film Night** on May 10th at 7 pm, with students performing live to films. The program will be The Film Ensemble led by Angelica Sanchez, The NYC Composers Ensemble directed by Mary Halvorson and Nir Felder and Matt Wilson's Student Ensemble. For more information, visit events.newschool.edu.

Last month saw the reopening of the famed **Keystone Korner** in Baltimore, the third iteration of the club after San Francisco and Tokyo, in a collaboration between original founder Todd Barkan and Michelin-starred chef Robert Wiedmaier. For more information, visit keystonekornerbaltimore.com.

The **Robert D. Bielecki Foundation** has announced two 2019 grant recipients: \$5,000 to The Kitchen in support of Wadada Leo Smith's *Rosa Parks: Pure Love. An Oratorio of Seven Songs* and \$10,000 to the Vision Festival in support of Andrew Cyrille's 2019 Lifetime Achievement Celebration. For more information, visit rdbf.org.

Brooklyn's Billie Holiday Theatre will present **A Walk Into Slavery: An Oral History of the Present**, a collaboration of Hollis King, Carl Hancock Rux and Indra Etwaroo marking the 400th anniversary of the first slaves brought to the colonies from Africa, Apr. 30th-May 4th. For more information, visit thebillieholiday.org.

As part of the Hostos Center's "**Machito & the Impact of the Afro-Cubans at 80**" event (May 2nd-4th), there will be several educational events: "Never Before Heard Recordings" (May 2nd and 4th at 6 pm); a tour of the exhibition "Machito and Mario: The Roots of Afro-Cuban Jazz" (May 3rd at 6:30 pm); a screening of the film *Machito: A Latin Jazz Legacy* (May 3rd at 7 pm); a rhythm section workshop (May 4th at 1:30 pm); and the panel discussion "Machito, Bauzá & Graciela: Creating a Genre that Endures" (May 4th at 3:30 pm). For more information, visit hostos.cuny.edu/culturearts/events/Year2019/May/Machito/Machito.shtml.

Manhattan School of Music (MSM), ELMA Music Foundation and Hugh Masekela Heritage Foundation have announced **The Hugh Masekela Heritage Scholarship**, providing full scholarships to six South African music students to pursue Bachelor of Music degrees at MSM, Masekela's alma mater.

Emmet Cohen has been named the winner of the 2019 American Pianists Awards, receiving a cash prize and two years of career advancement and support valued at over \$100,000 and a recording contract with Mack Avenue Music Group. For more information, visit americanpianists.org.

Carnegie Hall has announced the musicians for the **2019 NYO Jazz**, a four-week intensive summer program for American jazz instrumentalists (ages 16-19): saxophones: Sophia Kickhofel, Ian Muñoz, Evan Kappelman, Cole Palensky, Jason Arkins; trumpets: Ethan Avery, Summer Camargo, Janelle Finton, Ariel Mejia, Jack Towse; trombones: Jeremy Duke, Jett Lim, Leo Markel, Omeed Nyman; rhythm: Seth Finch, Miles Lennox, Emmanuel Michael, Nico Wohl, Jayla Chee, Will Hazlehurst, Anton Kot. For more information, visit carnegiehall.org/NYOJazz.

As Told To G/D Thyself, a short film from saxophonist **Kamasi Washington**, was released exclusively on Apple Music last month. For more information, visit kamasiwashington.com/astoldtogodthyself.

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