

JerseyJazz

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CENTRAL JERSEY JAZZ 2019 FESTIVAL

Dedicated to the performance, promotion and preservation of jazz.

The weekend of September 13-15 this year will mark the sixth three-city Central Jersey Jazz Festival, and the lineups are packed with jazz superstars and rising stars.

The Somerville Jazz Festival, created by WBGO weekend host Sheila Anderson, was launched in September 2009. Four years later, New Brunswick added a September jazz festival, hosted by the New Brunswick Jazz Project, on the Saturday preceding Somerville; and the Central Jersey Jazz Festival was born. The following year, Flemington's Business Improvement District joined the party, adding a jazz festival on the Friday night before New Brunswick; and the Central Jersey Jazz Festival was reborn as a full weekend event. All three days are now sponsored by RWJ Barnabas Health. All three events are free and will go on, rain or shine.



Flemington

With one exception -- in 2016 -- the Flemington performances have been held downtown on Main Street. But, this year, according to Laura Smith, operations manager, the festival is being moved to Stangl Road due to downtown construction.

The headliner in Flemington will be drummer Winard Harper, who performed at the first Flemington festival in 2014. Other performers will be singer-songwriter Jeanne Gies and keyboardist/composer Willem Delisfort. Musicians from the New Jersey Performing Arts Center's Wells Fargo Jazz for Teens program will perform in between sets.

Harper is a modern-day version of Art Blakey, often featuring young sidemen on the way up. *Chicago Tribune* critic Howard Reich describes him as "the mature master nurturing the next wave of Young Lions, just as he had been trained in the heat of battle by saxophonists Dexter Gordon and Johnny Griffin and singer Betty Carter, among others." Harper calls his band Jeli Posse, named after the balafone, a vibraphone-type instrument from West Africa.

Gies was dubbed "a pro" by Newport Jazz Festival founder George Wein and is recognized for her full-bodied, emotionally expressive voice and distinctive phrasing. Delisfort, who plays piano and organ, has worked with a wide variety of musicians from Lauryn Hill and Jennifer Holliday to Jimmy Heath, Louis Bellson, and Lew Soloff. NJPAC's Jazz for Teens program brings together 7th-12th grade instrumental and vocal students from diverse communities in the NJ/NY/PA region for multi-faceted, intensive instruction in jazz. The Flemington concert is produced by Sheila Anderson.

New Brunswick

Produced by the New Brunswick Jazz Project, the Saturday New Brunswick festival will feature the Dizzy Gillespie Afro-Latin Experience, the DIVA Five Play quintet, and a group led by drummer Jerome Jennings. There will be additional performances by the New Brunswick Jazz Brass.

Members of the Dizzy Gillespie Afro-Latin Experience are drawn from a pool of performers who play with the Dizzy

NEW JERSEY JAZZ FESTIVAL 2019

Friday, September 13, Flemington

6-7 P.M. WILLERM DELISFORT
7:30 - 8:30 P.M. JEANNE GIES
9-10 P.M. WINARD HARPER

Additional performances by NJPAC Jazz for Teens

Sponsors: Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce, ShopRite, Borough of Flemington, Unity Bank

Sunday, September 15, Somerville

1-2:15 P.M. BRIANNA THOMAS
2:45-4 P.M. JAVON JACKSON
4:30-6 P.M. NAT ADDERLEY, JR.

Additional performances by NJPAC Jazz for Teens

Sponsors: Downtown Somerville Alliance, Arts On Division, Regal Bank, Somerset County Cultural and Heritage Commission, Somerset Patriots, WBGO

Saturday, September 14, New Brunswick

1-2:15 P.M. JEROME JENNINGS
2:45-4 P.M. DIVA JAZZ QUINTET - FIVE PLAY
4:30-6 P.M. DIZZY GILLESPIE AFRO LATIN EXPERIENCE

Additional performances by New Brunswick Jazz Brass

Sponsors: New Brunswick Cultural Center, Inc., New Brunswick City Center, Tavern on George, Hub City Sounds, New Brunswick Parking Authority, Magyar Bank, Johnson & Johnson, Worldwide Piano



Dizzy Gillespie Afro-Latin Experience



Brianna Thomas

Gillespie Big Band and All-Star groups. That lineup often includes bassist John Lee, trumpeter Freddie Hendrix, saxophonist Sharel Cassity, pianist/vocalist Abelita Mateus, drummer Tommy Campbell, and percussionist Roger Squitiero. Reviewing one of the band's performances, *The Washington Post* proclaimed: "Gillespie's multifaceted legacy should shine bright."

DIVA Five Play is a sister group of the DIVA Jazz Orchestra, which celebrated its 25th anniversary last year. Both groups are led by drummer Sherrie Maricle. Other members of the quintet are pianist Tomoko Ohno, bassist Noriko Ueda, trumpeter Jami Dauber, and tenor saxophonist/clarinetist Janelle Reichman; tenor saxophonist Nicole Glover will sub for Reichman in New Brunswick. *Audiophile Review's* Paul Wilson, appraising the group's latest album, *Live From the Firehouse Stage* (5play2019), described the CD's content as "fun music from five gifted and highly skilled musicians having what certainly seems to be a really good time." Jennings is resident conductor of The Juilliard Jazz Orchestra. *JazzTimes's* Dan Bilawsky described him as "a drummer who's well-schooled in hard bop and well-versed in jazz dialects."

The NBJP was founded in 2010 by Virginia DeBerry, Jimmy Lenihan, and Michael Tublin with a goal of putting live jazz back into New Brunswick. Initially, there were gigs twice a month; now, there is live jazz five nights a week.

Somerville

Keyboardist Nat Adderley, Jr., tenor saxophonist Javon Jackson, and vocalist Brianna Thomas will perform in Somerville. All three will be making an encore appearance at the festival. Adderley, Jr. served as the music director for rhythm & blues singer Luther Vandross for several years. After Vandross's death in 2005, Adderley, Jr., returned to his jazz roots, often performing tributes to his uncle, alto saxophonist Cannonball Adderley, whose quintet included his father, trumpeter Nat Adderley.

Jackson is an alumnus of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. He has recorded 14 albums as a leader and has played or performed with several jazz legends including bassist Ron Carter, trumpeter Freddie Hubbard, and drummer Elvin Jones. The *Wall Street Journal's* Will Friedwald wrote that Thomas "may well be the best young straight-ahead jazz singer of her generation." NJPAC's Jazz for Teens musicians will also play in Somerville. Founder Sheila Anderson continues to produce the Somerville festival.

Anderson recalled the origins of the first Somerville festival. "As I remember it, Cynthia Hollod, who was then executive director of the Downtown Somerville Alliance, asked me to speak to them about doing a jazz festival. After several meetings with the committee, the festival was born. That first lineup on September 13, 2009, was: the Harry Allen Quartet, Sherman Irby Organomics, Gretchen Parlato Trio, and Jimmy Heath. **J**

JerseyJazz

c/o New Jersey Jazz Society
Michael A. Katz
382 Springfield Ave., Suite 217
Summit NJ 07901

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