

**The National Jazz Museum in Harlem**  
**104 East 126th Street**  
**New York, NY 10035**  
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<http://www.jazzmuseuminharlem.org/>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 2/29/08

## ***National Jazz Museum in Harlem's March Schedule***

- ***Jazz for Curious Listeners focus on jazz and poetry***
- ***Jazz for Curious Readers with author Ashley Khan***
- ***Performances by vocalist Melba Joyce, and Bill Mays***
- ***Harlem Speaks: Father Peter O'Brien and Geri Allen***

The National Jazz Museum in Harlem announces its full schedule of March 2008 events, from a new series of **Harlem Speaks Education Initiative** classes for youth, a discussion with author Ashley Khan for **Jazz for Curious Readers**, to live performances featuring Melba Joyce and pianist Bill Mays on separate dates.

**Harlem Speaks**, now in its fifth year of free programming, is proud to honor Father Peter O'Brien and Geri Allen, both of whom have very special relationships to the music and legacy of the great pianist, composer and arranger Mary Lou Williams. Appropriate for Women's History Month, we welcome this chance to explore William's life and career while engaging Father O'Brien and Geri Allen in a discussion about their own work and journey through the world of jazz.

**Saturday, March 1, 2008**

### **Harlem Speaks Education Initiative**

**Guest: Organist and Pianist Sarah McLawler**

1:30 – 2:30pm | At the Harlem School of the Arts

645 St. Nicholas Ave. (off 141<sup>st</sup> Street)

FREE

Hammond B-3 organist and singer Sarah McLawler was raised in the church with gospel music, and studied organ at an Indiana Conservatory. Influenced heavily by the music of the big bands, McLawler used to sneak into clubs in Indianapolis to hear Lucky Millinder's big band, with whom she ended up going on the road. She later formed an all-woman band, the Syn-Co-Ettes. They spent some time as a house band at Chicago's Savoy Club.

After meeting Richard Otto, a classical violinist who also performed jazz, at a residency at a Brooklyn club, she married him and the two spent years touring and recording together. As fixtures on the New York jazz scene in the 1950s, they became close to with the likes of Milt Jackson, Errol Garner, Dinah Washington, Cab Calloway, Nat Cole, Tony Bennett, Sammy Davis, Jr. and others. Washington was so taken with McLawler's playing, she once offered to be her manager.

During the 1950s, McLawler recorded singles for the King and Brunswick labels that are now collectors' items: "I Can't Stop Loving You" "Love, Sweet Love," as well as "Red Light" "Tipping In" "Let's Get the Party Rocking" and "Blue Room." Her recordings with her husband, violinist Richard Otto include "Somehow," "Yesterday" "Body & Soul" for Brunswick, and "Babe in the Woods" "Relax, Miss Frisky" "Flamingo" "Canadian Sunset" and "At the Break of Day" for Vee-Jay.

McLawler continues to breathe life into jazz standards, performing major shows at the Newport Jazz Festivals, the Newark Jazz Festival, and recently at St. Peter's Church for the annual tribute to Lester Young. She's lived in Harlem for many years, and regularly performs at Chez Josephine restaurant in midtown Manhattan.

**Tuesday, March 4, 2008**

### **JAZZ FOR CURIOUS LISTENERS**

**Langston Hughes's recordings with Charles Mingus**

7:00 pm | [At the Harlem School of the Arts](#)

[645 St. Nicholas Ave. \(off 141<sup>st</sup> Street\)](#)

FREE

In 1925, the honorary Poet Laureate of Harlem, Langston Hughes, won first prize in the magazine of the National Urban League, *Opportunity*. The poem was entitled "The Weary Blues." In 1958 Hughes collaborated with jazz writer and critic Leonard Feather and bassist Charles Mingus to adapt his award-winning poem to jazz.

"The Weary Blues" is about a jazz piano player and the effect he and his music had on Hughes, with a poetic meter based on the shuffle rhythm. It's also about freedom and democracy: "Democracy will not come this day, this year or ever, through compromise and fear/I have as much right as the other fellow has to stand on my two feet and own the land/I tire so of hearing people say let things take their course, tomorrow is another day/I do not need my freedom when I am dead/I cannot live on tomorrow's bread/Freedom is a strong seed, planted in a great need/I live here, too; I want freedom just as you."

The passionate and irascible Mingus, a towering figure of jazz bass and composition, also wrote about freedom, anticipating the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s with his "Fables of Faubus," a direct protest against Arkansas governor Orval E. Faubus, who in 1957 sent out the National Guard to prevent the integration of Little Rock Central High School by nine African American teenagers.

Come discover the intersection of jazz and poetry, freedom and song, via the historic alliance of Langston Hughes and Charles Mingus.

**Thursday, March 6, 2008**

### **Harlem Speaks**

**Guest: Father Peter O'Brien, Jazz Advocate**

6:30 pm | [At the Harlem School of the Arts](#)

[645 St. Nicholas Ave. \(off 141<sup>st</sup> Street\)](#)

**FREE**

Peter F. O'Brien, S.J. is a Roman Catholic priest and a member of The Society of Jesus (the Jesuits). He met legendary jazz pianist, arranger and composer Mary Lou Williams in 1964 when he was 23 and she 53 years of age. A deep friendship began immediately and endured until Ms. Williams' death in 1981. He began to represent her in some business matters as early as 1966 and became her personal manager in the autumn of 1970. He teaches English composition at St. Peter's College in Jersey City, NJ, and is a chaplain for Compassionate Care Hospice in that city. He is also the Executive Director of the Mary Lou Williams Foundation.

**Saturday, March 8, 2008**

### **Harlem Speaks Education Initiative**

**Guest: Trumpeter Dominick Farinacci**

1:30 – 2:30pm | [At the Harlem School of the Arts](#)

[645 St. Nicholas Ave. \(off 141<sup>st</sup> Street\)](#)

**FREE**

Twenty-four-year-old trumpeter Dominick Farinacci, a recent graduate of the Institute for Jazz Studies at The Juilliard School, has already recorded six records for the Japanese label, M & I Jazz. These recordings garnered Dominick the "International New Star" Award from *Swing Journal Magazine* (Japan) in 2003 ...

an honor that has been previously awarded to Christian McBride and Diana Krall, among others.

Dominick also received Gold Disc Awards (signifying a record of the month for *Swing Journal*) for three of those recordings. Dominick has already toured several times throughout Japan, and has performed in the USA with such luminaries as Tony Bennett, Ira Sullivan, Joey DeFrancesco, and Jason Miles. In December of 2000, Dominick performed with Wynton Marsalis (one of his mentors) and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra as a featured student in a Louis Armstrong tribute, which was broadcast on PBS's Live From Lincoln Center. In 2005, Dominick performed with his own groups at both the Blue Note and Birdland Jazz Club in New York, as well as at the Tanglewood Jazz Festival in September of that year.

Dominick's quartet recently recorded a live performance at the Kennedy Center in February 2006 for NPR's JazzSet with Dee Dee Bridgewater. He is currently performing regularly with his own group and as a sideman throughout the US and on several international tours this year.

**Monday, March 10, 2008**

### **JAZZ FOR CURIOUS READERS**

**Guest: Ashley Kahn, Author**

**Location: New York Public Library**

**(115th Street Branch 203 West 115th Street, New York, NY 10026)**

**Time: 6:00 – 7:30 pm**

Ashley Khan, one of the best jazz authors anywhere, will engage in a dialogue with National Jazz Museum in Harlem's own Loren Schoenberg for the organization's newest series, Jazz for Curious Readers. Kahn has written several books destined to be classics: *Kind of Blue:*

*The Making of the Miles Davis Masterpiece, A Love Supreme, and The Color of Jazz*, a fifty-year overview of photographer Pete Turner's one hundred most memorable album covers, which offers insight into Turner's signature use of bold color and composition while discussing how his work set new standards for the medium.

**Tuesday, March 11, 2008**

## **JAZZ FOR CURIOUS LISTENERS**

### **Jazz and Poetry**

7:00 pm | At the Harlem School of the Arts

645 St. Nicholas Ave. (off 141<sup>st</sup> Street)

FREE

Tonight's class is extension of last week's focus on the collaboration between Charles Mingus and Langston Hughes. This week we'll pursue the history of jazz poetry as a distinct genre. Hughes is the best candidate as founder of the jazz poetry genre, since none of the jazz-influenced poets who preceded him merged the two art forms as he did.

Hughes influenced many major jazz poets, including Sterling Brown, who published significant works in the 1930s. As a new genre, jazz poetry reflected the influence of jazz music upon culture in the 1920s. The jazz-related poets of the 1920s also reflect the all encompassing influence of jazz music in American society during the 1920s.

Modern poets in the jazz tradition include: Amiri Baraka, Marvin Bell, Hayden Carruth, Jayne Cortez, Michael S. Harper, Stanley Crouch, Jack Kerouac, Yusef Komunyaaka, Mina Loy, Kenneth Rexroth, and Sonia Sanchez.

**Saturday, March 15, 2008**

## **Harlem Speaks Education Initiative**

**Guest: Pianist Aaron Diehl**

1:30 – 2:30pm | At the Harlem School of the Arts

645 St. Nicholas Ave. (off 141<sup>st</sup> Street)

FREE

Hailed by the *Chicago Tribune* as "The most promising discovery that [Wynton] Marsalis has made since Eric Reed," Aaron Diehl has been an upcoming force in jazz, dazzling audiences with his brilliant technique, sensitive touch, and interpretations of the music of such great composers as Scott Joplin, Ferdinand "Jelly Roll" Morton, Art Tatum, and Duke Ellington, among others. Mr. Diehl has performed with the Wynton Marsalis Septet, Jazz at Lincoln Center, The Boston Symphony Orchestra, Wycliffe Gordon, Wessell Anderson, Benny Golson, and Hank Jones. He has released his first CD as a leader entitled "Mozart Jazz," on Pony Canyon, a major label in Japan. The Japanese television station NHK made a documentary on Mr. Diehl and Jazz at Juilliard, which was broadcast to over 5,000,000 people nationwide.

In 2002 he was recognized as one of the outstanding soloists at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Essentially Ellington Competition. The following year, Wynton Marsalis invited him to tour with his Septet on their summer European tour. Mr. Diehl is the 2004 recipient of the Martin E. Segal award for Jazz at Lincoln Center. He will soon be featured on Marian McPartland's NPR radio show "Piano Jazz." Mr. Diehl studies at The Juilliard School under Eric Reed, and Oxana Yablonskaya in the classical division. He is presently the musical director of St. Joseph of the Holy Family Church in Central Harlem

**Tuesday, March 18, 2008**

## **JAZZ FOR CURIOUS LISTENERS**

### **Jazz and Poetry**

7:00 pm | [At the Harlem School of the Arts](#)

[645 St. Nicholas Ave. \(off 141<sup>st</sup> Street\)](#)

[FREE](#)

Jazz poetry is a literary genre defined as poetry necessarily informed by jazz music—that is, poetry in which the poet responds to and writes about jazz. Jazz poetry, like the music itself, encompasses a variety of forms, rhythms, and sounds. Beginning with the birth of blues and jazz at the beginning of the twentieth century, jazz poetry can be seen as a thread that runs through the Harlem Renaissance, the Beat movement, and the Black Arts Movement—and it is still vibrant today. From early blues to free jazz to experimental music, jazz poets use their appreciation for the music as poetic inspiration.

Not only the music but the artists make frequent appearances in jazz poetry: Louis Armstrong, John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie, Billie Holiday, Charles Mingus, Thelonious Monk, Charlie Parker, Sonny Rollins, Bessie Smith, and Lester Young are just some of the muses for jazz poetry.

**Wednesday, March 19, 2008**

**JAZZ IN THE PARKS**

**Guest: Vocalist Melba Joyce**

**Location: Hansborough Recreation Center (35 W. 134th Street), Pelham Fritz Recreation Center in Marcus Garvey Park**

The National Jazz Museum in Harlem and continues its acclaimed JAZZ IN THE PARKS series presenting performance and interviews with Harlem legends. We continue on MARCH 19 at Hansborough Recreation Center, 135<sup>th</sup> Street between Lenox and Fifth Avenues with the one and only Melba Joyce. She has been featured in several educational programs at the Jazz Museum when she is in-between her usual international touring schedule.

Melba Joyce was born in Dallas, Texas, to a family of musicians including her mother, grandparents, and her father, Melvin Moore, a prominent jazz and swing-band vocalist who toured and recorded with Dizzy Gillespie. Ms. Joyce later moved with her family to Los Angeles, where she attended Antioch University West; after moving to LA, she was soon noticed by musicians and began opening for artists including Miles Davis, Freddie Hubbard, and Smokey Robinson and The Miracles, beginning a career that has spanned three decades, during which she has shared billing with Louis Armstrong, Sarah Vaughan, Louis Jordan, Lionel Hampton, Tony Bennett, Joe Williams, Marvin Gaye, and Smokey Robinson.

During the War in Vietnam, Ms. Joyce toured that country entertaining the troops, and upon her return she was appointed panelist for the Congressional Black Caucus's Women in Jazz Forum. She produced the first Women in Jazz Festival at Harlem's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, became a principal in the Day of the Child series for UNICEF, and, with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, produced the musical education series Jazz For Special People. In 1998, Ms. Joyce participated in the Kennedy Center-United States Information Agency Jazz Ambassadors program, which included a six-week tour of several African countries and a performance at the Kennedy Center.

In 2004, she was the first person to be honored by the Jazz Museum in Harlem's Harlem Speaks series, which honors artists who have continued the community's jazz legacy. In addition to her jazz vocal appearances, Melba Joyce appeared in the Broadway show *Black and Blue*; she understudied the three principal roles and also starred in the launching of the show's tour, which took her to major cities throughout the world. In August 2005, she joined the Count Basie Orchestra as featured vocalist.

**Thursday, March 20, 2008**

**HARLEM SPEAKS**

**Guest: Geri Allen, Pianist**

6:30 pm | At the Harlem School of the Arts

645 St. Nicholas Ave. (off 141<sup>st</sup> Street)

FREE

Geri Allen is an internationally known award-winning composer and pianist. Since 1982, she has recorded or performed with musicians as diverse as Charles Lloyd, Donald Walden, Bill Cosby, Mal Waldron, Sir Simon Rattle, Vernon Reid, Clark Terry, George Shirley, Ron Carter, Me'Shell Ndegeocello, Dewey Redman, Jimmy Cobb, Mary Wilson and The Supremes, Marcus Belgrave, Tony Williams, Betty Carter, Marian McPartland, Charlie Haden, Hal Wilner, Mino Cinelu, Ruth Brown, Billy Taylor, Oliver, Marianne Faithful, Wayne Shorter, Joan Rivers, and Oliver Lake among many others.

She has released a number of recordings under her own name including *The Nurturer*, *Eyes in the Back Of Your Head*, *Homegrown*, *The Printmakers Twenty One*, *Maroons*, *The Gathering* and most recently, the ambitious, critically acclaimed double CD *Geri Allen: Timeless Portraits and Dreams*. Among many notable awards, Ms. Allen is the first woman and youngest person to win the Danish Jazzpar prize.

A Detroit native, and a graduate of Detroit's famous magnet music school, Cass Technical High School, she also attended Howard University, where she also served as Assistant Professor of Music. During that period the University honored her with both the Distinguished Alumni and Distinguished Professor Awards. Professor Allen also holds a Master's Degree in Ethnomusicology from the University of Pittsburgh, where she studied with Dr. Nathan Davis, Dr. K Nketia, John Blacking, and Dr. Bell Yung.

She came to the School of Music, Theatre & Dance after teaching at New England Conservatory, The New School in NYC, and spending 25 years actively participating as a performing and recording artist who continues to be part of the Who's Who in Jazz on the NYC Jazz Scene today.

**Saturday, March 22, 2008**

**Harlem Speaks Education Initiative**

**Guest: Tenor Saxophonist Walter Blanding, Jr.**

1:30 – 2:30pm | At the Harlem School of the Arts

645 St. Nicholas Ave. (off 141<sup>st</sup> Street)

FREE

Walter Blanding (Tenor and Soprano Saxophones, Clarinet) was born August 14, 1971 in Cleveland, Ohio to a musical family and began playing the saxophone at age six. In 1981, he moved with his family to New York City, and by age 16, he was performing regularly with his parents at the Village Gate.

Blanding attended LaGuardia High School for the Performing Arts and continued his studies at the New School for Social Research, receiving his B.F.A. in May, 2005. His 1991 debut release, *Tough Young Tenors* was acclaimed as one of the best jazz albums of the year and his artistry began to impress listeners and critics alike. Since that time, in addition to the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, he has performed, toured and/or recorded with not only his own groups, but also with such renowned artists as the Cab Calloway Orchestra, Roy Hargrove, Hilton Ruiz, Count Basie Orchestra, Illinois Jacquet Big Band, Wycliffe Gordon, Marcus Roberts, Wynton Marsalis Quintet, Issac Hayes, and many others.

Mr. Blanding lived in Israel for 4 years where he had a major impact on the music scene, touring the country with his own ensemble and with invited U.S. artists, such as Louis Hayes, Eric Reed, Vanessa Rubin and others, to perform there. He also taught music in several Israeli schools and even opened his own private school in Tel Aviv. During this period, Newsweek International described him in a feature article as "Jazz Ambassador to Israel."

**Tuesday, March 25, 2008**

## **JAZZ FOR CURIOUS LISTENERS**

### **Jazz and Poetry**

7:00 pm | [At the Harlem School of the Arts](#)

[645 St. Nicholas Ave. \(off 141<sup>st</sup> Street\)](#)

[FREE](#)

Jazz poetry can be defined as poetry that "demonstrates jazz-like rhythm or the feel of improvisation". During the 1920s, several poets began to eschew the conventions of rhythm and style; among these were Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, and E.E. Cummings. The significance of the simultaneous evolution of poetry and jazz during the 1920s was apparent to many poets of the era, resulting in the merging of the two art forms into jazz poetry. Jazz poetry has long been something of an "outsider" art form that exists somewhere outside the mainstream, having been conceived in the 1920s by African-Americans, maintained in the 1950s by counterculture poets like those of the Beat generation, and adapted in modern times into hip-hop music and live poetry events known as poetry slams.

Friday, March 28, 2008

## HARLEM IN THE HIMALAYAS

**Bill Mays and The Inventions Trio**

7:00 pm

Rubin Museum of Art

150 West 17th Street

New York, NY 10011

Box Office: 212.620.5000 ext. 344

**\$18** in advance | **\$20** at door

The Inventions Trio is comprised of pianist Bill Mays, trumpeter/flugelhornist Marvin Stamm, and cellist Alisa Horn. Mays and Stamm are classically-trained jazz masters of the piano and trumpet who have joined with a marvelously gifted and classically-trained cellist to explore the intersection of chamber music and jazz, to “find the chamber music in jazz and the jazz in chamber music,” performing fresh interpretations of well-known classical themes, jazz classics, and original works.

The Inventions Trio grew out of Mays and Stamm’s long association and duo work together, followed by a commission of Mays’ three-movement *Fantasy for Cello, Trumpet & Piano*. Another inspiration was Mays’ duo work with flutist Bud Shank in 1980 that resulted in the Concord Records LP, *Explorations*, which featured Mays’ *Suite for Flute and Piano* and improvisations on classical themes. In the 1990s Mays mixed musical genres again by orchestrating *The Nutcracker Suite* for Jazz City Records. Written for four woodwinds and rhythm section, the CD featured movements from the *Nutcracker* and other well-known themes by Bach, Chopin, Debussy, Ravel and Rachmaninoff.

In recent years, Mays teamed with members of the Finisterra and the Philadelphia Piano Quartets to play his jazz versions of Arensky, Dvorak, Mendelssohn, Rodrigo, and Vivaldi. In Mays’ words: “whether playing Borodin or Bird, Bach or bop, the aim is to make the music come alive in a new way, find great melodies, be true to the composer’s underlying harmonic scheme, let the music swing, listen intently, play honestly, always honoring the rich traditions from which we’re drawing and building upon.”

**Saturday, March 29, 2008**

**Harlem Speaks Education Initiative**

**Guest: Trumpeter Jumaane Smith**

1:30 – 2:30pm | At the Harlem School of the Arts

645 St. Nicholas Ave. (off 141<sup>st</sup> Street)

FREE

Jumaane Smith is lead trumpeter for The Juilliard Jazz Orchestra. He has performed with such artists as Wynton Marsalis, Wycliffe Gordon, Jon Faddis, Bobby Short, Herb Jeffries, Clark Terry, Percy Heath and Loren Schoenberg, among many others. He has performed at The Montreux Jazz Festival, The North Sea Jazz Festival, and others. He is a highly versatile musician and his performance, composition and arranging credits range from Jazz to Classical.

*This press release was composed and edited by **Greg Thomas**.*

**The National Jazz Museum in Harlem** has been ensconced in its Harlem offices for over five years now; its public programs now attract several thousand people a year. **Good news: The Victoria Theater on 125<sup>th</sup> Street will be redeveloped and includes space (10,150 sq. feet) for the museum!** If you would like to receive updates on our progress or further information, please contact us online at <http://www.jazzmuseuminharlem.org/contact.html> or by phone at 212-348-8300. To find video and audio clips, event summaries, program updates and photographs galore from our previous programs, venture here:

[www.jazzmuseuminharlem.org](http://www.jazzmuseuminharlem.org)