

The National Jazz Museum in Harlem

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<http://www.jazzmuseuminharlem.org/>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 6/04/08

National Jazz Museum in Harlem's June Schedule

- ***Jazz for Curious Listeners focus on Art Tatum***
- ***Harlem Speaks: George Wein and Emme Kemp***
- ***Performances by the National Jazz Museum in Harlem All-Star Big Band; saxophonist Jane Ira Bloom; trumpeter Joe Wilder; and bandleader Johnny Colon***
- ***Special Events: Tributes to Duke Ellington and Art Tatum***

The National Jazz Museum in Harlem is excited to present tributes during June 2008 to Duke Ellington and Art Tatum, exploring the musical worlds of two giants of 20th century American music with sonic and scholarly clarity.

The focus on Tatum is particularly fitting this month, as we are honored to receive one of our most significant gifts to date: the piano and personal effects of Art Tatum. Through the good offices of Zenph Studios, the widow and family of Mr. Tatum is donating his own grand piano and other priceless Tatum memorabilia to the National Jazz Museum in Harlem at a special event at the Apollo Theater on Sunday, June 22nd.

But wait, there's even more: discussions with the great jazz impresario George Wein and pianist Emme Kemp, both octogenarians, as well as live performances by Jane Ira Bloom, Joe Wilder, Johnny Colon and the National Jazz Museum in Harlem All-Star Big Band, which will feature some of the young musicians upon whose shoulders ride the future of the idiom.

Just look at the line-up and history below. What other organization, in any genre, can lay claim to doing more to honor past giants, living elders, as well as providing early spotlights on the young giants of the future, in the span of one month?

The National Jazz Museum in Harlem is deeply dedicated to the legacy and continued growth of jazz. Your continued support of our events demonstrates your love of jazz and the level of community appreciation and interest in its further development. As we continue our efforts to bring you the best insights and live music (at little or no cost), your participation translates into a favorable reflection upon our efforts to build a physical museum worthy of this profound, emotionally riveting art form. We look forward to seeing you at our future events. And when you come, please bring a friend!

Tuesday, June 3, 2008

JAZZ FOR CURIOUS LISTENERS explores the world of Art Tatum

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

[645 St. Nicholas Ave. \(off 141st Street\)](#)

[FREE](#)

Art Tatum was born Oct. 13, 1909 in Toledo, Ohio and despite being blind in one eye and only partially sighted in the other he became arguably the greatest jazz piano player who ever lived. He came from a musical family and, when younger, had some formal training at the Toledo School of Music, however he was largely self-taught. His teacher there recognized his talents and tried to steer him towards a career as a classical concert pianist. Tatum was more interested in the music of Fats Waller, which would be a strong influence on his music. At 18 he was playing interludes at a local radio station and within a short period of time he had his own show.

In 1932 he was heard by the singer Adelaide Hall who brought him to New York as her accompanist. One year later he made his first recordings, among which was "Tiger Rag". This song, which features breakneck tempo and rippling left- and right-hand cascades and crashing bass notes, had every pianist in the country amazed by his astonishing dexterity. While in New York he established his reputation in "cutting contests" with other top pianists, which he never lost. He spent the next few years playing in Cleveland, Chicago, New York and Los Angeles and even England in 1938. During this time he established himself as a major figure in jazz circles. In the early 1940s Tatum formed an extremely popular trio with bassist Slam Stewart and guitarist Tiny Grimes.

He spent much of the next decade touring North America. In 1953 Tatum was signed by producer Norman Granz and recorded extensively both as a soloist and in small groups with Benny Carter, Buddy De Franco, Roy Eldridge, Lionel Hampton, Ben Webster and others. His incredible talent allowed him to be extremely productive during this time. Ray Spencer, a Tatum biographer, noted that Tatum was constantly "refining and honing down after each performance until an ideal version remained needing no further adjustments". This allowed him to achieve a remarkable work rate. For example, his solo sessions for Granz were mostly completed in two days...that is a total of 69 tracks, and all but three of them needed only one take. Sadly, on Nov. 4, 1956 his prodigious output was cut short when he died of uremia, however his artistic influence has been strong and long-lasting.

Come hear Executive Director Loren Schoenberg relate how and why Tatum's influence has withstood the test of time.

Thursday, June 5, 2008

SPECIAL EVENT:

A Tribute to Duke Ellington

National Jazz Museum In Harlem All-Star Big Band

6:30 - 8:00 pm

Location: Calvary Christian Church

(Park Avenue South at 21st Street)

FREE | More info: 212-260-3875

Conductor and Executive Director Loren Schoenberg and The Gramercy Park Block Association invite you to attend this free tribute to Duke Ellington for the association's 14th Annual free concert!

Duke Ellington is considered by many to be America's most brilliant jazz composer of the twentieth century, and perhaps the best American composer bar none. His classics include "Don't Get Around Much Anymore," "Mood Indigo," and "I Let a Song Get Out of My Heart."

On April 29, 1899, Edward Kennedy Ellington was born in Washington, D.C., to James Edward and Daisy Ellington. With his father, a Methodist, and his mother, a Baptist, Ellington's upbringing had strong religious influences. An artistic child, Ellington passed up an art scholarship to study at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York, in order to devote his time to his first love: music, specifically the piano. By the age of fourteen, Ellington had written his first two pieces, "Soda Fountain Rag" and "What You Gonna Do When the Bed Breaks Down?" During this time Ellington gained his nickname, "Duke," after a friend recommended that Ellington should have some sort of title.

He divided his studies between music and commercial art, and by 1918 established a reputation as a bandleader and agent. In 1923 he went to New York City and soon became a successful bandleader. In 1927 he secured an important engagement at the Cotton Club in Harlem and remained there (aside from occasional tours) until 1932.

Ellington's band made its first European trip in 1932. After World War II (1939–45), the band toured Europe regularly, with short trips to South America, the Far East, and Australia. One peak period for the band was from 1939 to 1942, when many critics considered its performances superior to any other jazz ensemble of any size.

As a composer Ellington was responsible for numerous works that achieved popular success, some written with his band members and with his co-arranger Billy Strayhorn. The Duke's most significant music was written specifically for his own band and soloists. Always sensitive to the nuances of tone of his soloists, Ellington wrote features for individual sidemen and used his knowledge of their characteristic sounds when composing other works. His arrangements achieved a remarkable blend of individual and ensemble contributions. With *Creole Rhapsody* (1931) and *Reminiscing in Tempo* (1935) Ellington was the first jazz composer to break the three-minute time limitation of the 78-rpm record. After the 1940s he concentrated more on longer works, including several suites built around a central theme, frequently an aspect of African American life. Always a fine orchestral pianist, with a style influenced by the Harlem stylists of the 1920s, Ellington remained in the background on most of his early recordings. After the 1950s he emerged as a highly imaginative piano soloist.

Ellington was the recipient of numerous Grammy Awards throughout his career, and in 1959 he was awarded the Springarn Medal from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in 1964. The city of New York gave him a prize and Yale University awarded him a doctor of music degree in 1967; Morgan State and Washington universities also gave him honorary degrees that year. On his seventieth birthday Ellington was honored by President Richard Nixon (1913–1994) at a White House ceremony and was given the Medal of Freedom. In 1970 he was elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters.

Ellington continued to compose and perform until his death from lung cancer on May 24, 1974, in New York City. His band, headed by his son Mercer, survived him, but as Phyl Garland of *Ebony* magazine writes, the elder Ellington will always be remembered for "the daring innovations that came to mark his music—the strange modulations built upon lush melodies that ramble into unexpected places, the unorthodox construction of songs...."

Ellington's legacy is that he remains one of the greatest talents in all of jazz, a remarkable feat considering the history of jazz is packed with legendary names. His influence over musicians is as important today as it was during Ellington's time.

Friday, June 6, 2008

HARLEM IN THE HIMALAYAS

Performer: Jane Ira Bloom, saxophonist

7:00 pm | [Rubin Museum of Art](#)

[150 West 17th Street](#)

Box Office: 212.620.5000 ext. 344

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

Soprano saxophonist/composer Jane Ira Bloom has been steadfastly developing her unique voice on the soprano saxophone for over 30 years. She is a pioneer in the use of live electronics and movement in jazz, as well as the possessor of "one of the most gorgeous tones and hauntingly lyrical ballad conceptions of any soprano saxophonist - *Pulse*."

Her continuing commitment to "pushing the envelope" in her music has led to collaborations with such outstanding jazz artists as Kenny Wheeler, Charlie Haden, Ed Blackwell, Rufus Reid, Matt Wilson, Bob Brookmeyer, Julian Priester, Jerry Granelli, Matt Wilson, Jay Clayton, Mark Dresser, Bobby Previte, & Fred Hersch. She's also spearheaded a collaborative world music group, "Atlantic/ Pacific Waves" featuring world music virtuosi Min Xioa-Fen on Chinese pipa, Jin Hi Kim on Korean komungo, and Mark Dresser on bass.

Tonight she will share the stage with Xioa-Fen and Dresser for an exploration into the sculpture of sound.

She has performed at such diverse venues as Carnegie Hall, Jazz at Lincoln Center, the Museum of Modern Art, the Kennedy Center, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the Smithsonian's Einstein Planetarium, and the Montreal, JVC, and

San Francisco Jazz Festivals as well as regular club engagements in NYC and tours of England, Portugal, Switzerland and Brazil with her current quartet.

She was recently awarded a 2007 Guggenheim Fellowship in music composition. Winner of the 2007 Mary Lou Williams Women In Jazz Award for lifetime service to jazz, the 2001, 2003, & 2006 Jazz Journalists Award for soprano sax of the year, the Downbeat International Critics Poll for soprano saxophone, the Charlie Parker Fellowship for Jazz Innovation and the Jazz Masters Award by the International Women in Jazz, she is the first musician ever commissioned by the NASA Art Program, and was also honored by having an asteroid named in her honor by the International Astronomical Union (asteroid 6083janeirabloom).

A strong visual thinker and a cinematic stylist, Bloom's affinity for other art forms such as painting, film, theatre and dance has both enriched her music and brought her into contact with other innovative artists such as actors Vanessa Redgrave & Joanne Woodward, painter Dan Namingha, and legendary dancer/ choreographer Carmen DeLavallade. She has composed for the American Composers Orchestra (NYC), the St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble, the Pilobolus, Paradigm, & Philadanco Dance Companies, writing works for large ensemble involving her signature movement techniques. She has also collaborated with classical composers premiering new works for soprano saxophone ("Sinfonia" by Augusta Read Thomas).

She is on the faculty of the New School for Jazz & Contemporary Music in NYC, holds degrees from Yale University and Yale School of Music and studied saxophone with woodwind virtuoso Joseph Viola. Nat Hentoff has called Bloom an artist "beyond category." Bill Milkowski has called her "A true jazz original...a restlessly creative spirit, and a modern day role model for any aspiring musician who dares to follow his or her own vision."

Tuesday, June 10, 2008

JAZZ FOR CURIOUS LISTENERS explores the world of Art Tatum

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

[645 St. Nicholas Ave. \(off 141st Street\)](#)

[FREE](#)

The starting point of Art Tatum's style was Fats Waller's stride. As Tatum once said, "Fats, that's where I come out of and, man, that's quite a place to come from". From this beginning he went on to create and superbly original and creative style of playing piano. His left-handed figures were similar to stride but he was really known for the way that he explored harmonic complexities and unusual chord progressions.

When improvising, Tatum would often insert totally new chord sequences (occasionally with a chord on each beat) into one or two measures. He also developed the habit of quoting from other melodies, something that became a standard practice among modern jazz musicians. What really set Tatum apart was his amazing technical abilities which combined with his willingness to explore the imagined limitations of the orthodox keyboard which produced astonishing rhythmic and harmonic complexities.

Perhaps the greatest tribute to the excellence of Art Tatum lies in the opinions of his peers. He influenced many musicians including Bud Powell, Herbie Hancock, and even non-pianists such as Charlie Parker and John Coltrane. Many would say that he inspired the bebop revolution in jazz. When Oscar Peterson first heard him play he thought it was two people and he considered Tatum the best jazz instrumentalist of all time. Legend has it that classical pianist Vladimir Horowitz was so awed by Tatum's wizardry that it brought him to tears. Fittingly, his strongest support comes from one of his early influences, Fats Waller. One time in 1938 Tatum dropped in to hear Waller play at a club. By way of introduction Waller told the audience, "I just play the piano, but God is in the house tonight."

Thursday, June 12, 2008

HARLEM SPEAKS

Guest: George Wein, Jazz Festival Impresario

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

645 St. Nicholas Ave. (off 141st Street)

FREE

George Wein is the man who is arguably the father of the jazz festivals movement. Though he is known first and foremost for his long career as a jazz producer and impresario, George Wein is also a jazz musician. Though his far-flung activities have not afforded him a full-fledged career as a performer and recording artist, he has long been an active pianist in a swing/proto-bebop mode, making tours with his own all star bands. But it is as festival pioneer, producer, and all-around impresario that George Wein has made his principle mark. His company, Festival Productions Inc., has produced jazz festivals and concerts around the globe.

Wein first studied music with the noted Margaret Chaloff in Boston, later falling under the tutelage of Teddy Wilson at Juilliard. Besides prepping as a pianist, George Wein had other ideas. He opened his first jazz club, Storyville, in Boston in 1950. One night he was approached by some wealthy residents of the resort town of Newport, R.I., who had eyes to fill what they saw as a cultural void during the summer months in their adopted community. Wein was keenly interested in the possibilities and was engaged as the producer of the first Newport Jazz Festival, established in 1954. The idea of staging a major jazz event with multiple acts on consecutive days had never quite coalesced the way the Newport Jazz Festival did it, and Wein was off and running.

Places as unlikely as a small town Indiana eventually sought Wein's skills at putting together these festivals, and overseas opportunities beckoned as well. Later the Newport Jazz Festival gave birth to the Newport Folk Festival, and Wein had established a cottage industry. He also produced jazz concerts at major events including the 1958 Brussels World's Fair. In 1960, Wein established Festival Productions Inc. and went on to produce the Ohio Valley Jazz Festival in Cincinnati, the Boston Globe Jazz Festival, the Hampton Jazz Festival, the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, the Grande Parade du Jazz in Nice, France, and the Playboy Jazz Festival, first in Chicago and later in L.A., where it continues.

In 1971, unruly crowds and the subsequent police action forced Wein to temporarily abandon Newport, R.I. and move his festival to New York. There he pioneered the concept of corporate underwriting of jazz festivals, first with the Kool Jazz Festival series, more recently with his JVC Jazz Festival series. As a record producer he helmed the George Wein Collection of recordings for the Concord label in 1983. His festival production enterprise has topped out at nearly 30 events, in the U.S., Europe and Japan.

Among George Wein's honors are two separate White House anniversary celebrations of his Newport Jazz Festival, during the Carter and Clinton administrations. He has received numerous honorary degrees and awards and the *DownBeat* Lifetime Achievement Award.

Though he sold his Festival Productions company, George Wein remains active. He also serves on the executive boards of Jazz at Lincoln Center, the Apollo Theatre Foundation and Carnegie Hall. In addition to carrying on this work, he is an author, whose autobiography *Myself Among Others* was recognized by the Jazz Journalists Association as 2004's best book about jazz, and continues to perform as a pianist, touring the United States, Europe and Japan with his group, the Newport All-Stars.

Friday, June 13, 2008

HARLEM IN THE HIMALAYAS

Performer: Joe Wilder and Friends

7:00 pm | [Rubin Museum of Art](#)

[150 West 17th Street](#)

Box Office: 212.620.5000 ext. 344

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

Joe Wilder, trumpet

Loren Schoenberg, tenor sax

Steve Ash, piano

Yasushi Nakamura, bass

Quincy Davis, drums

Wilder was born in Colwyn, Pennsylvania on February 22, 1922 into a musical family including his father Curtis, a bassist and bandleader in Philadelphia. Curtis Jr., Wilder's older brother, also played bass. Although he was initially attracted to the trombone, his father bought a cornet for him early on. He was a quick study.

His fast progress led to a regular feature on a weekly children's radio program in Philadelphia called the "Parisian Tailors' Colored Kiddies of the Air." The youngsters were backed by bands appearing at the Lincoln Theater, including Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway. "I would be playing the first trumpet part of some popular tune--just reading it note for note. And these bands would be playing backgrounds for us!" Wilder had an early encounter with Louis Armstrong on one of these occasions. "He was awfully nice to me. He gave me a pass and said, 'You come and see Louis every day.'" Pops remembered the young trumpeter from the broadcast in later years: "He always encouraged me, and I think he was proud of the fact that I made it in the studios," Wilder recalls.

He studied at the Mastbaum School of Music in Philadelphia. Early on he was drawn to classical music, but soon realized that a career in the symphony was not a realistic goal for a black musician coming of age in the late 1930s. So Wilder began playing in big bands, leaving home in 1941 at nineteen to join Les Hite's band.

Wilder was one of the first thousand blacks to serve in the Marines during World War II, working first in Special Weapons then gaining an assignment to the headquarters band for which he became assistant bandmaster. He played in the orchestras of Jimmie Lunceford, Herbie Fields, Sam Donahue, Lucky Millinder, Dizzy Gillespie, and Noble Sissle during the 1940s to the early '50's.

His last big band gig was with the Count Basie Orchestra in 1953, after which his career remained close to home—he's a devoted husband, father of three daughters, and a grandfather, too. He started playing in hit productions such as *Guys and Dolls* and Cole Porter's *Silk Stockings*, the touring company of which he joined in late 1953. "They went first to Mr. Porter and asked if he had any objection to a black musician playing first trumpet," Joe recalls. "All he asked was, 'Can he play my music?' When they told him I could, he answered, 'Well, that's all that matters.'"

He earned a secure place in the studio scene as a "first call" musician, and served on staff at ABC from 1957 to 1974. "A lot of times you just went in and were completely surprised," he recalled. "We took pride in being able to sight-read anything that was put before us and in playing any type of music as well as the people who specialized in that particular style."

He went back to school in the 60s, earning a bachelor's degree at the Manhattan School of Music. Wilder played on several occasions with the New York Philharmonic, and in 1968 he became principal trumpet for the Symphony of the New World, which he characterized as "the first fully integrated symphony orchestra in the United States." He also recorded his own album of classical trumpet pieces, fulfilling his original dream.

He's the only surviving member of the Count Basie All-Star Orchestra seen in the classic 1959 film, *The Sound of Jazz*, soloing on the tune, "Fast and Happy Blues." Then as now, Joe Wilder's trumpet and flugelhorn playing are as elegant and sophisticated as the man, his approach unique and soulful like the veritable sound of jazz, don't miss this rare New York appearance!

Tuesday, June 17, 2008

JAZZ FOR CURIOUS LISTENERS explores the world of Art Tatum

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

645 St. Nicholas Ave. (off 141st Street)

FREE

Join us as the National Jazz Museum in Harlem continues a very close look and listen to one of the most ingenious and stunningly virtuosic jazz musicians of the 20th century, Art Tatum.

Sunday, June 22, 2008

SPECIAL EVENT: Tatum: "Piano Starts Here"

2:00 pm

Location: Apollo Theater,

(New York, NY)

[Tickets thru Ticketmaster](#)

At this concert, the National Jazz Museum in Harlem will accept the Art Tatum collection from his family.

Art Tatum's widow, Geraldine, has donated number of artifacts, including Tatum's prized grand piano, touring trunks, and a locked piano bench filled with personal papers and sheet music, to the Jazz Museum.

Tuesday, June 24, 2008

JAZZ FOR CURIOUS LISTENERS explores the world of Art Tatum

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

645 St. Nicholas Ave. (off 141st Street)

FREE

Expect to see and hear Tatum rarities from the archival vaults of the National Jazz Museum in Harlem.

Thursday, June 26, 2008

HARLEM SPEAKS

Guest: Emme Kemp, Pianist and Vocalist

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

645 St. Nicholas Ave. (off 141st Street)

FREE

Chicago born Emme Kemp, a three-year-old piano prodigy, studied at Northwestern University and the Berklee School of Music. Before coming to New York, Emme spent time in Northern California where she was coached by the eminent pianist Egon Petri. Moving eastward she played Las Vegas and New York Waldorf Astoria - Peacock Alley, for two years. Other New York locales included the St. Regis Hotel, Rainbow Room, and numerous college campuses. Kemp's repertoire covers a wide range of musical styles, and she is multi-talented. As a Bandleader, Broadway Composer, Pianist and Vocalist, Ms. Kemp independently produced her own original songs and music, which are featured on her latest CD *Try A Little Tenderness*

On November 2005 The Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning presented works of Queens' Women Composers/performers from Billie Holiday to Julie Mandel. Kemp participated as pianist and vocalist in the debut performance of her lush and outstanding "First Awakenings Jazz Ballet," and a performance with the Carol Sudhalter Astoria Jazz Band.

Along with performing and composing, Kemp has been an active member of the David I. Martin Music Guild. Inc. She has received awards from the National Endowment for the Arts and ASCAP, among other organizations. The *New York Times* has commended her for having "an unusually sensitive understanding" of her art!

In January 2007, Ms. Kemp was featured in Chicago jam-session scenes with Sean Penn, in the Woody Allen film *Sweet and Lowdown*, which was included in "Essentially Woody" At the Film Forum Movie House.

Share in the vibes as the National Jazz Museum in Harlem honors an unsung heroine of American music.

Sunday, June 29, 2008

HARLEM SPEAKS

Johnny Colon & NY Salsa Jazz

2:00 pm

Special Location: The Riverside Theatre

at The Riverside Church, 91 Claremont Avenue, New York, NY 10027

FREE

Interview 2 pm/Dance 3:30 pm

Part of the NY Family Arts Festival

Presented by The Riverside Theatre

Don't miss the opportunity to spend an afternoon with the legendary bandleader/singer and pioneering educator **Johnny Colon**. He'll be doing double duty, first in an interview conducted by National Jazz Museum in Harlem Executive Director Loren Schoenberg as part of our well-known HARLEM SPEAKS series, and then leading his fiery band for a wonderful afternoon of dancing to his award-winning orchestra. We dare you to sit still once they start!

*This press release was composed and edited by **Greg Thomas**, host of the web's only jazz news and entertainment TV show, [Jazz it Up!](#) (See footage of **Harlem in the Himalayas** by clicking the link.)*

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 125th 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 audio and video clips, event summaries, program updates and photographs galore from our previous programs, venture here:

www.jazzmuseuminharlem.org