

**The National Jazz Museum in Harlem**  
**104 East 126th Street**  
**New York, NY 10035**  
**212 348-8300**  
<http://www.jazzmuseuminharlem.org/>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 8/15/09

### ***National Jazz Museum in Harlem September Schedule***

- ***Harlem Speaks: Clem DeRosa and Jason Moran***
- ***Jazz for Curious Listeners: Jazz on Film – Dave Brubeck, Cecil Taylor, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, and Art Tatum/Django Reinhardt***
- ***Jazz for Curious Readers: Jazz Journalist Ted Panken***
- ***Harlem in the Himalayas: Fred Hersch, David Binney Quartet***
- ***Saturday Panel: "Latin Music U.S.A" – hosted by Bobby Sanabria***

This month the National Jazz Museum in Harlem features films galore, discussions with musicians, jazz educators and journalists, and live performances at one of the best acoustic halls in New York City.

*Jazz for Curious Listeners* will focus on the artistry of several of the most unique stylists and improvisers in jazz history as seen on film: pianists Dave Brubeck, Cecil Taylor and Art Tatum, saxophonist Rahsaan Roland Kirk and guitarist Django Reinhardt. Our flagship series, the bi-weekly *Harlem Speaks* interview, is proud to bring jazz drummer and jazz education pioneer Clem DeRosa and the ingenious young jazz pianist Jason Moran to the forefront of discussion at our Visitor's Center. Journalist Ted Panken has been in the thick of the jazz journalist community for decades, and a respected jazz radio announcer to boot. He's featured at *Jazz for Curious Readers*.

Live performances, where music holds sway beyond words, are the attraction for *Harlem in the Himalayas*, where pianist Fred Hersch, and saxophonist David Binney will, respectively, hold court.

And don't miss an exclusive preview screening of the PBS documentary, "Latin Music U.S.A." at our *Saturday Panel*, hosted by one of its creators, musician and historian Bobby Sanabria.

**Tuesday, Sept. 1, 2009**

[Jazz for Curious Listeners](#)

**Dave Brubeck**

7:00 – 8:30pm

**Location:** NJMH Visitors Center  
(104 E. 126th Street, Suite 2C)

FREE | For more information: 212-348-8300

**Jazz on Film**

Dave Brubeck has long served as proof that creative jazz and popular success can go together. Although critics who had championed him when he was unknown seemed to scorn him when the Dave Brubeck Quartet became a surprise success, in reality Brubeck never watered down or altered his music in order to gain a wide audience. Creative booking (being one of the first groups to play regularly on college campuses) and a bit of luck resulted in great popularity, and Dave Brubeck remains one of the few household names in jazz.

From nearly the start, Brubeck enjoyed utilizing poly-rhythms and poly-tonality (playing in two keys at once). He had classical training from his mother, but fooled her for a long period by memorizing his lessons and not learning to read music. He studied music at the College of the Pacific during 1938-1942. Brubeck led a service band in General Patton's Army during World War II and then, in 1946, he started studying at Mills College with the classical composer Darius Milhaud, who encouraged his students to play jazz. During 1946-1949, Brubeck led a group consisting mostly of fellow classmates, and they recorded as the Dave Brubeck Octet; their music (released on Fantasy in 1951) still sounds advanced today, with complex time signatures and some poly-tonality. The octet was too radical to get much work, so Brubeck formed a trio with drummer Cal Tjader (who doubled on vibes) and bassist Ron Crotty. The trio's Fantasy recordings of 1949-1951 were quite popular in the Bay Area, but the group came to an end when Brubeck hurt his back during a serious swimming accident and was put out of action for months.

Upon his return in 1951, Brubeck was persuaded by altoist Paul Desmond to make the group a quartet. Within two years, the band had become surprisingly popular. Desmond's cool-toned alto and quick wit fit in well with Brubeck's often heavy chording and experimental playing. Joe Dodge was the band's early drummer but, after he tired of the road, the virtuosic Joe Morello took his place in 1956; while the revolving bass chair finally settled on Eugene Wright in 1958. By then, Brubeck had followed his popular series of Fantasy recordings with some big sellers on Columbia, and had appeared on the cover of Time (1954). The huge success of Paul Desmond's "Take Five" (1960) was followed by many songs played in "odd" time signatures such as 7/4 and 9/8; the high-quality soloing of the musicians kept these experiments from sounding like gimmicks. Dave and Iola Brubeck (his wife and lyricist) put together an anti-racism show featuring Louis Armstrong (The Real Ambassadors) which was recorded, but its only public appearance was at the Monterey Jazz Festival in the early '60s.

The Dave Brubeck Quartet constantly traveled around the world until its breakup in 1967. After some time off, during which he wrote religious works, Brubeck came back the following year with a new quartet featuring Gerry Mulligan, although he would have several reunions with Desmond before the altoist's death in 1977. Brubeck joined with his sons Darius (keyboards), Chris (electric bass and bass trombone), and Danny (drums) in Two Generations of Brubeck in the 1970s. In the early '80s, tenor saxophonist Jerry Bergonzi was in the Brubeck Quartet, and beginning in the mid-'80s, clarinetist Bill Smith (who was in the original octet) alternated with altoist Bobby Militello.

There is no shortage of Dave Brubeck records currently available, practically everything he cut for Fantasy, Columbia, Concord, and Telarc are easy to locate. Brubeck, whose compositions "In Your Own Sweet Way," "The Duke," and "Blue Rondo a la Turk" have become standards, remains very busy to the current day.

## **Tuesday, September 8, 2009**

### [Jazz for Curious Listeners](#)

**Cecil Taylor**

7:00 – 8:30pm

**Location:** NJMH Visitors Center

(104 E. 126th Street, Suite 2C)

FREE | For more information: 212-348-8300

### **Jazz on Film**

Soon after he first emerged in the mid-'50s, pianist Cecil Taylor may have been the most unique improviser in jazz; five decades later he is still the most radical. Although in his early days he used some standards as vehicles for improvisation, since the early '60s Taylor has stuck exclusively to originals. To simplify describing his style, one could say that Taylor's intense atonal percussive approach involves playing the piano as if it were a set of drums. He generally emphasizes dense clusters of sound played with remarkable technique and endurance, often during marathon performances. Suffice it to say that Cecil Taylor's music is not for everyone.

Taylor started piano lessons from the age of six, and attended the New York College of Music and the New England Conservatory. Taylor's early influences included Duke Ellington and Dave Brubeck, but from the start he sounded original. Early gigs included work with groups led by Johnny Hodges and Hot Lips Page, but, after forming his quartet in the mid-'50s, Taylor was never a sideman again. The group played at the *Five Spot Cafe* in 1956 for six weeks and performed at the *1957 Newport Jazz Festival* (which was recorded by *Verve*), but, despite occasional records, work was scarce. In 1960, Taylor recorded extensively for *Candid* and the following year he sometimes substituted in the play *The Connection*. By 1962, Taylor's quartet featured his longtime associate Mimmy Lyons on alto and drummer Sunny Murray. He spent six months in Europe (Albert Ayler worked with Taylor's group for a time although no recordings resulted) but upon his return to the U.S., Taylor did not work again for almost a year. Even with the rise of free

jazz, his music was considered too advanced. In 1964, Taylor was one of the founders of the Jazz Composer's Guild and, in 1968, he was featured on a record by the Jazz Composer's Orchestra. In the mid-'60s Taylor recorded two very advanced sets for *Blue Note*, but it was generally a lean decade.

Things greatly improved starting in the 1970s. Taylor taught for a time at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Antioch College, and Glassboro State College, he recorded more frequently with his Unit, and European tours became common. After being awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1973, the pianist's financial difficulties were eased a bit; he even performed at the White House (during Jimmy Carter's administration) in 1979. A piano duet concert with Mary Lou Williams didn't go too well but a collaboration with drummer Max Roach was quite successful. Taylor started incorporating some of his eccentric poetry into his performances and, unlike most musicians, he has not mellowed with age. The death of Jimmy Lyons in 1986 was a major blow, but Cecil Taylor has remained quite active up until the present day, never compromising his musical vision. His music remains as challenging and wondrous as ever.

## **Thursday, Sept. 10, 2009**

### [Harlem Speaks](#)

#### **Clem DeRosa, Drummer/Educator**

6:30 – 8:30pm

**Location:** NJMH Visitors Center

(104 E. 126th Street, Suite 2C)

FREE | For more information: 212-348-8300

His career as a professional musician, educator, arranger, composer and orchestra leader spans 50 years. At the age of 15 Clem DeRosa's natural ability allowed him to perform with the best musicians in the New York metropolitan area. At age 18 his career was interrupted by World War II when he entered military service.

During his military career, Clem served with one of Glenn Miller's Air Corps Bands. After his discharge, he resumed his career as a professional drummer. Through the years he has recorded and/or performed with Charlie Mingus, Marian McPartland, Teo Macero, Teddy Wilson, Thad Jones, Ben Webster, Clark Terry, Phil Woods, Coleman Hawkins, John LaPorta, Kenyon Hopkins, Bobby Hackett and more.

Clem had a strong desire to increase his musical knowledge, so he enrolled at The Juilliard School to study composition and conducting. He later transferred to the Manhattan School of Music, where he received his Master's degree.

During the next era of his life, Clem became deeply involved in music education as one of the leading pioneers of jazz education. Highlights of his achievements in education include co-founding and serving as president of the International Association of Jazz Educators (IAJE), teaching at Columbia University's Teachers College, performances with his student jazz ensembles on the Johnny Carson and Merv Griffin TV shows,

receiving an honorary doctorate from Five Towns College, and being named to the IAJE Hall of Fame in 1990.

Throughout his years in music education he maintained his professional performing, arranging and conducting activities for many prominent artists. Eventually he became the respected leader of the Glenn Miller Orchestra (received gold record from GRP for assistance in production of "In The Digital Mood"), the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra, and the Dorsey Brothers Orchestra. Today Clem is one of America's leading conductors and producers of corporate events.

## **Friday, Sept. 11, 2009**

### [Harlem in the Himalayas](#)

#### **Fred Hersch, Pianist**

7:00pm

**Location:** Rubin Museum of Art

(150 West 17th Street)

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

Box Office: 212-620-5000 ext. 344

Pianist and composer Fred Hersch has been called "one of the small handful of brilliant musicians of his generation" by *Downbeat* and has earned a place among the foremost jazz artists in the world today. From the late 70's onward as a sideman to jazz legends including Joe Henderson, Art Farmer and Stan Getz, he has solidified a reputation as a versatile master of jazz piano, as well as a relentlessly probing composer and conceptualist. He is widely recognized for his ability to steadfastly create a unique body of original works while reinventing the standard jazz repertoire – investing time-tested classics with keen insight, fresh ideas and extraordinary technique. Whether unaccompanied, in duo, working with trios and quintets, Hersch has explored the jazz tradition to its fullest even as he opens new and undiscovered doors. Hersch's numerous accomplishments include a 2003 Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship for composition, two Grammy® nominations for Best Jazz Instrumental Performance and a Grammy® nomination for Best Instrumental Composition. He has appeared on over one hundred recordings, including more than two-dozen albums as bandleader/solo pianist.

His career as a performer has been greatly enhanced by his composing activities, a vital part of nearly all of his live concerts and recordings. In 2003, Hersch created *Leaves of Grass* (Palmetto Records), a large-scale setting of Walt Whitman's poetry for two voices (Kurt Elling and Kate McGarry) and an instrumental octet; the work was presented in March 2005 in a sold-out performance at Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall as part of a six-city US tour. Hersch has toured with concert pianist Christopher and he has also collaborated with artists ranging from Bill Frisell, Toots Thielemans and Charlie Haden to singers Renée Fleming, Norma Winstone and Audra McDonald. He has received commissions from The Gilmore Keyboard Festival, The Doris Duke Foundation, the Miller Theatre at Columbia University, The Gramercy Trio and The Brooklyn Youth

Chorus. Naxos Records has released *Fred Hersch: Concert Music 2001-2006*, a disc of his through-composed "classical" works.

Hersch is considered to be one of the most prolific and widely-praised solo jazz pianists of his generation. In 2006, Palmetto Records released the solo disc *Fred Hersch in Amsterdam: Live at the Bimhuis*; its release led to Hersch becoming the first pianist in the 70-year history of New York's legendary Village Vanguard to play an entire week as a solo pianist shortly after the disc's release. In addition, he leads a trio, a quintet and has ongoing special collaborations with jazz and classical instrumentalists and vocalists around the world. His newest project features an unconventional line-up of piano, trumpet, voice and percussion. *The Fred Hersch Pocket Orchestra: Live at Jazz Standard* was released in April 2009 on Sunnyside Records.

Hersch has acted as a passionate spokesman and fund-raiser for AIDS services and education agencies since 1993. He has produced and performed on four benefit recordings and at numerous concerts for the charities Classical Action: Performing Arts Against AIDS and Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS that have raised over \$250,000 to date.

Hersch has been featured on CBS Sunday Morning with Dr. Billy Taylor and on a wide variety of National Public Radio programs including Fresh Air, Jazz Set, Studio 360 and Marian McPartland's Piano Jazz. Hersch has also been awarded a Rockefeller Fellowship, grants from The National Endowment for the Arts and Meet the Composer, and six composition residencies at The MacDowell Colony. He conducted a Professional Training Workshop for Young Musicians at The Weill Institute at Carnegie Hall in 2008 and was awarded the Branigan Lectureship at Indiana University in 2004. A committed educator, Hersch has taught at The New School and Manhattan School of Music; he is currently a visiting professor at Western Michigan University and is on the Jazz Studies faculty of The New England Conservatory.

## **Monday, Sept. 14, 2009**

### [Jazz for Curious Readers](#)

#### **Ted Panken**

7:00 – 8:30pm

**Location:** NJMH Visitors Center  
(104 E. 126th Street, Suite 2C)

FREE | For more information: 212-348-8300

Ted Panken writes feature articles, reviews, and commentary for various print and online music publications, including Downbeat, Jazziz, and [www.jazz.com](http://www.jazz.com), and won the 2007 ASCAP Deems Taylor Award for his Downbeat article "Smalls Universe." He has annotated some 400 compact disk releases, and his work has also appeared in the *New York Daily News*, the *Village Voice*, and *Tikkun*. Between 1985 and 2008, Panken presented jazz and other jazz-related forms of improvised music on New York's WKCR-

FM, where he conducted hundreds of live, in-depth interviews with both established and [then] up-and-coming musicians.

His work at WKCR was integral to his becoming a writer. Musicians he met at the station, for instance Joe Lovano and James Williams, asked him to write liner notes for their recordings. As Panken put it, "word got around," and his career as a writer took off. In addition to the publications mentioned above, he has written program notes for concerts at Jazz at Lincoln Center for many years.

A life-long New Yorker, who spent much of the '70s in Chicago, he now lives in Brooklyn with his wife, daughter, dog, and cat.

## **Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2009**

### [Jazz for Curious Listeners](#)

#### **Rahsaan Roland Kirk**

7:00 – 8:30pm

**Location:** NJMH Visitors Center

(104 E. 126th Street, Suite 2C)

FREE | For more information: 212-348-8300

### **Jazz on Film**

One of the most exciting saxophone soloists in jazz history, Rahsaan Roland Kirk was a post-modernist before that term even existed. Kirk played the continuum of jazz tradition as an instrument unto itself; he felt little compunction about mixing and matching elements from the music's history, and his concoctions usually seemed natural, if not inevitable. When discussing Kirk, a great deal of attention is always paid to his eccentricities -- playing several horns at once, making his own instruments, clowning on stage. However, Kirk was an immensely creative artist; he covered every aspect of jazz, from Dixieland to free -- and perhaps no other jazz musician has ever been more spontaneously inventive. His skills in constructing a solo are of particular note. Kirk had the ability to pace, shape, and elevate his improvisations to an extraordinary degree. During any given Kirk solo, just at the point in the course of his performance when it appeared he could not raise the intensity level any higher, he always seemed able to turn it up yet another notch.

Kirk was born with sight, but became blind at the age of two. He started playing the bugle and trumpet, then learned the clarinet and C-melody sax. Kirk began playing tenor sax professionally in R&B bands at the age of 15. While a teenager, he discovered the "manzello" and "stritch" -- the former, a modified version of the saxello, which was itself a slightly curved variant of the B flat soprano sax; the latter, a modified straight E flat alto. To these and other instruments, Kirk began making his own improvements. He reshaped all three of his saxes so that they could be played simultaneously; he'd play tenor with his left hand, finger the manzello with his right, and sound a drone on the stritch, for instance. Kirk's self-invented technique was in evidence from his first

recording, a 1956 R&B record called *Triple Threat*. By 1960 he had begun to incorporate a siren whistle into his solos, and by '63 he had mastered circular breathing, a technique that enabled him to play without pause for breath.

In his early 20s, Kirk worked in Louisville before moving to Chicago in 1960. That year he made his second album, *Introducing Roland Kirk*, which featured saxophonist/trumpeter Ira Sullivan. In 1961, Kirk toured Germany and spent three months with Charles Mingus. From that point onward, Kirk mostly led his own group, the Vibration Society, recording prolifically with a range of sidemen. In the early '70s, Kirk became something of an activist; he led the "Jazz and People's Movement," a group devoted to opening up new opportunities for jazz musicians. The group adopted the tactic of interrupting tapings and broadcasts of television and radio programs in protest of the small number of African-American musicians employed by the networks and recording studios. In the course of his career, Kirk brought many hitherto unused instruments to jazz. In addition to the saxes, Kirk played the nose whistle, the piccolo, and the harmonica; instruments of his own design included the "trumpophone" (a trumpet with a soprano sax mouthpiece), and the "slidesophone" (a small trombone or slide trumpet, also with a sax mouthpiece). Kirk suffered a paralyzing stroke in 1975, losing movement on one side of his body, but his homemade saxophone technique allowed him to continue to play; beginning in 1976 and lasting until his death a year later, Kirk played one-handed.

**Thursday, Sept. 24, 2009**

[Harlem Speaks](#)

**Jason Moran, Pianist**

6:30 – 8:30pm

**Location:** NJMH Visitors Center

(104 E. 126th Street, Suite 2C)

FREE | For more information: 212-348-8300

Jason Moran made his professional recording debut on Greg Osby's 1997 Blue Note CD, *Further Ado*, which brought him to the attention of Blue Note executives who signed the pianist to his own record deal shortly thereafter. The association with Blue Note is fitting, placing Moran in the lineage of innovative pianist/composers whose career beginnings were nurtured by the veteran jazz label, musicians such as Monk, Herbie Hancock and Herbie Nichols.

Moran's debut recording as a leader, *Soundtrack to Human Motion*, which found him in the company of Osby, Eric Harland, vibraphonist Stefon Harris and bassist Lonnie Plaxico, was released in 1999 to great critical praise (Ben Ratliff of *The New York Times* named it the best album of the year). The following year's *Facing Left* found Moran stripping down to a trio with bassist Tarus Mateen and drummer Nasheet Waits, and prompted *JazzTimes* to declare the album "an instant classic." Moran augmented the trio for his third Blue Note release, *Black Stars*, adding avant-garde icon Sam Rivers, who plays saxophone, flute and piano on the recording. Gary Giddins of the Village Voice

exclaimed "Black Stars is possibly a Blue Note benchmark, definitely one of the year's outstanding discs."

Moran has performed as a sideman with such artists as Cassandra Wilson, Joe Lovano, Don Byron, Steve Coleman, Lee Konitz, Von Freeman, Ravi Coltrane, and Stefon Harris. He was the youngest honoree of the New Work Commission by the San Francisco Jazz Festival. He was also awarded a grant from Chamber Music America's "New Works: Creation and Presentation" program, which is funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. For these two grants Moran used sampled conversations as vocal triggers. These compositions would be the foundation for many of Moran's new compositions. Jazziz magazine wrote "Moran is blessed with the courage of his own convictions—part scavenger and part seer, fluent in the cut/paste/splice devices of hip hop production...."

In 2002, Moran released his universally acclaimed solo piano disc *Modernistic*. The Cork Jazz Festival awarded Moran the 2002 Guinness Rising Star Award. 2003's *The Bandwagon*, culled from the trio's six-day stint at New York's Village Vanguard, earned the team of Moran-Mateen-Waits a title as "the best new rhythm section in jazz" (The New York Times) and caused Rolling Stone to proclaim Moran "the most provocative thinker in current jazz."

Moran's sixth release on Blue Note, *Same Mother*, was released in February '05. This blues based recording adds guitarist, Marvin Sewell, to the Bandwagon. *Same Mother* is "a reconsideration of the blues that doesn't depend on clichéd dynamics and song structure" (The New York Times).

He has composed and performed extended works commissioned by New York City's Jazz at Lincoln Center, the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Dia: Beacon in Beacon, New York. Duke University, Town Hall and Harlem Stages presented an ambitious multimedia work by Moran based on Thelonious Monk's historic 1959 concert at Town Hall in New York City, and rehearsal tapes and photographs taken that year by W. Eugene Smith.

**Friday, Sept. 25, 2009**

[Harlem in the Himalayas](#)

**David Binney Quartet**

7:00pm

**Location:** Rubin Museum of Art  
(150 West 17th Street)

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

Box Office: 212-620-5000 ext. 344

Saxophonist/composer David Binney was born in Miami, Florida and raised in Southern California. His parents were jazz fans, and introduced Binney to jazz greats such as John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Bobby Hutcherson, and Wayne Shorter. Binney's parents also exposed him to the music of Jimi Hendrix, Milton Nascimento, Sly Stone and a variety of

other styles of music that helped foster an interest in a broad spectrum of music. He began to study the saxophone with various teachers in Los Angeles. At the age of 19 he moved to New York City, where he studied with Phil Woods, Dave Liebman, and George Coleman. In 1989, Binney was awarded an NEA Grant which he used to record his first album, *Point Game* on Owl Records.

Binney has performed in basement clubs in New York to jazz festivals in Europe, appeared on stage with Aretha Franklin at Carnegie Hall, and with Maceo Parker. He has produced all of his own albums, in addition to two of the Lost Tribe releases. Binney is a founding member of Lost Tribe and Lan Xang, and has recorded as a sideman for Uri Caine's Mahler Project, Drew Gress' Jagged Sky and Medeski, Martin and Wood. David started his record label, Mythology Records, in 1998.

David Binney performs regularly at the 55 Bar in New York City.

## **Saturday, Sept. 26, 2009**

### [Saturday Panels](#)

#### **Latin Music U.S.A.**

11:00am – 4:00pm

**Location:** NJMH Visitors Center  
(104 E. 126th Street, Suite 2C)

FREE | For more information: 212-348-8300

Musician and historian Bobby Sanabria hosts a screening of portions of the new PBS documentary along with the film's producer Pamela Aguilar and director Dan McCabe as discussion guests.

## **Four Part Documentary Series Premieres on PBS Over Two Evenings October 12 and 19, 2009**

*Latin Music USA* is a film about American music. Fusions of Latin sounds with jazz, rock, country, rhythm and blues — music with deeper roots and broader reach than most people realize. It's a fresh take on our musical history, reaching across five decades and across musical genres to portray the rich mix of sounds created by Latinos and embraced by all.

The four-hour documentary series premieres on October 12th (Episodes 1&2) and October 19th (Episodes 3&4) 2009, on PBS stations nationwide and on [PBS.org/latinmusicusa](http://PBS.org/latinmusicusa). Produced by a team led by WGBH, in co-production with the BBC, *Latin Music USA* invites the audience into the vibrant musical conversation between Latinos and non-Latinos that has helped shape the history of popular music in the United States. Fittingly, the series launches in Hispanic Heritage Month, a time to

recognize the contributions of Latinos to the United States and to celebrate Latino heritage and culture.

The series features the stories of an extraordinary range of artists, including *salsa* greats Willie Colón and Marc Anthony; the Latin-inflected sounds found in much of sixties rock and roll, from the Drifters to Motown to the Rolling Stones; jazz fused with Cuban rhythms from Mario Bauzá and Chano Pozo; the genius of Texas accordion player Flaco Jiménez; Carlos Santana; Linda Ronstadt; the legendary Chicano rock band Los Lobos; megastars Gloria and Emilio Estefan; Ricky Martin and Juanes; Miami rapper Pitbull; *reggaetón* performers Daddy Yankee and Tego Calderón; and Lin-Manuel Miranda from the Tony Award-winning musical *In the Heights*. The life experiences of these and many other unforgettable artists will reveal how Latinos have reinvented their music in the United States, while never losing sight of their own rich traditions.

## **Tuesday, September 29, 2009**

### [Jazz for Curious Listeners](#)

**Art Tatum / Django Reinhardt**

7:00 – 8:30pm

**Location:** NJMH Visitors Center

(104 E. 126th Street, Suite 2C)

FREE | For more information: 212-348-8300

### **Jazz on Film**

Art Tatum has been a focus of several jazz museum events over the past several years, most recently a Saturday panel that also featured Ben Webster. Now he's paired with another pioneer who became known to jazz fans and writers in the 1930s, guitarist Django Reinhardt. Seeing each on film will bring their artistry to life!

### **Django Reinhardt**

Reinhardt was the son of a traveling entertainer and the brother of Joseph Reinhardt. He grew up in a gypsy settlement outside Paris. Reinhardt first played violin and later took up guitar, and began working professionally in 1922 with the accordionist Guerino. In 1928, he was badly burned in a caravan fire, which resulted in the mutilation of his left hand. This deprived him of the use of two fingers and led him to devise a unique fingering method to overcome his handicap.

After a period of convalescence, he worked in cafés in Paris and in a duo with the singer Jean Sablon. In 1934, he was a founding member, with Stephane Grappelli, of the ensemble that became known as the Quintette du Hot Club de France. In the years before World War II the group gained considerable renown through its numerous recordings, and Reinhardt became an international celebrity. He appeared throughout Europe and

recorded with many important American musicians who visited the Continent. During the war, while Grappelli lived in Britain, Reinhardt remained in France. He led a big band, then achieved considerable success as the leader of a new quintet in which the clarinetist Hubert Rostaing took Grappelli's place. He also became interested in composition and, with Andre Hodeir, arranged the music for the film *Le Village de la Colere* (1946). In 1946, he visited England and Switzerland, toured the USA as a soloist with Duke Ellington's band (playing an amplified guitar for the first time), and worked in New York.

After his return to France, he lived in Samois and toured and recorded with his quintet, which sometimes included Grappelli again. Reinhardt's grasp of harmony, remarkable technique, and trenchant rhythmic sense made him an excellent accompanist. His incisive support is heard to advantage on *Stardust* (1935), recorded with Coleman Hawkins. He later developed into a soloist of unique character, creating a deeply personal style out of his own cultural patrimony. By 1937, when he recorded *Chicago* with the Quintette, he was established as the first outstanding European jazz musician, a stylist with great melodic resourcefulness and a mastery of inflection. He was a gifted composer of short evocative pieces and had a flair for pacing a performance so the maximum variety could be wrung from it without compromising its homogeneity; an excellent example of this is *St. Louis Blues* (1937).

Endowed with remarkable sensitivity, he could work with visiting American performers without forsaking his own essentially romantic style. In the 1940s, he switched to the electric guitar. However, this did not coarsen his playing since he used its power with discretion. The rhythmic content of his work became more varied, as in *Minor Swing* (1947), and his improvised lines more flexible. The asymmetrical, occasionally violent playing heard in some later performances shows the continual widening of his expressive scope. A documentary film, *Django Reinhardt* (1958), was made after his death by the director Paul Paviot. It includes an introduction by Jean Cocteau and features music performed by Grappelli, Rostaing, and Joseph Reinhardt.

Django's two sons, Lousson and Babik, were both fine guitarists, and after their father's death, Babik established a reputation in his own right.

## **Art Tatum**

Art Tatum is one of the greatest pianists to ever play the instrument. Despite seriously impaired vision (he was blind in one eye and had only partial sight in the other), Tatum received some formal piano training as a teenager at the Toledo School of Music and learned to read sheet music with the aid of glasses and by the Braille method. Other than that, he was self-taught, learning from piano rolls, phonograph recordings, radio broadcasts, and various musicians whom he encountered as a young man in the area around Toledo and Cleveland. Tatum acknowledged Fats Waller as his primary inspiration, with the popular radio pianist Lee Sims, whose interpretations contained many interesting harmonies, as an important secondary influence.

Tatum was playing professionally in Toledo by 1926 and performed on radio in 1929-30. In 1932, he traveled to New York as the accompanist for Adelaide Hall. There, in March 1933, he made his first solo recordings, for Brunswick. After leaving Hall, he worked in Cleveland from 1934-5 and led a group in Chicago from 1935-6. His reputation as an outstanding jazz pianist was consolidated in 1937 with his performances in various New York clubs and on radio shows. He toured England the following year and appeared regularly in New York and Los Angeles in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Taking Nat "King" Cole's successful jazz trio as a model, Tatum founded his own influential trio with Slam Stewart (double bass) and Tiny Grimes (electric guitar) in 1943. Grimes left the following year, but Tatum continually returned to this format, playing with Everett Barksdale in particular.

In 1944, Tatum played in a jazz concert at the Metropolitan Opera House, and in 1947 he made a cameo appearance in the film *The Fabulous Dorseys*. Although he was regularly active in nightclubs, radio shows, recording studios, and was lionized by jazz musicians and critics, he did not acquire a large popular following during this period and was bypassed in jazz popularity polls. In 1953, he began an association with the record producer Norman Granz that led to a number of outstanding small-group recordings with such mainstream musicians as Benny Carter, Roy Eldridge, and Ben Webster. More importantly, he was recorded in a long series of solo performances, which indicated both the extent of his repertory and his extraordinary imagination. Tatum remained active and constantly improving his art until shortly before his death.

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## Visitors Center

104 East 126<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 2C

Monday through Friday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m

close to 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 trains to 125th Street

We're waiting for you! Yes, that's right. Our new **Visitors Center** is now open **Monday through Friday (10 a.m. – 4 p.m.)** and chock full of books, CDs and DVDs for your perusal. There is also a first-class exhibit of photos on the walls, so we hope you will come up and see us and also spread the word to any other curious folk who want to spend some time getting jazzed in Harlem.

Also, to find audio and video clips, event summaries, program updates and photographs galore from our previous events, venture here:

<http://www.jmih.org>

*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.*

[Join the Jazz Museum today!](#)