

# KEEP THE MUSIC PLAYING

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2018 JAZZY AWARD  
PRESENTED POSTHUMOUSLY TO  
**JOHNNIE GARRY**

MONDAY, APRIL 30, 2018

A STELLAR LINE-UP OF A-LIST MUSICIANS

**WINARD HARPER, MUSIC DIRECTOR**

- |                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| AKIKO TSURUGA         | KAHLIL KWAME BELL  |
| ALEXIS COLE           | LAFAYETTE HARRIS   |
| ALYSON WILLIAMS       | LINCOLN COWINGS    |
| ANDREA BRACHFELD      | LISLE ATKINSON     |
| ANTOINETTE MONTAGUE   | LOUIS HAYES        |
| BOBBY SANABRIA        | LYNETTE WASHINGTON |
| BRIANNA THOMAS        | MARCUS PERSIANI    |
| BRUCE EDWARDS         | MARION COWINGS     |
| CHIP JACKSON          | NAT ADDERLEY, JR.  |
| CRAIG HARRIS          | PATIENCE HIGGINS   |
| CYNTHIA SCOTT         | RAY MANTILLA       |
| DANNY MIXON           | ROLAND GUERERRO    |
| DARNELL "JAY" STARKES | SOLOMON HICKS      |
| DERRICK BARKER        | TK BLUE            |
| GHANNIYYA GREEN       | WARREN SMITH       |
| JAMES ZOLLAR          | WYCLIFFE GORDON    |
| JAY HOGGARD           | YUNIOR TERRY       |

CONCERT AT 6:30 PM | DOORS OPEN AT 6:00 PM

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"When are musicians going to realize that THEY have the power?" This statement from trumpeter Bill Dixon has often been repeated as he was incredulous at the things musicians had to put up with from venues, record labels, promoters and the like. 54 years after Dixon co-founded the Jazz Composers' Guild, things haven't changed much—that said, when a venue like Ridgewood's H010 gets a reputation as a generally unfriendly pay-to-play spot, where improvisers are basically renting space against a sure-to-be small door charge, folks start to fly the coop. So tenor saxophonist **John Dikeman**, guitarist **Jasper Stadhouders**, bassist **Tony Piazza**, drummer **Adam Shead** and trombonist **Steve Swell** (minus the latter, the group hails from Amsterdam and Chicago and was on tour) migrated from H010 to the Crown Heights art gallery HappyLucky no. 1 (Mar. 3rd), joining up with pedal steel guitarist **Susan Alcorn** and Australian reedplayer **Jim Denley**, who were performing duo. Surrounded by a pig's breakfast of fiber, paper and jeweled artworks, the quintet tussled with one another over two shortish improvisations, Dikeman's rugged and hoarse squall mating well with Swell's economical slush and quizzical flutter, and left the space warm. Denley and Alcorn hadn't met prior and though both initially showed restraint, feeling one another out, the inevitable loosening up led to some remarkable passages of metallic prepared-horn grind and sine wave-like chordal bellows. —Clifford Allen

Artist/activist/vocalist Abbey Lincoln was a disrupter. As part of a series honoring '60s black female pioneers, Marc Cary, who logged 12 years as her pianist, staged **Mothers of the Movements** at Harlem Stage Gatehouse (Mar. 3rd). To help him (re)generate the disruptive spirit of his former employer, Cary enlisted veteran (but eternally youthful) bassist Reggie Workman, resilient drummer Terri Lyne Carrington, adaptable tabla drummer Sameer Gupta, pianist Randy Noel, tenor saxophonist Edmar Colón and vocalist Jackie Gage (who had the unenviable task of filling Lincoln's shoes). Besides "Driva' Man", "Tears for Johannesburg" and "Freedom Day", all from the iconic *We Insist! Max Roach's Freedom Now Suite*, the set included Lincoln's "Straightahead", "Throw It Away", "Down Here Below" and "Music Is The Magic", Cary's "Running Out of Time" (set to Lincoln's lyrics) and Mongo Santamaria's "Afro Blue". Spanning two hours, it had vertiginous peaks linked by long broad valleys. Cary and Carrington were the impetus behind many of the collective high points, each evoking animated crowd responses during solo features. Colón and Gage were equally compelling, if less charismatic. Gupta, too often drowned in the sea of notes, finally surfaced in a few places, his delicate finger-taps dancing over four tuned tablas. Some of the extended jams seemed to linger longer than necessary, though on "Down Here Below", an extended lull in the middle eventually erupted with volcanic strength. —Tom Greenland



Swell/Stadhouders/Piazza/Shead/Dikeman at HappyLucky no. 1



Marc Cary & Randy Noel @ Harlem Stage Gatehouse

We often need, though don't always get, reminders of what is truly 'beyond' in creative arts. I would be remiss if I didn't say that the avant garde improvisers I encounter in New York and elsewhere are mostly like me: middle-aged, white, male, straight/cis and upper-middle class. And as much as we might be politically aligned and have similar aesthetic interests, we need to check ourselves. Even if we don't have complete access to worlds that are not ours—those of people of color, women, trans and queer individuals—these are people who can effect change and the possibility of different directions. The centerpiece of **Queer Trash** at Issue Project Room (Mar. 10th; QT's Michael Foster, Richard Kamerman and Eames Armstrong are the 2018 Suzanne Fiol Curatorial Fellows at IPR) was Keijaun Thomas' "Distance Is Not Separation" (or at least part of it—the full work can be seen on her Vimeo page). The artist, nude except for undergarments, packing tape "corset" and flame-orange extensions, circled a small makeshift floor plan of cardboard, balloons, glitter, yarn and commercial detritus and recited an echo against the prerecorded performance of her written declaration "She Hard, She Q", honoring and reading black feminist icons and pop cultural figures while alternating bodily presence from supplication/objectification to taut, athletic specificity. While the venue didn't invite as much audience participation as the work could use, Thomas' dose of critical realness and transgression was decidedly necessary. (CA)

You just can't predict how **Catherine Russell** is going to sound live: she sings so many styles, all well. At Saint Peter's Church (Mar. 4th), as featured artist for the first of three Jazz Vespers services she performed this Lent season, she was in worship mode. Alternating with the pastors' readings and calls to prayer, she brought their words to life in soulful song, her resonant alto rising to fill the tall, intimate tower. Three covers—The Consolers' countrified "Don't Let Nothing Shake Your Faith", The Jackson Southernaires' delta-bluesy "Help Me Make It Through Another Day" and the Staple Singers' spine-tingling "Stand By Me"—were smoother but no less heartfelt renditions of their gritty predecessors, Russell blending her creamy, cutting alto with the empathetic vocal harmonies of Melissa Stylianou and Jason Walker, fine singers in their own right, while bassist/bandleader Ike Sturm, guitarist Jesse Lewis and vibraphonist Chris Dingman provided nimble yet judicious support. The traditional hymn, "All Night, All Day (Angels Watching Over Me)", was performed with similar brio. In a more modern vein, Russell sang Sturm's "Give Us, Lord, a New Heart" and his setting of Bret Hesel's "Listen", leading a small community choir through the jazzy chord changes with space for a few horn solos. There, in the midst of our crowded crazy city, besieged by noise and ambition, Russell could have raised her voice in rejoinder, belting out a brash protest, but she chose a quieter, most musical way to make her meaning loud and clear. (TG)

While fusion of jazz with Indian classical and traditional musics is hardly new — going back at least to the '60s with Joe Harriott, Manfred Schoof and later Miles Davis, Pat Martino and John McLaughlin — what has changed over the past decade or more is that the fusion is coming from the other direction. Now we have post-colonial indo-jazz fusion, promulgated by musicians with direct heritage, whether it is Vijay Iyer, Rudresh Mahanthappa or, as was on display at National Sawdust (Mar. 11th), **Aakash Mittal**. The saxophonist was presenting music written under the auspices of a grant awarded by the American Institute of Indian Studies, which allowed him to visit Kolkata and compose *Nocturne*, a five-section piece of music based on Hindustani evening and night ragas. The music was interpreted by Mittal's Awaz Trio, completed by Miles Okazaki (guitar) and Rajna Swaminathan (mridangam, a tuned percussion instrument). The 50-minute composition was presented *en suite*, with a shifting hierarchy, cellular repetition, moments of formality contrasted by diffuse spaciness and sections of lockstep movement. While Mittal's playing exhibits a Western tone and tonality, its edge matched well with the deep throoms of mridangam and various electric soundscapes of guitar. The rhythmic aspects were omnipresent, usually maintained by Okazaki and echoed by Swaminathan. Later in the set, Mittal invited a guest onstage, trumpeter Amir ElSaffar, equally dedicated to exploring his Eastern roots. —*Andrey Henkin*

Multinational all-female septet **Woman To Woman** made its NYC debut at the 92nd Street Y (Mar. 2nd) with a concert confirming the prominent role of women of the world in jazz today. The group, assembled by pianist Renee Rosnes and comprising vocalist Cécile McLorin Salvant, trumpeter Ingrid Jensen, tenor saxophonist Melissa Aldana, clarinetist Anat Cohen, bassist Noriko Ueda and drummer Allison Miller, got things started with Salvant's joyous reading of "Never Will I Marry", the whole band swinging with an uplifting verve that continued through their rendition of "I Get A Kick Out Of You", which began with Salvant's a cappella delivery of the seldom-sung verse. Cohen and the rhythm section were in the spotlight on "Jitterbug Waltz", her virtuosic technique on full display as she interjected warbling tags to lyrical phrases. Jensen was out front on a medley of her own "Long" (which she played blowing ethereally into the piano strings) and Ellington's "Solitude". Aldana was featured on a lithely swinging version of Monk's "We See", adding bellowing lower register accents to serpentine lines. Salvant was back for an optimistic rendering of Bob Dorough's "Devil May Care" before the sextet closed the first half with Rosnes' potent anthem "Galapagos". The band played an exciting second set, which began stirringly with Salvant singing Jimmy Rowles' "The Peacocks" and included Wayne Shorter's "United" before closing with Billie Holiday's blues "Fine and Mellow". —*Russ Musto*



Aakash Mittal's Awaz Trio @ National Sawdust



Renee Rosnes, Cécile McLorin Salvant & Anat Cohen @ 92nd Street Y

Just as Aristotle studied at the chiton of Plato, who in turn was a disciple of Socrates, so too did Charles Mingus tap the younger saxophonist **Charles McPherson** for his 1960-72 bands, the latter continuing the tradition decades later by having members of later generations like pianist Jeb Patton and guitarist Yotam Silberstein in his group for a stand at Dizzy's Club. For the first set of the first night (Mar. 1st), McPherson's drummer son Chuck was absent, replaced by Johnathan Blake, who has the Midas touch at the kit, joined in the rhythm section by bassist Todd Coolman. McPherson comes out of the Detroit bop tradition, then had that influence tempered by the fiery work of Mingus; as such, the Dizzy's set was a mixture of jazz standards and McPherson originals (echoing his many recordings since the '60s), presented in a fashion that didn't shake the earth necessarily but definitely warmed the rain-soaked crowd. What has distinguished McPherson is his pungent tone and predilection for unusual melodic narratives in his soloing, like contemporary Gary Bartz if from a bluesier direction. On one piece, McPherson testified as if at a Mingus-led prayer meeting, ending on a long, circular-breathed final note. "Night Fall" was written for the San Diego Ballet while "Marionette" was composed for McPherson's daughter. If a complaint needs to be made, it was there was little to no variation in solo order within the set, making the tunes most interesting when it was McPherson out front. (AH)

Women comprised the larger part of the audience for **Fostina Dixon** and Winds Of Change at the Schomburg Center (Mar. 12th). Part of the Women's Jazz Festival 2018 celebrating Alice Coltrane and Abbey Lincoln, Dixon, a mainstay of the latter's groups, began her set layering live samples of solo baritone saxophone in a soulful collage she titled "Loop de Loop". Joined by the trio of pianist Edsel Gomez, bassist Lonnie Plaxico and drummer Ronnie Burrage, the reedplayer then blew swooping, blues-drenched alto lines over the lingering fat bottom, creating a sound akin to a solo World Saxophone Quartet. Segueing into her "Rest", which began with a gospel-tinged solo piano prelude, the band blended funky R&B and fusion and interjected Herbie Hancock's "Butterfly" motif as an interlude in an episodic outing with Dixon blowing biting alto lines over an inexorable backbeat. The soulful mood continued with Dixon sticking to alto on her "Deliverance Suite", which also featured Gomez' swirling keyboards. She sang convincingly on her Marvin Gaye-inspired "Prayer For Jabez" and Lincoln's "Story Of My Father". Switching to soprano, she and the band swung lightly on her bossa "I Longed For Love" then dug in hard (with the leader on alto) for Mingus' "Fables Of Faubus". Back on soprano she played prettily on Ellington's "African Flower", sticking with it on her "Strutt'n" and "Strutt Sum Mo", alternating calypso and second line rhythms, before closing out with a racing "Caravan". (RM)

## WHAT'S NEWS

The Sony Corporation and Blue Note Media Group have announced a joint effort, **Sony Hall**, a venue with a capacity "of 1,000 standing and 500 seated, with a full-service restaurant and bar...equipped with Sony's technologies, integrated throughout the 12,000 square-foot venue" to open in New York City this spring. Additionally, Sony has been named sponsor of the annual Blue Note Jazz Festival, taking place every summer. For more information, visit [bluenote.net](http://bluenote.net).

As part of Jazz Appreciation Month, the **Louis Armstrong House** will present two events: on Apr. 30th, there will be the first public screening of *Satchmo Plays King Oliver*, the only known film of Armstrong in the studio, at the Museum of the City of New York; and on Apr. 28th, trumpeter Bria Skonberg will present a Family Louis Armstrong Workshop at the Armstrong House. For more information, visit [louisarmstronghouse.org](http://louisarmstronghouse.org).

The **Brooklyn Academy of Music** has named David Binder as its new Artistic Director, taking over for Joseph V. Melillo. For more information, visit [bam.org](http://bam.org).

Finalists have been named for the 23rd Annual **Essentially Ellington** High School Jazz Band Competition taking place at Jazz at Lincoln Center this May. Relatively local ensembles are Newark Academy (Livingston, NJ) and William H. Hall High School (West Hartford, CT). For more information, visit [academy.jazz.org/ee](http://academy.jazz.org/ee).

Recipients of the first round of 2018 funding from the **National Endowment for the Arts** have been announced. Local recipients include: Aaron Davis Hall; Afro-Latin Jazz Alliance of New York; Apollo Theater Foundation; Arts for Art; BRIC Arts; Brooklyn Academy of Music; Festival of New Trumpet Music; Issue Project Room; Jazz Foundation of America; Kaufman Music Center; National Sawdust and Roulette. For more information, visit [arts.gov](http://arts.gov).

The **American Pianists Association** has announced five finalists for the American Pianists Awards: Kenny Banks, Jr., Emmet Cohen, Keelan Dimick, Dave Meder and Billy Test will compete for the Cole Porter Fellowship, given every four years to an American jazz pianist and awarded in April 2019. There will be a concert featuring all five finalists at Dizzy's Club on May. 17th. For more information, visit [AmericanPianists.org](http://AmericanPianists.org).

The **Seattle Women's Jazz Orchestra's** sixth annual Jazz Contest for Women Composers is now accepting scores. Winning and honorable mention composers will receive an honorarium and their compositions performed and recorded live by the Seattle Women's Jazz Orchestra during the 2018 Earshot Jazz Festival in Seattle. Submission deadline is Jun. 30th. For more information, visit [swojo.org](http://swojo.org).

Guitarist **David Grubbs** will have a release event at Printed Matter Apr. 26th at 6:30 pm for his new book *Now that the audience is assembled*, a "book-length prose poem that describes a fictional musical performance during which an unnamed musician improvises the construction of a series of invented instruments before an audience that is alternately contemplative, participatory, disputatious, and asleep." For more information, visit [printedmatter.org/programs/events/676](http://printedmatter.org/programs/events/676).

The **Museum of Modern Art's** Modern Jazz Social, a benefit and live music performance, will honor Debra L. Lee, chairman and CEO of BET Networks, Apr. 3rd. The evening will feature performances by Cécile McLorin Salvant, Aaron Diehl and Tariq "Black Thought" Trotter. For more information, visit [moma.org](http://moma.org).

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