

BALTIMORE JAZZ ALLIANCE

September 2016

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THE BJA NEWSLETTER

WWW.BALTIMOREJAZZ.COM

Charm City Announces First Baltimore Jazz Fest

By Paula Phillips

THE BALTIMORE JAZZ ALLIANCE is working behind the scenes to produce the city's first free jazz festival on Saturday, October 1st from noon until 8 pm. At last one major event will showcase the city's vibrant and enduring jazz scene. Presented by the BJA and Baltimore City Recreation & Parks and many generous sponsors, the festival will be held in beautiful Druid Hill Park. There will be free parking

Baltimore Jazz Fest will showcase a plethora of outstanding area artists, offering a variety of styles from contemporary and straight-ahead jazz to Latin jazz and Gypsy swing. Performers include The Greg Hatza ORGANization, Clarence Ward III, Rumba Club, Hot Club of Baltimore with vocalist Alexis Tantau, and Art Sherrod Jr.

Venerated musician and educator Charles Funn will direct young musicians in the Dunbar Jazz Ensemble and lead the festival's closing performance by Baltimore Legends. Funn is the 2015 recipient of a Jazz Hero Award from the Jazz Journalists Association. The Legends ensemble includes Tim Harris, Bob Butta, Carlos Johnson, Dave Smith, Bobby Ward, John Lamkin, Sr., Clayton McLendon and Gary Richardson. Festival emcees are award-winning musician and bandleader Rufus Roundtree and WEAA's Marcellus "Bassman" Shepard.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ART SHERROD

Art Sherrod Jr. will be just one of the featured jazz artists at Baltimore's first free jazz festival.

The beautiful grounds of Druid Hill Park and the Rawlings Conservatory offer a perfect setting for the seasoned jazz fan or novice. The event also features educational offerings such as a "petting zoo," where children can play various instruments. Food and drink vendors will contribute to the picnic-like atmosphere.

Looking Back

Long-time jazz fans know that Baltimore can lay claim to such iconic jazz figures as Billie Holiday, Ethel Ennis, Cab Calloway and other notables who performed in the early 1930's when The Royal Theatre was one of the "circuit

theaters" regularly visited by black entertainers. Stars such as Duke Ellington, Pearl Bailey and Louis Armstrong appeared there.

The city enjoyed a heyday of jazz with many venues concentrated along Pennsylvania Avenue until the '60s, when the neighborhood experienced economic decline. Smaller clubs continued to spring up, but were no longer concentrated in one area. Baltimore jazz fans still reminisce about The Sportsmen's Lounge, The Closet, The Sphinx Club and The New Haven Lounge.

Formed in 1964, The Left Bank Jazz Society played a major role in keeping jazz front and center in Baltimore for three decades, during which time they booked jazz giants, including Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Stan Kenton, Freddie Hubbard, Maynard Ferguson, Carmen McRae, Charles Lloyd, Charles Mingus, Stan Getz, Roland Kirk, Randy Weston, Jackie McLean, Sonny Rollins, Coleman Hawkins, Wes Montgomery, Lee Morgan, George Benson, Ahmad Jamal and Woody Herman.

Today's Jazz Scene

Today, jazz is thriving in Baltimore. The jazz program at Towson University was begun decades ago by beloved composer and bandleader Hank Levy, whose composition "Whiplash" inspired the award-winning film of the same name. The Jazz Studies program at The

(continued on page 3)

The Baltimore Jazz Alliance is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization.

The Baltimore Jazz Alliance (BJA) is a grass-roots organization of jazz aficionados, musicians and venues dedicated to enhancing and promoting jazz in Baltimore and the surrounding areas. New members sharing this passion are always welcome as the BJA continues its efforts to build a stronger and better networked jazz scene. Together we can help this music thrive in the region and reward listeners and musicians alike.

BJA Priorities

- To develop new audiences for jazz
- To strengthen communication within the jazz community
- To improve media relations on behalf of the jazz community
- To bring greater visibility to the entire array of jazz offerings in the Baltimore region
- To provide greater access to performance opportunities for Baltimore-area jazz musicians

Visit www.baltimorejazz.com for information about our accomplishments and future goals.

Baltimore Jazz Alliance
847 North Howard Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Please direct your questions and comments to:
webmaster@baltimorejazz.com

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JAZZ JAM SESSIONS

Where the cats congregate to groove and grow!

*** NOTE: As these events may be subject to change, it's always a good idea to CALL AHEAD for CONFIRMATION!**

MONDAYS

Liam Flynn's Ale House – Monday night jam sessions hosted by Hot Club of Baltimore, mostly Django Reinhardt music, 1930s-'40s & standards. 22 W. North Avenue. 8-midnight. 410-244-8447

Amy's Place – Every other Monday featuring house band SPICE. 5517 Ritchie Highway, Unit B, Brooklyn Park. 8 pm. 410-725-9131 or 410-725-9193

NEW! Club 347 – Every Monday jam session/open mic hosted by Dawoud Said, Johnny Jones & Jesse Powers. 347 N. Calvert Street. Musicians/vocalists are welcome. 8 pm-1:30 am. 443-506-7200

Sign of the Times – Clarence Ward III presents The Session. 139 N. Belnord Avenue. All are welcome to come out and express yourselves. No cover, one drink minimum. Come on in and swing with us. 8:30-11 pm. 410-522-0600

TUESDAYS

Randallstown CC – Open Jazz Jam Sessions/Book and Poetry Readings every Tuesday at 6-8 pm. Hosted by Derrick Amin. 3505 Resource Drive, Randallstown. Musicians and vocalists are welcome. Sponsored by BJA. 410-887-0698

WEDNESDAYS

49 West Café – FIRST and THIRD Wednesdays. "Starr's Jazz Jam" at 49 West Street, Annapolis. Hosted by John Starr and house band. Musicians and singers very welcome! Delicious and reasonably priced food and drink available! \$10 cover. 7-10 pm. Reservations 410-626-9796

Homeslyce – Todd Marcus leads jazz jam sessions every Wednesday. Musicians and singers welcome. 336 N. Charles Street. 8-11 pm. 443-501-4000

THURSDAYS

Liam Flynn's Ale House – Jam sessions led by Ben Grant, 22 W. North Avenue. 8-11 pm. 410-244-8447

The Place Lounge – Jam session/open mic hosted by Spice. 315 W. Franklin Street. Musicians and vocalists are welcome. 7-10 pm. 410-547-2722

If you know of local jam sessions, please share the information with our readers by emailing the details to the editor at: jazzpalette@gmail.com

If any of the jazz jam sessions listed are discontinued, PLEASE INFORM THE EDITOR at: jazzpalette@gmail.com

Help us support live jazz in Baltimore by becoming a member of BJA. See page 11.

Charm City Announces First Baltimore Jazz Fest



PHOTO COURTESY MICHAEL JOSEPH HARRIS

Hot Club of Baltimore

L to R: Michael Joseph Harris, Alexis Tantau, Sami Arefin, Eddie Hrybyk



PHOTO COURTESY OF GREG HATZA

The Greg Hatza ORGANization

L to R: Brian Kookan, Peter Fraize, Robert Shahid, Greg Hatza

(continued from page 1)

Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University attracts students from all over the world.

Large auditoriums in colleges and museums and mid-size venues like the Caton Castle, An die Musik Live and Eubie Blake Cultural Center offer plenty of jazz, as do numerous restaurants and bars. Local performers stay busy playing in Baltimore and nearby Washington, D.C., and Charm City is a stop for touring bands.

Under the leadership of ardent jazz lover and BJA founder Barry Glassman, Baltimore Jazz Alliance took up the mantle of jazz in the city in 2003 (with non-profit incorporation in 2008). Mark Osteen served as president from 2004-2015, and BJA continues to elevate the role of jazz and shine a spotlight on talented homegrown artists. Not yet a member? Join to meet fellow jazz lovers, receive an informative newsletter, access the online events calendar and use the Where's the Jazz map. New members are always welcome.

Baltimore Jazz Fest gratefully acknowledges its sponsors: Baltimore Community Foundation (BCF), Jazz Beyond Borders, Quality of Life Giving Circle, Rovner Products, Keith Larsen's Mid-Atlantic Drum, Guitar Center Rentals, and all those who contributed to the Indiegogo campaign.

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as we add more details about
Baltimore Jazz Fest.

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MTA Sponsors Jazz Radio

By Bob Jacobson



There's a new source in town for contemporary jazz—WTTZ, 93.5 FM—with a unique sponsor: the Maryland Transit Administration,

the agency that runs buses, light rail, Mobility paratransit, and the Metro subway. Under the slogans "the station that moves you" (get it?) and "smooth, relaxing favorites," programming resembles that of the former "smooth jazz" radio station WSMJ—contemporary jazz (mostly instrumental), covers of R&B hits (e.g., Junior Walker's "Shotgun" and Average White Band's "Work to Do"), original R&B and pop (e.g., Stevie Wonder, Barry White, Dionne Warwick).

At this point WTTZ does not provide announcements of what is being played. MTA spokesman Marc Jones, Manager of Broadcast Operations, says that the station, which reaches mainly Baltimore City and County, will add streaming and RDS (Radio Data System), through which song titles will appear on your car radio. Because of MTA's sponsorship, a significant amount of programming is devoted to notices and interviews about transportation services.

BJA Member Benefits

Your support is crucial to the success of the Baltimore Jazz Alliance! When you join, membership benefits include receipt of our monthly newsletter, discounts on BJA merchandise, advance notice about all BJA events, and of course the satisfaction of being a part of Baltimore's best source of information and advocacy for Jazz.

But that's not all! The following venues and other businesses offer discounts to BJA members:

- An die Musik offers 10% discount for BJA members for music purchases at the An die Musik record store.
- Baltimore Chamber Jazz Society offers BJA members a \$2 discount off the general admission price. Just indicate your affiliation when ordering tickets.
- Eubie Live! at the Eubie Blake Cultural Center at 847 N. Howard Street offers a discount to BJA members on rentals of its performance and events spaces.
- Jazzway 6004 offers BJA members a \$5 discount on performances at their venue.
- Germano's Piattini often offers discounted tickets to specific events for BJA members, announced by email.

BALTIMORE JAZZ ALLIANCE IS DEDICATED TO PROMOTING *LIVE JAZZ* IN BALTIMORE!



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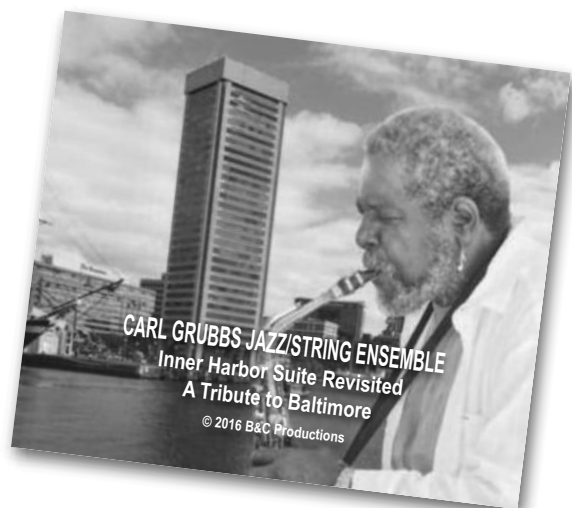
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Ebban and Ephraim Dorsey Headline at Caton Castle

By Liz Fixsen

With jazz, the earlier you start, the better. There is so much to learn, beginning with the technical mastery of the instrument. Then you need to learn the repertoire and the various styles. And it doesn't hurt to take in some theory about scales and chord progressions. Finally, you face the challenge of improvisation.

These are all more reasons that one mission of the Baltimore Jazz Alliance is to foster youth jazz education, which it does through its "Jazz for Kids" program and by awarding scholarships to worthy youth who are studying and performing jazz.

Alto saxophonists Ebban and Ephraim Dorsey, siblings who are 12 and 13 years old, respectively, are prime examples of youthful performers worthy of support. Both received the Next Generation scholarship award presented by the BJA at its 2015 fundraiser at Caton Castle. The youngsters also represented the BJA at Artscape 2015 with a performance in the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance tent.

It was particularly gratifying to see the number of BJA member musicians and others who turned out to support the Dorsey kids' first show as band leaders and headliners at Caton Castle on Saturday, August 13th. The two middle-schoolers held the stage with poise and aplomb, backed by a band of Baltimore's finest: Brian Kookon on guitar, Greg Hatza playing keyboard, and Robert Shahid on drums, all regular performers at the club.

It will be exciting to watch these two talented youngsters grow and mature, gain sophistication and self-confidence . . .

I missed the first set, but the second set included a range of favorite standards, starting with Joe Henderson's "Recordame." Ebban's solo had a lovely melodic coherence: she set up an idea and pursued it with variations. Ephraim was featured on the Erroll Garner ballad "Misty" and gave a respectable interpretation with nice embellishments, particularly on a long solo coda. This was followed by the beautiful Lee Morgan tune, "Ceora," with its tricky trills. The band then ripped into a lively rendition of "Tenor Madness." The program continued with Freddie Hubbard's "Little Sunflower," "Giant Steps" and "Blues in the Closet," with Ebban quoting "Blue Monk" on her solo. I heard later that during the first set Ephraim had sung and scatted on one of his favorite tunes.

It was clear that the two kids were seasoned performers. Both displayed considerable proficiency on their instruments, with great tone and pitch control. And they know their repertoire: there wasn't a false note, and their improvisations followed the harmonic progressions with well-



PHOTO COURTESY OF LIZ FIXSEN

L to R: Brian Kookon, Ebban Dorsey, Greg Hatza, Ephraim Dorsey and Robert Shahid

thought-out melodic patterns.

The pair began their musical career in elementary school bands, which was natural for kids coming from a musical family—their dad, Ezra, plays jazz trumpet and baritone sax, their brother plays bass, and their older sister played saxophone. Often on a Sunday afternoon they will hold an informal family jam session. Their mom, Bernadine, is their tireless supporter and promoter. The pair have won several awards and scholarships, including two scholarships to Peabody Institute, the Rosa Pryor Scholarship (with a trophy), and the above-mentioned award from the BJA. Certainly they are a credit to their teachers, including Carl Grubbs (they are regular participants in his jazz summer camp) as well as Craig Alston, Eric Kennedy, and, at Peabody Institute, saxophonist Ian Sims and bassist Blake Meister.

Present in the audience were a number of musicians with whom the Dorsey kids have played, including Meister and Sims, multi-instrumentalist Warren Wolf, drummer Quincy Phillips, bass clarinetist Todd Marcus, keyboardist Lafayette Gilchrist, and saxophonist Corinthia Cromwell. WEA's Doc Manning was also there, as was BJA board member and jazz promoter Vernard Gray. The club was packed and the crowd gave the band and the kids hearty applause after each number. Ephraim and Ebban have sat in with the band on past occasions at Caton Castle, which shares the credit for helping to encourage these two young jazz prodigies.

In an interview posted in Baltimore County Public Schools'

"Student Spotlight," Ephraim says he would like to travel the world playing music and put out an album with all his own compositions. Ebban says she would like to restore the popularity of jazz and use her musical talents (she also plays classical piano) to influence younger children. She also says, "I would like to play a song with all of the famous jazz musicians together at one time." She and her brother took a step closer to that dream, playing a whole evening of tunes with some pretty famous jazz musicians. It will be exciting to watch these two talented youngsters grow and mature, gain sophistication and self-confidence, and take their places in Charm City's pantheon of jazz greats.

BJA Awards Scholarship to Simone Summers

By Bob Jacobson

Board member Alice Downs presented BJA's Next Generation award and scholarship to trumpet student Simone Summers, age 13, at the conclusion of Contemporary Arts's annual SAX camp at Loyola University Maryland. Simone was recognized for peer leadership, improved musical skills, camp administrative assistance and dedication to her craft.

This was Simone's second year at SAX camp. She is entering eighth grade at Baltimore City's Roland Park Elementary / Middle School, where she plays in the concert and jazz bands. She also participates in Peabody Preparatory's jazz program under the direction of Blake Meister.

A free membership to BJA was included in the award, making Simone our youngest member.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALICE DOWNS

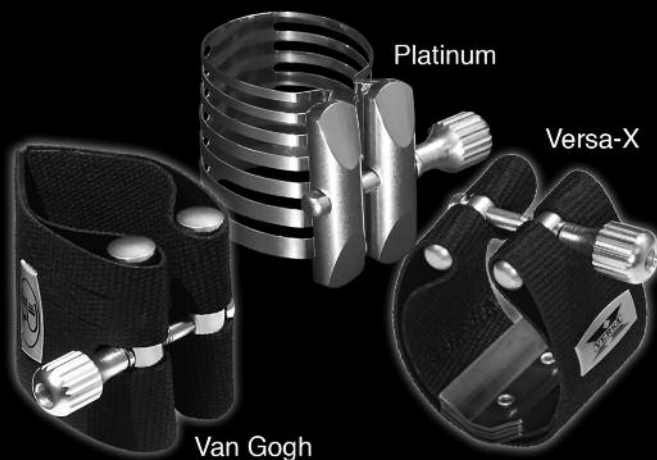
L to R: Craig Alston, Alice Downs, Vernard Gray, Simone Summers and Carl Grubbs

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JAN KNUTSON

Looking Both Ways

By Ken Avis

Let's get past the fact that Jan Knutson released his second CD, *Looking Both Ways*, before finishing high school. It's a wow-inducing nugget to contemplate but the issue comes down to whether the CD is worth a listen. If you enjoy guitarists like Joe Pass, Herb Ellis and chord-melody style guitar, you're going to enjoy *Looking Both Ways*.

Having been raised on Ella Fitzgerald and Joe Pass albums like *Take Love Easy*, and Pass's solo *Virtuoso* albums, I think Knutson's 2014 debut album of solo guitar, *Out of Nowhere*, was a delight. His impressive collaborators include guitarist Paul Wingo, who is listed as a friend and teacher, and jazz guitar legend Frank Vignola, who produced the CD. Vignola has invited Knutson to perform live with him a number of times—an impressive endorsement in itself.

Looking Both Ways takes the story further, documenting Knutson's development with another friend and teacher, the great Steve Abshire. To watch Abshire and Knutson play together, as they did at Knutson's Strathmore Artist-in-Residence show earlier this year, is a study of camaraderie as they clearly share mutual joy and respect as well as they exchange solo lines.

Live and on this CD, Knutson is in the company of the best musicians around. On tracks like "Pennies from Heaven," the twin, weaving guitars of Knutson and Abshire carry the tune in the style of Pass and Ellis. Elsewhere, mandolin ace Danny Knicely cuts loose, swinging his way through "Honeysuckle Rose" and "Avalon." The inspired hands of Tommy Cecil on Duke Ellington's "Cotton Tail" show why he is rightly recognized as one of the best bass players today. These seasoned musicians provide a sympathetic and tasteful support to the music, never overpowering the guitar.

Knutson doesn't overwork the band. A good half of the cuts are solo jazz guitar arrangements, full of surprises, melody and swing. What I love about this album is the variety; its inventive, sensitive arrangements feature delicious melodic lines and stylish guitar playing throughout.

Amidst the classics are a handful of Jan Knutson originals. "Blink" and "Paul's Place," a composition inspired by and dedicated to Wingo, fit perfectly alongside the standards. "Amsterdam" offers a more introspective, ambient sound—a modern sounding, solo guitar composition, yet with references to the greats of jazz guitar. A lovely piece.

In addition to Knutson's good fortune in attracting such excellent musicians and mentors, his family must also be credited for supporting his talents. At the previously mentioned Strathmore show I sat by a couple who were smiling so broadly they had to be Knutson's parents . . . and indeed



CD REVIEW

they were. His CD liner notes mention that he picked up guitar at the age of 10 and started "taking jazz seriously" when he was around 12. Knutson's father—a US Navy Band trombonist—developed his skills as a luthier and builds the guitars that his son plays.

So, with two first-rate CDs to his name, Jan Knutson is now looking both ways, preparing to move to the Manhattan School of Music to further his studies. He is looking to the future while also looking back on experiences and people that have inspired his playing. I'm at a bit of a loss to imagine how much better he can get with four years of formal training . . . but I'm willing to stick around, and I'm expecting to be surprised and impressed.



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PHOTO COURTESY OF LIZ FIXSEN

Two of Baltimore's finest jazz musicians enjoying Artscape
From left: Nico Sarbanes and Dan Wallace

BJA at Artscape 2016

By Bob Jacobson

For the twelfth year in a row, BJA members braved week-end-long temperatures in the 90s to put out the word at Artscape about Baltimore jazz. Having a booth on July 17th-19th was opportune timing for the first public announcement of the upcoming Baltimore Jazz Fest and the news was met with great excitement.

Thanks to our hard-working volunteers (first timers are marked with an N; those working multiple two-hour shifts are marked with an asterisk):

Derrick Thompson, Tom VerPloeg (N), Rob Winter, Rena Sweetwine (N), Michael Raitzyk, Kirsten Downs, Deborah Brown (N), Karen Braithwaite-Yarn, David McGarvey, Steve Alpern, Carolyn Williams, Steve Everette (N), Tyrone Crawley (N), Bob Jacobson*, Liz Fixsen*, Robert Shahid*, George Yost*, Ian Rashkin*, Terry Koger*, Michael and Kitty Andom (N and *).

Notable among our volunteers' achievements was the recruiting of twenty-five new members.

Thanks also to Randolph Gardner and his band The Rose Gold Experience, who represented BJA twice at Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance's performance tent.

Several BJA members also performed at Artscape this year, including band leaders Carl Grubbs, Mark Osteen, Dan Wallace, and Michael Raitzyk as well as band members Seth Kibel and Terry Koger (with the Muthafunkaholics!).

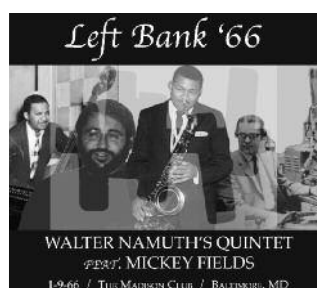
BJA Member Notes

WELCOME!

We welcome our new and returning BJA members: Drew Alfgren, Tanya Bobo-Lenoci, Kathleen Carrco, Jim Coles, John Crotty, Roger Curtis, Roland Dorsey, Jerrel Duffy, Leroy Edwards, Frank Falatko, Christopher Fink, Robert Ford, Elizabeth Foxwell, Charles Gholston, Kim Gillies, Chris Holland, Nathan Hook, Alexander Jarman, Kathy Kaneda, Clarke Kelly, Nancy Miller, Barry Neff, Scott Olden, Bryan Queen, Charles Schueller, Mechele Sledge, Scott Stansfield, Strung Out Studios, Simone Summers, Jeff Swiss, Oliver Webb and Jackie Wiggins

BOPA GRANT FOR PHIL RAVITA

Longtime BJA member Phil Ravita received a grant from BOPA through Free Fall Baltimore to present a show commemorating Ella Fitzgerald's approaching 100th birthday, in April 2017.



LEFT BANK '66 CD available from BJA!

You may now buy the CD *Left Bank '66* directly from BJA. Recorded in 1966 at the Madison Club, the CD features Baltimore sax legend Mickey Fields and

guitarist Walt Namuth, who joined the Buddy Rich Big Band the following year. These two huge talents were rarely recorded, adding to the value of this CD. In his *City Paper* review, Geoffrey Himes wrote, "If you care at all about the history of Baltimore music or the history of the jazz saxophone, this is a recording you need to hear."

Six tracks include Sam Jones's "Unit 7," Monk's "Well You Needn't," Miles Davis's "Pfrancin" and "The Theme," Benny Golson's "Stablemates," and Billy Reid's "The Gypsy." Phil Harris is on bass, Claude Hubbard on piano and Purnell Rice on drums. Total playing time = 67 minutes.

To purchase *Left Bank '66*, you may pay \$15 via PayPal at baltimorejazz.com or write a check for \$15 to: BJA, 847 North Howard Street, Baltimore, MD 21201. Please make sure to type or print your street address. The CD will be sent to you by U.S. mail.

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Details on page 11.

Blues Alley Presents



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September 2016

Dedicated to promoting **JAZZ IN BALTIMORE!**



Save the enclosed BALTIMORE JAZZ FEST SCHEDULE.