

BALTIMORE JAZZ ALLIANCE

FALL 2021 INSIDE THIS EDITION

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Bassist Extraordinaire Blake Meister

By Kristoffer Belgica

Known for his wit and versatility, Philadelphia-born bassist Blake Meister has become a widely recognized name in Baltimore's jazz scene and beyond. Even in the toughest of times, he remains one of the busiest (and most positive) musicians around. Whether attending Terra Cafe's Monday night jam session or performing on stage at all the local haunts and venues, he is always on the move and at the ready.

Meister has a knack for evoking bursts of laughter just as often as he can leave people in awed silence while he takes a solo. Many have described him as a very "go-with-the-flow" person, in both his playing and his personality.

It is apparent that he works just as hard as he swings, given his recent track record. Just look at any jazz calendar or performance description, and you will likely spot his name on the bill. He received three Individual Artist Awards from the Maryland State Arts Council (for composition in 2012 and 2018 and for performance in 2015), and his debut album, *Septagon*, was named CapitalBop's Best Album of 2012. Well-versed in the post-bop language, he regularly performs in other styles too, including Gypsy jazz (he is regularly recruited by Hot Club of Baltimore bandleader Michael Joseph



PHOTO CREDIT: SPOTICUS PHOTOGRAPHY

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Spotlighting Ron Scott of Caton Castle

By Gregory Lewis

Hidden in plain sight on a half-block-square lot in the southwestern corner of the city—a stone's throw away from the intersection of Baltimore and Hilton Streets—sits Caton Castle, a multi-story Tudor-style structure with an angular roof and gabled windows above an L-shaped veranda.

Since it lacks a moat, it's a stretch to call this erstwhile roadhouse a "castle," but Ron Scott did it anyway when he acquired the property after an auction around 1990. Since that time, Scott has made Caton Castle a fixture on the local jazz scene, regularly presenting top-name musicians as well as outstanding local talent such as organist Greg Hatza, vibraphonist Warren Wolf and alto saxophonist Tim Green.

Who is Sir Ron Scott of Caton Castle? He and I recently discussed that question at one of the venue's cabaret tables in a room that before the pandemic pause would comfortably seat a hundred imbibing and dining connoisseurs of the music. As a regular patron, I could envision the friendly wait staff in pinball moves between linen-covered tables, gliding to and from the open bar and the swinging kitchen doors, while a glossy photo gallery of jazz royalty adorns the walls. Incidentally, I recommend the chicken wings.

Born in 1945 in Baltimore, Scott was one of eight siblings in a household on Greene Street, amidst a downtown area since transformed by urban development, including Oriole

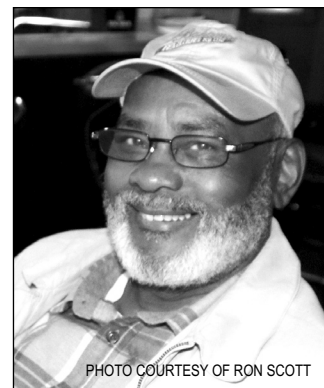


PHOTO COURTESY OF RON SCOTT

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**The Baltimore Jazz Alliance is a
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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

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3000 Homewood Avenue #33347
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Spotlighting Ron Scott of Caton Castle

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Park at Camden Yards. Although holding only a pedestrian interest in music at the time, Scott still retains some vivid musical memories from his early years. "I had a friend who was paralyzed at age 15," says Scott. "When that happened to him, [his pals] just gathered around him and played a lot of music at his house." And there were pop tunes (and some jazz) enjoyed on the jukebox at the South Baltimore restaurant owned by Scott's uncle. "It was during a time when people hung out in restaurants," he explains.

Other than occasional trips to the old Royal Theatre—a concert by polio-stricken R & B crooner Sir Walter Jackson (1938-1983) stands out—Scott's musical interests didn't perk up until the mid-1970s. Scott married Gloria, a childhood acquaintance turned devoted wife, until her passing in 2019. Also, Scott began his career as a maintenance worker with the Baltimore City Public Schools, from which he retired around 2005.

It so happened that a co-worker was also a John Coltrane fan who schooled Scott on some subtleties of jazz appreciation, answering Scott's criticism of Coltrane's avant-garde saxophone style with an admonition: "Listen to Coltrane's ballads with Johnny Hartman." Scott did, and discovered what jazz fans with big ears know: it is possible to like and to dislike the same artist.

By the 1980s, Scott was frequenting the local jazz scene—including The Sportsman's Lounge, The Bandstand and The Closet—but he was particularly impressed by The New Haven Lounge in Northeast Baltimore. "I really liked that atmosphere," says Scott. Of course, none of those venues has survived.

As an impresario, Scott got off on the wrong foot by presenting, he says, "music geared to the younger generation. That brings a lot of grief. At the time, in 1990, I'm 45, and people coming in here are just barely 21. I'm carding

them and what not. That helped bring the changes." That is, Scott paid heed to influential voices on the local jazz scene who helped shape the venue's straight-ahead jazz direction, including promoter James "Biddy" Wood (1924-2011), saxophonist Harold Adams (1942-2021) and drummer Robert Shahid.

Who was the first famous jazz headliner to appear at the Caton Castle? Charles "The Mighty Burner" Earland (1941-1999). In the 1990s, the great jazz organist performed for free at a birthday event that Scott sponsored for local radio personality "Big Jim" Staton, a friend of Earland.

Thereafter, alto sax star Gary Bartz also played at Caton Castle with a group that included noted pianist John Hicks (1941-2006). Scott confesses: "I'm going to tell you how green I was. I didn't have a [permanent] piano because I wasn't getting acts like that." He adds, "I didn't realize that the rhythm section could be just as bad [as in bodacious] as the person up front. You might be into Hicks. You might not be thinking about Gary Bartz."

Since that time, Caton Castle's house piano has been tinkled by some very fine pianists, including Cedar Walton (1934-2013), Harold Mabern (1936-2019), Mulgrew Miller (1955-2013) and Larry Willis (1942-2019). As to Walton, a local old-school favorite from long-ago Left Bank Jazz Society performances, Scott reacted with sticker shock at his asking price and received a memorable response: "If you can't afford me, don't call me."

When will outstanding live music resume at Caton Castle? As soon as the pandemic obstacle is overcome, replies Scott. Regularly check the calendar tab at www.catoncastle.com to find out when that happens.

Gregory Lewis (grgrylewis@yahoo.com) is a longtime Baltimore attorney whose jazz reflections frequently appear under Caton Castle's Show Review tab at catoncastle.com and reflectionscatoncastle.blogspot.com

Bassist Extraordinaire Blake Meister

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Harris), Latin jazz, French waltzes, and, occasionally, funk and pop.

During our interview, Meister reminisced about his college years and reflected on his mentors, bassist Paul Johnson and saxophonist Gary Thomas. Having played only electric bass, he arrived at Peabody Conservatory with an upright bass given to him by his parents but with no experience playing it. Meister says, "I actually started studying classical music to learn the upright. . . . Fortunately [Paul Johnson] was willing to teach me [jazz], so I kind of fell backwards into it that way. He got me on the right path, and really went out of his way for me, over and over again."

The gig grind is a rite of passage for all musicians. One can only grow so much playing within the comfort of one's home, and unless a player gets out to perform, it will be a slow boat to his or her full potential. Immediately recognizing this fact, Meister took to the streets, attending as many jam sessions and gigs as he could manage. He took part in a regular Monday night jam session at An die Musik, as well as playing with several featured acts there. These experiences further steeped him in the jazz tradition.

During the latter half of his bachelor's degree studies, he performed at local venues, bars, and clubs almost nightly. Upon completing his studies at Peabody, he was approached by a friend to audition for the classical music master's program at Catholic University in Washington, DC. Unsurprisingly, he earned a spot. He studied under National Symphony bassist Ira Gold and continued to play with a seemingly never-ending assortment of ensembles all over the region. It is a challenge to

juggle the pursuit of higher education with working as a full-time performing musician. Even so, in between studying and performing, Meister also taught piano, bass, music theory and ear training at Peabody Preparatory.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BLAKE MEISTER

Thomas was chairman of the Peabody jazz department while Meister was involved with the school. "He's an incredible educator," says Meister. "He has a way of getting right to the core of what students need to do. He helped me fix a lot of things in my playing. When I was teaching at Peabody, we would get breakfast before our morning classes. There was a lot of guidance there, too. He's a unique player. Hopefully some of

his ideas have rubbed off on me."

Meister credits his father, a blues DJ, for introducing him to a wide array of music as he was growing up. While he consumed hefty helpings of blues, folk, country, and hip-hop, the young bassist always gave considerable attention to jazz, listening to Miles Davis and John Coltrane, among others. Some musicians can pinpoint a precise recording, performance, or experience that inspired them to become full-time musicians. For Meister, there was no watershed moment. He states that he has always just played music and will continue to do so, adding "I take every day as it comes."

When asked if he had any advice to offer for budding musicians, Meister had this to say: "Start practicing now. It's like investing. [Not everyone] has [money] to put away, usually, but what you do have is time. If you could invest five hours a day when you're fifteen years old, it's going to pay very big dividends. It'll make your life a lot easier. And if you choose to pursue [music], doors are going to open up for you in a different kind of way."

While he is very much at home on the upright bass, Meister also performs jazz on piano. He is also available for private lessons. Keep up with all of his performances and releases on Facebook, Instagram or his website www.blake-meister.com

Kristoffer Belgica is a Texas native who primarily plays rhythm guitar for local Gypsy jazz ensembles Hot Club of Baltimore, and the DC-based group Swing 5. He served for seven years in the US Air Force and now devotes his time to learning from and contributing to the Baltimore jazz community. He has written several articles for the BJA newsletter.

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Pianist Aaron Hill – A Man with Many Hats

By Liz Fixsen

Experts who give advice on resumes say: keep it to one page. This does not apply to pianist Aaron Hill—whose resume is about as long as the line out the door at Keystone Korner when Ravi Coltrane played last June. According to his bio, Hill's various hats include those of pianist, composer, audio engineer, philosopher, theologian, psychotherapist, mindfulness and meditation guru, and business entrepreneur—to name a few. And if he gets his due, the line to see Aaron Hill play at Keystone Korner (again) or anywhere else will be just as long as Coltrane's.

But you don't have to stand in line to hear Hill play if you come to Terra Café, where he is a member of the house band in one of Baltimore's biggest and liveliest jam sessions, held every Monday night. You don't have to stand in line to hear him and his trio at any one of his now more than 130 free Street Serenades throughout the Baltimore area. There is no line to hear him on one of his many websites, including Bandcamp, Spotify, YouTube, and Pandora. With his long dreads, glasses, and toothy smile, this attractive and loquacious young guy is physically and digitally omnipresent.

His music is hard to classify. Jazz is just one ingredient in a potpourri of styles, reflecting his journey from hip-hop and rap, through gospel, and finally to jazz—and beyond. Growing up in a Pentecostal church, he was steeped in that musical tradition. Having taught himself piano for some time and benefiting from the tutelage of Dr. Maurice Johnson, he found himself at age 21 with a ten-hour-a-week job at a friend's church. At that point, he went all in for music. He quit his job at an auto parts store and used the thirty hours a week to delve into study of music. He would go to the Enoch Pratt Library and check out CDs and books on any kind of music, and he immersed himself in whatever he found online. He also studied piano, mostly classical, for a year at Baltimore City Community College.

Hill transitioned into jazz through a friendship with a guy named Steve, who came one day to Hill's church looking for the job that Hill had just landed. The two connected musically: Steve was looking to transition from jazz into gospel, and Hill was looking to go the opposite direction. Steve helped Hill move away from smooth jazz and open his ears to the authentic sounds of "real" jazz by listening to the late John Tegner's jazz program on WEAA.

I have heard Hill play at his Street Serenades in Ellicott City, at Terra Café and Keystone Korner, and at a benefit concert in June for Beyond the Natural in Catonsville. When he plays the piano, Hill is completely immersed in the experience. It is as though he is straining to become one with the instrument, to make it an extension of his body and his soul. There is a lush and shimmering density to his playing, like sheets of rain swirling in a storm. Hill is a musical storyteller: into that maelstrom of notes, Hill weaves speech and vocal-



His music is hard to classify. Jazz is just one ingredient in a potpourri of styles, reflecting his journey from hip-hop and rap, through gospel, and finally to jazz—and beyond.

izations, as in his bluesy tune that he played at that Catonsville concert, "People Make the World Go Round" (perhaps distantly inspired by the Stylistics), with an incantatory chorus of "round and round and round." His elaborate rendition of "Stella by Starlight" drew on a tapestry of genres, with some Liszt-like arpeggios, some chunky Rachmaninoff chords, and a dollop of Jerry Lee Lewis funk lurking in the corners. "Behold the Star" began as a limpid, romantic ballad with a Latinesque groove, accented by drummer Quincy Phillips on a spiral cymbal. It then rose to a wild cacophony accompanied by Hill's passionate vocalizations, finally winding down to let the bass propel the tune in a throaty register. That concert also included his song, "Believe in Love," featuring rap-style lyrics and audience participation, with clapping and a call-and-response chorus of "we believe in love."

"Believe in Love" could also be the theme of Hill's other calling: host of an audio chat program called Clubhouse. Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, he leads a morning session from 8:30 to 10:30 or 11:30, talking, singing, and counseling. He is currently training online with the Milton Erick-

son Institute to become a therapist. In freewheeling chat sessions that he likens to jazz improvisation, Hill lets the moment dictate the story and the flow. He says that some participants have told him that the sessions have been “life-changing” for them. Hill shares his guiding principles: “It matters the company you keep,” “You should curate your time,” “You should be yourself,” “You should be willing to take correction.”

Whether through his therapeutic improvisatory chat sessions or through his incantatory and immersive piano playing, Hill is a force to be reckoned with. Learn more at aaronhilltv.com or on his Facebook page.

Liz Fixsen is a dedicated fan of jazz in Baltimore, for many years a familiar presence at the clubs and jam sessions, a member of the BJA board, and a writer and editor for the BJA newsletter. A jazz vocalist and pianist, she occasionally performs at Baltimore-area venues and for private events.

FREE Online Global Community Musician Directory

Seattle pianist Randy Halberstadt is developing an online global community musician directory, a FREE service. Some big improvements are scheduled for the next few months (such as creating a separate domain, adding self-editability and a search function, etc.), but the cost to the musicians will always be \$0.00.

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Clarence Ward III's New Album

Dat Feel Good—*Live at Blue House*

By Eric Byrd

Clarence Ward III and his band Dat Feel Good have released a live recording, titled *Live at Blue House*, which captures his group in fine form on eight tracks. It is an inspiring program of music, coming from a deep place within the artist. The journey of how Ward III arrived at *Live at Blue House* is as at least as valuable as the music itself.

According to Ward, this recording documents a live-streamed concert that almost didn't happen. In March 2020, Ward experienced the loss of his father, and soon after, the country and the world fell headfirst into the pandemic. This prolific artist on both saxophone and trumpet suddenly found himself unable to play. The layoff from performing in-person shows with a band, an experience shared by artists throughout most of 2020, made a bad situation worse. Eventually Ward decided he needed to document his music. "I'm now in the head space to take things to the next level for my family, Baltimore, and myself," Ward says.

Thank God he found his voice again.

From the opening bars of the opening track "Day Traveler" it becomes obvious that Ward's is one of the more relevant musical voices on the scene today. The song sets up a moody—dare I say dreamy?—atmosphere before drummer Quincy Phillips lays down a wonderful samba groove which contains most of the improvisational material. Keyboardist Aaron Hill starts the solo section here, and the interplay among him, Phillips, and bassist Mikel Combs lets you know that Dat Feel Good lives up to its name.

From the opening bars . . . it becomes obvious
that Ward's is one of the more relevant
musical voices on the scene today.

Ward composed that song and most of the others on this project. Although the next track is the popular jazz standard "Misty," Ward puts such a hip vibe on it that it sounds like a brand-new song. If you enjoy Robert Glasper, you'll love this track. Ward's trumpet embellishes the melodic content just enough to make his novel interpretation work as both a standard and as something modern.

In his bio, Ward states that he began studying with the legendary Baltimore educator Charles Funn. Ward's tune "Funn's Funk" is a lot like the man himself—fun, funky, and ready to make you smile because he's already got a smile on his face. This track is where the band really starts to fly high. Ward plays both trumpet and saxophone here. About four minutes in, Ward and Phillips go to battle without the



bass and keyboard; each statement by the saxophone is answered in kind by the drummer. The jury is still out on who got whom. Hill then moves to center stage on organ. His solo is electric—twists and turns all punctuated with rhythmic interjections by bassist Combs. You'll be out of breath—but then Ward takes another blistering solo on trumpet for the remainder of the song. This track is 11 minutes of the blues on steroids, starting in the Black gospel tradition and ending up in outer space!

"Heartfelt" is exactly what you'd imagine. Phillips is probably the perfect drummer for this project, as he has the ability to swing as hard as any bebop drummer, yet has the subtlety for an R & B backbeat as if that's all he plays. The same can be said for Hill, who moves adeptly and effortlessly in and out of acoustic piano and keyboard sounds. These players give Dat Feel Good tremendous versatility. Plus, Ward can place his trumpet on top of a groove, albeit swing or pocket, and it all sounds musical.

"Thanks for the Tears" is a nice Latin-ish vibe in three or six. Ward's trumpet voice here evokes a Roy Hargrove-type sound. What makes the track stand out is that Ward plays along with the Dat Feel Good band, not against them. Some soloists, especially when they have an expansive vocabulary, create vehicles where the most memorable aspect is their solo. Sometimes that means the soloist is not particularly interested in or impacted by the foundation the band is laying down. But this tune is definitely a band effort. It's Ward's lead-

ership, but the band is cohesive, and they play together. By the time the groove shifts to a faster Latin in four, at which point the piano takes the lead, the song increases in intensity. This is a really great avenue to show off the band's versatility.

The rest of the tracks, such as the more subdued "3AM," the organ rollicking "When the Saints Go Marching In," and the—dare I say, urban contemporary, Stevie Wonder-ish—"Feel Good" all announce that Clarence Ward III and Dat Feel Good's *Live at Blue House* is a collection of music you need to experience. This recording is the perfect soundtrack for a long drive around Baltimore, the city Ward loves, right when the sun goes down. But make no mistake: this live document should not be categorized as background music. It demands your full attention—every track, every solo, from start to finish. Fortunately for us, Clarence Ward III found his voice again. Without it, Bal-

timore would just not be as hip as it is now.

As for taking his music to the next level? Mission Accomplished.

The album is available digitally on Amazon, Spotify, YouTube, AppleMusic, and iTunes. Ward and Hill can be heard at their jam session every Monday at Terra Café, 25th & St. Paul Streets in Baltimore.

Eric Byrd is a jazz pianist and leader of the Eric Byrd Trio (with bassist Bhagwan Khalsa and drummer Alphonso Young, Jr.). The trio has performed extensively throughout the region and across the globe with some of the most recognized artists of jazz. They have been sponsored by the United States Embassy as Kennedy Center/U.S. State Department Jazz Ambassadors, touring and performing worldwide.

BJA Board Member Jean Farnsworth, Life-Long Jazz Fan

By Liz Fixsen

BJA board secretary Jean Farnsworth grew up playing piano in a music-loving family, receiving an AA degree at Community College of Baltimore County in classical piano performance before completing a bachelor's degree in anthropology at Towson University. However, her career path veered away from music. Jean writes that she found BJA through Business Vets of Maryland, which she discovered through her day job as a researcher and leasing coordinator for a commercial real estate firm. She says she was "seeking a way to bring music back into my life and make a difference in the Baltimore arts community. Upon meeting the group and learning about the mission," says Jean, "I immediately wanted to be a part of this wonderful collective."

Jean has been a jazz fan most of her life. Her first exposure to jazz was Miles Davis's famous album, *Kind of Blue*, and she "immediately fell in love with the genre." *Monk's Dream*, by Thelonious Monk, was a close second. "After discovering these artists in the late '90s, I spent most of my paycheck from my part-time job at the mall pet store on jazz CDs at Record and Tape Traders."

Asked to name her favorite jazz musicians, she says that is "a lengthy conversation. I love music. It's part of my character and identity." But among her favorites in constant rotation at home or on the road, she names Sun Ra and Marshall Allen, Miles Davis, Charles Mingus, Ezra Collective, Ray Bryant, James Booker, Alice Coltrane, Michel Camillo, Art Tatum, Louis Armstrong, Sarah Vaughan, Yusef Lateef, Billie Holiday and Esperanza Spalding. In Baltimore, she is a fan of trumpeters Clarence Ward III and Brandon Woody, bassist Eddie Hrybyk, vocalist Imani Grace, pianists Aaron Hill and Eric Byrd, multi-instrumentalist Ray Winder, bass clarinetist Todd Marcus and trombonist Rufus Roundtree.



2022." Her project management and administrative skills are tremendously useful in her board volunteer work. Like most of us music-loving Baltimoreans, she has missed the live music scene during the pandemic and looks forward to more volunteering as in-person events resume. This summer, she hosted one of the Charm City Porch Concerts staged by Hrybyk at various homes throughout Baltimore. Jean says, "These concerts are an excellent way to share music, support musicians and build community."

A jazz aficionada to the core, Jean sees the Baltimore jazz scene as equal to that in any of America's great jazz cities. She says: "Baltimore's history is rich and constantly evolving. The city is blessed with incredible talent in many styles of jazz, from traditional to avant garde. I also see the city as an incubator because of the inspiring talent coming out of the Baltimore School for the Arts, Peabody Institute, and the city's many arts programs. Both local and international musicians play in Baltimore's many spectacular music venues. There is a deep and uplifting jazz history in this city, and I'm happy to celebrate it."

Bass Legend Ron Carter Performs at Keystone Korner

By Kristoffer Belgica

It's not every day that one has the opportunity to attend a performance by a jazz legend. With a six-decade career, bassist and bandleader Ron Carter holds the title for most recorded jazz bassist, totaling over 2,200 recordings with such greats as Miles Davis, Freddie Hubbard, Jim Hall, Duke Pearson, Lee Morgan, Horace Silver, Joe Henderson, and many, many more. On August 19-22nd, he performed at Baltimore's popular jazz club Keystone Korner with his new quartet, consisting of pianist Renee Rosnes, saxophonist Jimmy Greene, and drummer Payton Crossley. This was his third visit to the Charm City venue. He was the featured act for the club's grand opening in April 2019 and performed there once more in January 2020.

When you enter Keystone Korner, you seem to cast yourself back into the black-and-white milieu of the bebop and post-bop eras. A welcoming seat at the bar and the promise of top-shelf jazz performances await all. When I attended, patrons and staff members beamed with excitement about the evening's performance. For everyone, it was a nice reprieve from the tough times we currently face. In attendance was a mix of jazz enthusiasts, students, artists, writers, radio personnel, and musicians, including Baltimore's own bassists Eddie Hrybyk and Blake Meister. With drink in hand, I sat at the back of the bar and continued to observe.

The performance featured tunes from the quartet's latest album, *Foursight–Stockholm*, recorded live in the Swedish capital in 2018 and released in two CDs. The group projected dynamic interplay throughout, making for a highly conceptualized performance. The evening began with one of Carter's original compositions, "595." The melody harks back to Miles Davis's "So What," the opening track of his legendary 1959 album *Kind of Blue*. Carter and Crossley laid down the groove on "Mr. Bow Tie," switching up the feel and keeping audience members on their toes. On "Flamenco Sketches," Greene offered a thoughtful solo while Rosnes added smatterings of chordal voicings. The song entered a new chapter when saxophone, piano, and drums faded, and we were left with only Carter, who performed a splendid bass solo. All listened intently. It was an expressive display, returning to a blues riff every now and again. He quoted J.S. Bach's "Prelude in C Major," no doubt a nod to his classical training. The trio rejoined to reiterate the theme before a hearty round of applause by the house. They had played for forty minutes, with no break.

The atmosphere changed with their modern rendition of "My Funny Valentine." Rosnes poignantly played the haunting melody while Carter backed her up with some interesting bass ideas. "Saguaro" brightened up the room with Rosnes's



PHOTO COURTESY OF RON CARTER

and Greene's playful interplay. The ensemble eased into the laid-back "Nearly" before concluding the program with the 1934 standard "You and the Night and the Music."

At age 84, Carter still performs with the same gusto as he did in his earliest recordings. Keystone Korner owner Todd Barkan calls Ron Carter a "musical storyteller," and I couldn't agree more.

I was fortunate enough to chat with Carter before his departure. With sincerity in his voice, he expressed gratitude for the "great audience" that evening. As for the next few performances, he said "expect some great music. [You] will be surprised by our presentation. . . . Come by and experience it."

The Ron Carter Quartet anticipated a European tour from September 16th through the 25th but were not yet sure if the continent would open up by then.

To keep up with more fantastic performances by local, national, and international jazz artists, follow Keystone Korner on social media or visit their website www.keystonekorner-baltimore.com.

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www.jazzbjep.com / www.rolandparkjazz.com
www.gregthompkinsjazz.com



Find the BALTIMORE JAZZ JAMS at
www.baltimorejazz.com/jazz-jams

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- If you support the BJA's mission, please consider becoming a member, or renewing your membership if it has lapsed.
- If you have a passion for the Baltimore jazz scene and have some skills to offer consider joining our board of directors or one of our working committees or volunteering for one of our events.
- If you are a musician, presenter or venue, make sure your events are listed on our calendar. It's free and a great way to reach thousands of viewers every month.

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Get Ready for the Third Baltimore Jazz Conference

By Ian Rashkin

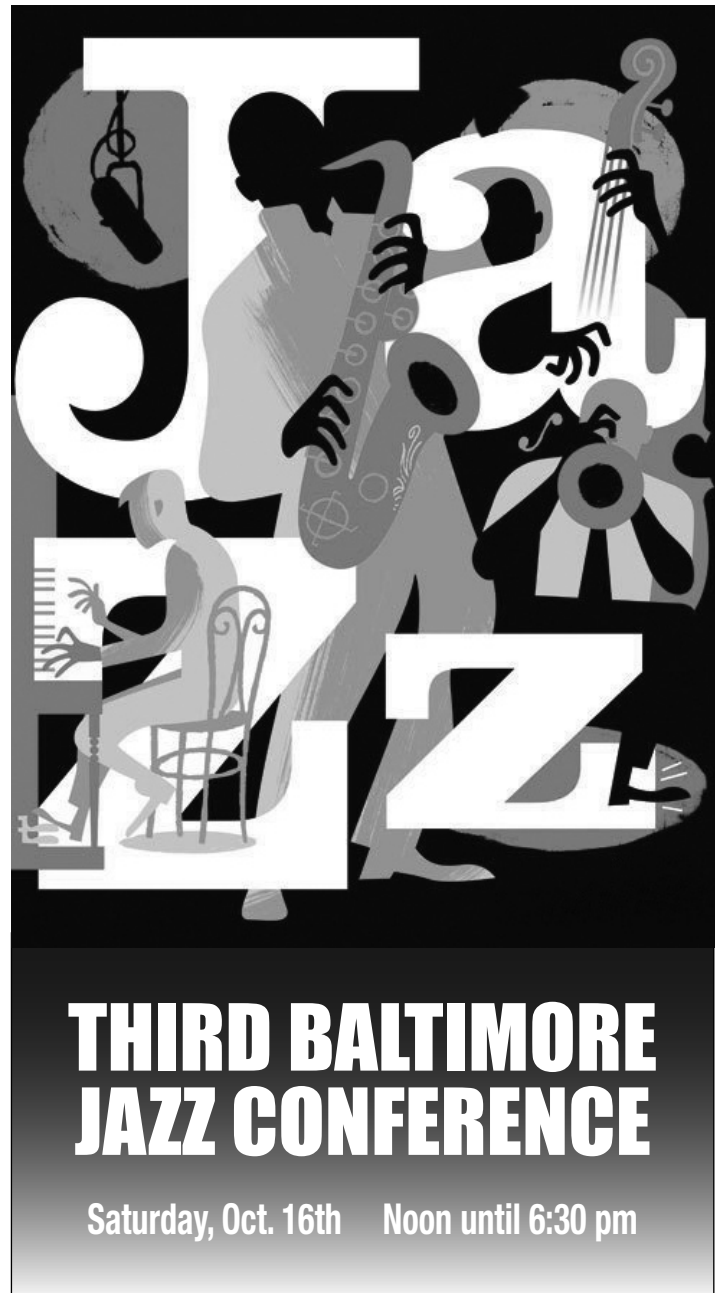
When the BJA introduced the Baltimore Jazz Conference in 2019, we hoped that it would fulfill three goals. First, we wanted to provide useful information to artists and others trying to navigate the business of jazz, from legal and business topics to marketing and fundraising opportunities. Second, we wanted to provide a forum for discussion of topics relevant to all jazz lovers, artists and audiences alike, including the deep history of jazz in this area, and frank discussions about what makes artists and audiences (and presenters) happiest. Finally, we wanted to take the opportunity, as always in our programming ideas, to introduce new audiences to the people, places, and sounds of Baltimore jazz.

To meet these goals, we've featured presentations from lawyers, performing rights organizations, funding organizations, and technical experts. We've held panels on education, on local jazz history, and on activism in music. We've featured live performances by local artists, as well as interviews and discussions with well-known local figures like Warren Wolf, Todd Barkan, Henry Wong, and more.

In the first year, we found out something else important: one of the most crucial elements of the Conference was the chance for local artists, listeners, presenters, historians, and business people to mingle, to network, to put names to faces and make new connections. When COVID-19 hit, we moved the 2020 conference to a fully virtual platform, but we tried to retain as much of this networking opportunity as possible, even if it was made much harder by both the virtual platform and the resulting constrained times and spaces available. Still, we had some excellent moments of connection, both in and out of sessions, and we learned a bit about what works well and what does not.

This year, we are excited to announce the third annual Baltimore Jazz Conference on Saturday, October 16th, from 12 until 6:30 pm. While we had initially planned a hybrid live and streamed event, due to recent surges and fluctuations in COVID rates and in associated restrictions we decided to keep it fully virtual again this year. The format will be much like last year's, with multiple offerings throughout the day, live (streamed) music, and topics that should appeal to both musicians and listeners. Keeping in mind what we learned about networking, we will make sure to allow more time and space for making those connections.

As of this writing, 2021's agenda is still being finalized, but it will include, among other offerings, informational sessions from the Baltimore Office of Promotion and the Arts and from the Music Workers Alliance, plus discussions about performing in a COVID-safe environment, building artistic careers, and more. See our web page (URL below) for more information on those and other exciting topics as they are finalized.



The Jazz Conference is a chance for all of us to learn, to connect, and to build our community, and even though it's virtual, it is a great chance to build your skills and your relationships. Check the web site for registration and more information. We can't wait to see you!

Third Baltimore Jazz Conference
Saturday, October 16th, from Noon until 6:30 pm
www.baltimorejazz.com/baltimore-jazz-conference-2021

Ian Rashkin works as a software developer by day, and plays bass any chance he gets, with Mike 'n' Ike, the Liz Fixsen Trio, and other local artists. He has served on the board of the Baltimore Jazz Alliance since 2014 and is its current president.

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BJA has been granted 501(c)(3) status by the IRS. All donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Thank you for joining! Your membership makes a difference!



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BJA is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization



FALL 2021

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER / DECEMBER

Dedicated to promoting Jazz in Baltimore!

BJA Member Notes

BJA's NEW BOARD MEMBERS

We welcome our new board members Susan Carlin and Anna Celenza.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Roger Blacklow, Wil Cameron, Samantha Goldstein, Rebekah Kaufman, John McLeod, Jane Myers, LieAnne Navarro, Andrew Rogers, Will Yager

News from the Community

- Warren Wolf grabbed the number three slot for vibraphone in the 69th *DownBeat* critics poll.
- BJA mourns the passing of saxophonist Eric Marner, who frequently performed at Reginald Lewis Museum, along with other venues.
- Guitarist/vocalist Charlie Thomas's death notice from 9/18/21 ended with the following: "In lieu of flowers or donations, Charlie would like you to go see a live musical performance of your choice, throw a tip in a musician's tip jar, or offer to hold the door when you see a musician carrying \$1500 worth of musical gear to the gig with a pay scale stuck in 1970."

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! A number of local venues and businesses offer discounts to BJA members. Our next issue will be distributed at the beginning of January 2022. Visit www.baltimorejazz.com for details. If you have a discount you'd like to offer, Please email us at jazzpalette@gmail.com and let us know what you have to offer.

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