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MONTCLAIR JAZZ FESTIVAL IS BACK

Bigger and Better for 2021

12th Annual Moves Downtown Supporting Local Businesses

[MONTCLAIR, NJ - June 30, 2021] Step away from the computer screens, music fans! The award-winning MONTCLAIR JAZZ FESTIVAL, the region’s largest and favorite music festival, is back for 2021, IN-PERSON, bigger and better than ever (and we’ve missed you!)

This mega event is produced annually by JAZZ HOUSE KIDS, one of the nation’s foremost jazz education organizations for young people, teaming up with its Artistic Director and festival curator, 7x GRAMMY Award-winning bassist CHRISTIAN McBRIDE. The 12th-annual MONTCLAIR JAZZ FEST isn’t wasting any time making up for a year without live jazz. This year the MONTCLAIR JAZZ FEST spreads to 35 hours of great live jazz, spanning three months, starting with two Thursday evening concerts in July and two full Saturdays of performances in August, leading up to an extravaganza Grand Finale of Events the week of September 20th.
"After such trying times for all humanity in 2020 and the beginning of 2021, being able to bring the MONTCLAIR JAZZ FESTIVAL back this year is a miracle, a blessing and a gift," said Christian McBride. "Pablo Picasso once said that 'art washes away the dust of everyday life', but Art Blakey specified that quote to 'music washes away the dust of everyday life.' After the last 16 months, we'll be washing off a lot of dust at this year's MONTCLAIR JAZZ FEST."

Downtown Move

Winner of three consecutive JerseyArts.com "People’s Choice Awards" for Favorite Music Festival, MONTCLAIR JAZZ FEST remains in the same zip code for 2021 but moves 1.2 miles to Montclair’s downtown corridor, with the nucleus of festivities happening at the new Lackawanna Plaza summer pop-up venue. The Grand Finale in September spread west down Bloomfield Avenue, turning it into a pedestrian musical playground after 11 years in Nishuane Park in the town’s South End.

"The Grand Finale of the MONTCLAIR JAZZ FEST found a beloved home in Nishuane Park," said Melissa Walker, founder + president of JAZZ HOUSE KiDS. "The South End of town has historical roots within the African-American community and was pitch-perfect for the celebration of America’s home-grown music called jazz, rooted in the African-American experience and struggle in America, and now embraced around the world."
“This year, due to the pandemic we felt it was important to present a series of concerts throughout the summer to bring people together again, and for the Grand Finale to keep people moving with four stages and to be able to support local businesses across Montclair hard-hit by the pandemic,” said Walker.

To accomplish this feat, JAZZ HOUSE KiDS has joined forces with two brand-new presenting sponsors for a brand-new festival -- BDP Holdings, LLC led by visionary developer DAVID PLACEK, and the Montclair Center Business Improvement District (BID), led by executive director JASON GLEASON, representing over 300 retailers and restaurants along Bloomfield Avenue and nearby adjacent streets. BDP and the BID take the reins from Rhonda and Bob Silver, The Bravitas Group/Silver Family Foundation, presenting sponsors since 2014. Through their leadership support, MONTCLAIR JAZZ FEST grew exponentially, becoming a cultural destination and part of the town’s rich social fabric. In 2019, for the 10th Anniversary, attendance topped 20,000 people over the course of two weeks; 15,000 in Nishuane Park alone for the grand finale. In 2020, While COVID-19 kept live music fans apart, the JAZZ HOUSE hosted a three-night Watch Party featuring the iconic original performances of fan-favorite sets from its MJF archives. More than 185,000 tuned in on social media and Sirius XM.

“My wife Bridget and I are honored to take the baton from the Bravitas Group and Bob and Rhonda Silver, who have helped build the MONTCLAIR JAZZ FEST into an important cultural destination for our town. We are thrilled to partner with the JAZZ HOUSE and Montclair Center BID as we look towards the future, bringing this fantastic live music event downtown this summer, in-person, bigger and better than ever,” said David Placek, Managing Partner of BDP Holdings. “We hope to see our community with their families come in big numbers and often over the summer. No tickets -- or computer screens -- required!”

The new downtown location will support local businesses hard-hit by the past 15 months of unprecedented events.

“The Montclair Center BID has been working closely will JAZZ HOUSE KiDS and BDP Holdings for months to bring the MONTCLAIR JAZZ FEST downtown,” said Jason Gleason. We are so proud to partner on this world-renowned festival and welcome thousands of visitors directly to the doors of our Montclair Center businesses.”
“We believe this unprecedented event will help springboard our community into a fresh season of recovery, renewal and growth,” said Gleason. “Montclair Center has been awarded year after year by JerseyArts as NJ’s Favorite Downtown Arts District. It has been so exciting to work with the JAZZ HOUSE and BDP Holdings to bring this great festival downtown to continue bolstering our renowned energy, creativity, and community.”

Live Jazz, In-Person and all Summer Long!

The MONTCLAIR JAZZ FESTIVAL will once again transform the vibrant, arts-rich New York City urban suburb of Montclair into a music mecca. The sounds of summer kick off on the Lackawanna Plaza main stage with an incredible array of artists: The MONTCLAIR JAZZ FEST Soundcheck Series on Thursday, July 8 with COCOMAMA’s eight-piece all-female Latin jazz orchestra and opening act, Story Tellers featuring ALEX LAURENZI. On Thursday, July 22, the electric performance of guitarist DAVE STRYKER’s 8 Track Band featuring vibraphonist WARREN WOLF, a celebration of classic pop tunes from the 70’s reimagined, and young women musicians shine center stage for the opening act with the JAZZ HOUSE CHiCA Power All-Stars.
The MONTCLAIR JAZZ FEST keeps it cooking for two all-day Saturday Lackawanna Block Parties with JAZZ HOUSE emerging musicians opening for one of the world’s preeminent voices on the trumpet, INGRID JENSEN and her band, vocalist and pianist KELLY GREEN and her Trio; and soul, funk and hip hop-influenced jazz trumpeter LEE HOGANS & Pursuance on Saturday, August 7th. The Saturday, August 14th mega day will feature saxophonist IRWIN HALL and his groovin’ Organ Trio and the heralded bari saxophonist, LAUREN SEVIAN and her Quartet. Capping off the summer series on the evening of August 14th, Montclair gets its groove on with an Old School Funk + Soul Dance Party featuring DJ Brother Mister, aka CHRISTIAN McBRIDE.

September marks the Grand Finale of the MONTCLAIR JAZZ FESTIVAL. Fans will gather to celebrate the vibrant and diverse town of Montclair and its many facets. The MONTCLAIR JAZZ FEST picks up steam as thousands of fans come out for the Grand Finale Jamboree on Saturday, September 25 with a jam-packed exciting day of free inspiring live music with internationally-acclaimed jazz headliners on four stages including the Lackawanna Plaza Marquee and Park Street Stages. Over 100 artisan food and craft vendors from across the town and region, and a family activities zone will be enjoyed by fans on the all-pedestrian Bloomfield Avenue from South Park to Lackawanna Plaza -- nearly a half mile long festival Jamboree.

Other special events are planned for September including a Jazz Movie Night and Friends of the Festival Reception with partner Montclair Film on Wednesday, September 22nd, and, in a nod to Miles Davis’ ballad on his 1959 iconic album Kind of Blue, MONTCLAIR JAZZ FEST
corporate partners, Take 5 Club patrons and guests artists mix and mingle under the stars in a VIP ticketed event followed by an intimate all-star jazz performance at Blue in Green: Cocktails + Concert in a Garden to be held at the town-treasured Van Vleck House & Gardens on Thursday, September 23th.

The MONTCLAIR JAZZ FESTIVAL represents a diverse range of styles, ages, and talent featuring organ, soul, swing Latin and traditional jazz. In the footsteps of Nina Simone, women are front and center in each series, and audiences will be introduced to the young artists now on the music scene who came out of the JAZZ HOUSE program. Headliners represent some of the smokin’ hot best jazz talents in the NJ/NYC region.

“The Town of Montclair is proud to support our vibrant arts and music community, and the MONTCLAIR JAZZ FESTIVAL, one of the traditional highlights of the summer,” said Sean Spiller, Mayor of Montclair. “With a slightly different look this year, I know JAZZ HOUSE KiDS will put on another outstanding festival, supporting businesses across Montclair and welcoming jazz fans from across the region to our beautiful downtown to safely enjoy live music together.”

This summer, renowned chefs DAMON WISE and LAUREN HIRSCHBERG will open Pineapple Express Barbecue, a restaurant and beer garden at the historic Lackawanna Railroad Terminal. According to Hirschberg, chef and owner of Montclair favorite Turtle & the Wolf, he and his partner Wise, chef and owner of Wise Meats, beef, pork and chicken will be smoked on-site over local cherry and oak woods, with counter service ordering, mobile bars, picnic table seating and yard games.

“Damon and I are very excited to open Pineapple Express Barbecue and partnering with the Montclair Jazz Festival was a natural fit,” said Lauren Hirschberg. “Lackawanna Plaza and the MJF are both pillars of the Montclair community and we hope to create a space that brings people together through music and barbecue.”

Both JAZZ HOUSE KiDS, the nationally-recognized music education nonprofit based in Montclair, NJ, and the MONTCLAIR JAZZ FESTIVAL are the brainchild of jazz vocalist and recording artist MELISSA WALKER. Creative direction comes from her husband, seven-time
GRAMMY® Award-winner, band leader, composer and virtuoso jazz bassist Christian McBride.

“This event is always spectacular, but with the pandemic still raging in early 2021, we thought we might have to plan our second virtual festival. But we were determined to bring us back together again in-person this year, something that we felt was critical to the healing of this community,” said Melissa Walker. “We started talking to our partners back in January and had literally dozens of meetings with officials from Essex County and the Town of Montclair including health officials, continuously revising the structure of the events based on CDC and NJ State guidelines and COVID restrictions lifting. “If there was ever a time to tap into the healing power of music, it’s now.”

Jazz House Kids is doing some of its most important work today for its community of students, families and jazz fans alike, and employing hundreds of musicians hit hard by the crisis. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Jazz House has doubled down on its efforts to ensure equity and access to world-class music education, support healthy communities through jazz, and celebrate all people with mutual respect, both on and off the bandstand. The Jazz House helps young people find their voice, combats isolation and lack of peer-to-peer engagement, provides community and leadership opportunities for alumni, and builds bridges from the African-American roots of jazz to today.

For more information about line up dates, and how to get involved as a festival sponsor, individual supporter, vendor or volunteer, visit www.montclairjazzfestival.org or email mjf@jazzhousekids.org.

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About JAZZ HOUSE KiDS

JAZZ HOUSE KiDS has been swinging doors open for 18 years, and its emerging musicians are soloing and singing their way to greatness. The award-winning organization uses America’s original musical art form -- jazz -- to transform lives by helping young people gain an artistic edge through music, mentoring, education and leadership. Through pre-professional musical training along with community engagement and education programs, the JAZZ HOUSE builds tomorrow’s community leaders and global citizens, and serves all students regardless of their financial circumstances. The JAZZ HOUSE produces the acclaimed “No Tickets Required” MONTCLAIR JAZZ FESTIVAL, which attracts over 20,000 people each summer and is led by seven-time GRAMMY Award winner and Artistic Director Christian McBride.

About BDP Holdings, LLC

BDP Holdings is a New Jersey based real estate investment company specializing in the acquisition, development and repositioning of real estate in the New York Tri-State area and select markets throughout the United States. The firm’s leadership has over 25 years of experience investing in over $6.5 billion of value-driven real estate in more than 30 states.

About Montclair Center BID

Montclair Center is classic and edgy, urban and urbane, great business and great fun. Montclair Center is a First Suburb and a modern Transit Village. Most of all, Montclair Center is a great place to shop, dine, work, live and play. These exciting dichotomies and more are summed up in its tagline — Montclair Center: Where the Suburb Meets the City. Founded by merchants and property owners who were concerned about on-street aesthetics, safety, code enforcement, customer attraction and district marketing, Montclair Center Corporation started operations in the summer of 2002. Since that time, Montclair Center has become known for its vibrant street life, fabulous restaurants, award winning retail, great art scene and pedestrian friendly office setting.
MONTCLAIR JAZZ FEST - SUMMER LINE UP

Thursdays, JULY 8 + 22 | 6:00 – 9:00 PM
Lackawanna Soundcheck Series
The 2021 MONTCLAIR JAZZ FEST produced by JAZZ HOUSE KiDS heats things up with two summer evening concerts:

July 8 – Story Tellers featuring Alex Laurenzi open for Cocomama’s eight-piece all-female Latin jazz orchestra

July 22 – Chica Power All-Stars open for Dave Stryker’s 8 Track Band featuring Warren Wolf, a celebration of classic pop tunes from the 70’s reimagined.

Saturdays, AUGUST 7 + 14
Lackawanna Block Parties
The MONTCLAIR JAZZ FEST returns for two all-day Saturday block parties with JAZZ HOUSE emerging musicians and an amazing array of all-stars for two jam-packed days

Saturday, AUGUST 7 | 1:00 – 9:00 PM
World-renowned trumpeter Ingrid Jensen, the Kelly Green Trio, Lee Hogans & Pursuance

Saturday, AUGUST 14
1:00 – 6:00 PM
Irwin Hall Organ Trio and Lauren Sevian Quartet
6:00 – 9:00 PM
Dance Party with DJ Brother Mister
Capping off the summer series with an old school funk + soul party featuring DJ Brother Mister aka 7x GRAMMY winner Christian McBride
MONTCLAIR JAZZ FEST - GRAND FINALE SEPTEMBER EVENTS -- SAVE THE DATES!
Sept 22 - Sept 25

Wednesday, September 22 | 7:00 – 9:00 PM
JAZZ HOUSE GOES TO THE MOVIES with Montclair Film
Jazz film screening curated by Montclair Film’s Tom Hall, plus “Inside Scoop” Jazz Reception for Friends of the Festival

Thursday, SEPTEMBER 23 | 6:00 - 10:00 PM
Green in Blue: Cocktails + Concert in a Garden
New this year - VIP Special Event! In a nod to Miles Davis’ ballad on his 1959 iconic album Kind of Blue, our corporate partners, Take 5 Club members and guest artists mix and mingle with hors d’oeuvres and cocktails at the historic Van Vleck House + Gardens under the stars followed by an intimate all-star concert with musical direction by Christian McBride.

Saturday, September 25 | 1:00 - 9:00 pm
Downtown Jamboree Grand Finale
A jam-packed exciting day of free inspiring live music on four stages featuring an array of musicians, local artisan food and craft vendors, and family activities zone.

For more information, visit www.montclairjazzfestival.org
MONTCLAIR JAZZ FESTIVAL® PRODUCED BY JAZZ HOUSE KIDS®

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