

WHAT'S NEWS

Tony Bennett has announced his retirement from live performance at 95 after August shows at Radio City Music Hall with Lady Gaga, capping a seven-decade career.

The **2021 Festival of New Trumpet Music** will take place virtually from Sep. 8th-15th with a theme of "Brass Without Borders" and including live-streamed performances from various countries and a special tribute to Randy Brecker. For more information and to live-stream, visit fontmusic.org/festival2021.

The **Robert D. Bielecki Foundation** has announced its latest round of grants recipients: Henry Threadgill, \$20,000 in support for "Immigration and the Return of the Cheap Suit", a multimedia project premiering at Roulette in May 2022; Artists Space, \$10,000 Exhibition/Performance Grant for "Milford Graves: Fundamental Frequency" Exhibition and Performance Series premiere in October 2021; Avreeayl Ra, \$5,000 Unrestricted Grant; Sun Ra House Part 2, \$4,000 Additional Repairs and Restoration; Nick Mazzarella, Ingebrigt Håker Flaten and Avreeayl Ra, \$1,000 Grant in support for a forthcoming recording on Astral Spirits; Phyllis Chen, \$500 Composition Commission in support for "Tone Grove", a piece for two music boxes based on the weavings of Bauhaus artist Anni Albers (in collaboration with Ligorano Reese); and Dave Liebman/Adam Rudolph/Tyshawn Sorey Trio, \$1,000 Performance Grant in support of a performance at The Jazz Gallery in September 2021. For more information, visit rdbf.org.

The **Jazz Foundation of America**, in collaboration with Blue Note Records, Concord Music Group, Mack Avenue Music Group, Nonesuch Records, Universal Music Group, Verve Label Group and Warner Music Group, will release RELIEF, a compilation of previously unreleased music, on LP, CD and digitally (Sep. 24th), the proceeds of which will support ongoing efforts to aid musicians affected by the international shutdown of venues and other performance opportunities in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. For more information, visit store.jazzfoundation.org.

The **Louis Armstrong House's** 2021 Virtual Gala, "Ambassador Satch", will take place Sep. 23rd at 7 pm. For more information, visit louisarmstronghouse.org/gala.

The complete output of two waves of commissions made during the pandemic through funding by **The Jazz Coalition**, are now available for viewing at jazzcoalition.org/commission-recipients.

Bassist and co-founder of ShapeShifter Lab **Matt Garrison** has produced an artist app available through the Apple Store, which includes albums, audio and video content, charts and scores, lessons and live-streams. For more information, visit apps.apple.com/us/app/matt-garrison/id1070972204.

The **Detroit Jazz Festival**, scheduled to take place Sep. 3rd-6th, has been transformed into a live-streaming event. For more information, visit detroitjazzfest.org.

Miller Theatre, as part of its "Live from Columbia" live-stream series, will present Arturo O'Farrill and The Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra Sep. 18th at 4 pm. For more information, visit millertheatre.com/events/arturo-ofarrill-the-afro-latin-jazz-orchestra-live-from-columbia.

The **Afro Latin Jazz Alliance**, in partnership with Lantern Organization and Mega Development the New York City Department of Housing Development and Preservation, has announced plans for Timbale Terrace, a 16,000 square feet Afro Latin Music & Arts Center along with 330 affordable housing units in East Harlem.

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Trombonist **Craig Harris** brought his Nation of Imagination band to Marcus Garvey Park (Aug. 13th) for a Nocturnal Nubian Ball for Conscientious Ballers and Cultural Shot Callers, co-presented by Harlem Stage and Jazzmobile. The group, with trumpeter Eddie Allen, saxophonist Jay Rodriguez, keyboard players Adam Klipple and Yayoi Ikawa, electric bassist Calvin Jones and drummer Damon Due White, got things started laying down a funky groove. Singers Carla Cook, Helga Davis, Sam McKelton and Du'Bois A'Keen danced on to the stage chanting the group's theme song, "CAB", exhorting "It's in the pocket, we just can't stop it!" Cook scatted on "Makanda" and got down on "Harlem". The mood mellowed for Davis' plaintive vocal on "On My Mind", then picked up with Jones' funky beat leading the band into "Ceddo". Cook brought the house down on "I Found God" and A'Keen's spoken words on "The Writer", "It all depends on the skin you're livin' in", elicited knowing cheers. Davis sang heavenly on "Lovejoy" and Cook tenderly on "Life". "Song For A Friend" had singers imploring "Take the time to be kind". Then Harris introduced 97-year-old Sun Ra Arkestra leader Marshall Allen, who played alto and EWI with youthful intensity on "Wildseed" and "Keep Your Razor Sharp" and ethereal exoticism on "Pleiades". The pair blew rowdily on Harris' "Ali Interpolations" and prettily on "Reminiscing". The band swung "Discipline 27" then ended funking out with "Deep Thought". —*Russ Musto*

Back some 90 years or so, **Arnt Arntzen** wouldn't be viewed as unique. Plectrum banjo players who could locomote a jazz band with the force of a drummer, play chordal melodies and vexing, stinging solos were common in the 1920s-30s. In some circles, they were even commodities (remember Johnny St. Cyr with Louis Armstrong's Hot 5?). But the growth of electric recording technology saw less need for the banjo's bite and it came to be replaced by the guitar. Time be damned. Arntzen is the would-be banjo king right now, bravely proving it within the stripped-down trio of Danny Tobias (trumpet) and Vince Giordano (bass and bass saxophone), at Barbès (Aug. 12th). Okay, so Giordano was near metronomic playing his low-boy sock cymbals even while switching instruments, but the drive, harmonies, passing tones and fills were emanated from Arntzen's period Vega. The instrument has probably seen many a stage, but this banjo player called on the ghosts of jazz past while never falling into Dixie hokum; the trio pumped with such intensity that the room soon filled with throbbing 20-somethings. Standards like "I'll See You in My Dreams", "Somebody Stole My Gal", "Black and Blue" and "Dinah" breathed new life as improvisational segments between bass saxophone and trumpet shattered the myths, propelled by Arntzen's quarter-note command and dazzling breaks. By set's end the room shook like the old Gennett studio each time the railroad whizzed by. Pass the hooch! —*John Pietaro*



Craig Harris @ Marcus Garvey Park



Arnt Arntzen Trio @ Barbès

Allstar hardbopping septet **The Cookers** wasted no time firing up the Blue Note bandstand, kicking off the second set of its one-nighter (Aug. 3rd) with a piece from their forthcoming album, George Cables' "The Mystery Of Monifa Brown". The pianist's hard-hitting homage to the WBGO DJ recalled his days as a member of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, his insistent staccato percussive vamp and Billy Hart's propulsive drums driving extended incendiary solos by alto saxophonist Donald Harrison and trumpeter David Weiss, before Cables took his own turn. The band continued with Billy Harper's "Destiny Is Yours", an easy-grooving waltz featuring his dark sinewy tenor saxophone and Eddie Henderson's bright lyrical trumpet. Cables' fluid lines, buoyed by Cecil McBee's Spanish-tinged bassline and Hart's cadenced rhythms, introduced Harper's "Priestess", the horns playing the stirring melody in unison, after which the composer stepped out front, blowing bold serpentine lines prior to a spirited trumpet solo by David Weiss. The band slowed things down with McBee's lush ballad, "Close To You", a feature for newly minted NEA Jazz Master Harrison, who blew sweetly, ending with an impassioned four-plus-minute-long cadenza, earning him an extended ovation. The set closed out featuring the band's other 2021 NEA Jazz Master, Hart, on Freddie Hubbard's Jazz Messenger Civil Rights era anthem, "The Core", on which he soloed with unbridled intensity. (RM)

Chick Corea, lost six months ago but long before anyone could accept, remains legendary, alive within the hearts he so moved. Pianist **Dred Scott** celebrated the legend with an evening of performance and reminiscence at Mezzrow (Aug. 4th). The club's uber-hip vibe featuring modernist artwork and vintage jazz posters in addition to the classic silhouette of namesake Mezz, was a welcome home for such repertoire. Arriving early enough to catch the first set's encore—"Spain"—for this reviewer it was clear that Scott, to our gain, had been harboring this gig since February. The material, drawn from decades of Corea works, was balanced by both vintage and genre, Scott's dry banter acting as a welcome contrast to the performance intensity. Opening with 1983's "Quintet #3", the trio immediately danced over the pulsation, a sort of slow drag and samba mix, Scott's ringing parallel fifths enflaming the atmosphere under Matt Clohesy's broiling bass and drummer Diego Voglino's gallop. By the time "The One-Step" from 1978's *Friends* was heard, the familiar warmth built into the song became a communal experience, getting along famously with one's Manhattan. "There's a difference between a song and a piece," Scott reminded the tightly packed room just before launching into Corea's quite epic "Quartet #1". Opening with a piano solo screaming of Gershwin, Scott's hands blurred the grace notes taunting blue lines. "Humpty Dumpty" and "Matrix" also took flight, topping off a fitting homage. (JP)