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Monday, August 26, 2019

THE SPIRIT OF HARLEM CONCERT

Company: Harlem School of the Arts
Venue: HSA THEATER
Location: New York, NY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE HARLEM SCHOOL OF THE ARTS AND THE NATIONAL JAZZ MUSEUM IN HARLEM
PRESENT CATSKILL JAZZ FACTORY'S "THE SPIRIT OF HARLEM" –A CONCERT FEATURING
THE NEW GENERATION FESTIVAL JAZZ COLLECTIVE AND
URBAN PLAYGROUND CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

This performance pays homage to Harlem's jazz history and to the most
iconic moments of the community's musical past

On Monday, August 26 at 7:00pm, the Harlem School of the Arts (HSA), in partnership with The National Jazz Museum in Harlem (NJMH), and the Catskill Jazz Factory (CJF) will present a special concert performance of The Spirit of Harlem, a celebratory homage to the most iconic moments of Harlem's musical past, and the jazz renaissance currently taking place in New York City. Free to the public, the concert will be held at the HSA Theater, located at 649 St. Nicholas Avenue.

The Spirit of Harlemband brings together some of the most outstanding musical voices of today, a group originally commissioned by the Catskill Jazz Factory for residency and official world premiere at the upcoming New Generation Festival in Florence, Italy. Joining the tour for this Harlem performance is Urban Playground Chamber Orchestra, a distinctly 21st-century Harlem-based orchestra with a mission to broadcast that which has not been heard, and to give opportunity to new and dormant voices.

The National Jazz Museum in Harlem has been presenting a unique combination of lectures, concert, educational, and community events since 2004. Many of the artists in this production have been part of NJMH's musical family for many years.

Loren Schoenberg, Founding Director and Senior Scholar of the National Jazz Museum in Harlem, says, "We thank the HSA for allowing us to present this wonderful show at their historic home. This program has a very special mission and they have found the perfect complement of artists to turn the concept into a swinging reality. By focusing on a specific group of musicians who have both the authority of having been around long enough to establish international reputations but able to relate to the youth culture of today, they are perfectly poised to effect change in any generation they confront. This is a long way of saying how Ellington would have put it: I (and you) will love them madly!"

HSA has been a passionate leader, building a bolder and more prominent public profile and commitment to the history of Jazz, and the community most often affiliated with this internationally renowned improvisational music form, through an on-going series of well attended public forums, and with the introduction of a summer jazz intensive, Great Days of Jazz, organized by Yolanda Wyns, HSA's music director.

"Students studied a broad range of jazz greats, from Thelonious Monk to Coltrane, to Horace Silver, to Mary Lou Williams. Each day, as part of the intensive curriculum, our students had an opportunity to better understand what made these musicians unique – what made them stand out," said Ms. Wyns. "By highlighting the importance of excellence in training, we are passing on the legacy of the great jazz masters to a new generation of young musicians."

HSA's leadership role as a champion of the arts was recently acknowledged by the National Jazz Museum in Harlem, at their recent Gala Benefit Concert, where HSA was cited "...as exemplars of support for, and commitment to the contributions of jazz to our communities and culture." The organization was awarded the Jazz and Community Leadership Award at a ceremony that paid tribute to the legendary tenor saxophonist and composer, Benny Golson.

"Having this performance in our theatre is of special significance, not just because of HSA's commitment to the arts, but as we approach the upcoming 100th anniversary of the Harlem Renaissance, a monumental milestone, it highlights the contributions and the impact that artists living in this community had across all of the arts disciplines," says HSA president Eric Pryor.

The Spirit of Harlem concert, led by "trumpeter of abundant poise" (New York Times) Dominick Farinacci, will take the audience on a musical journey through Harlem's most iconic jazz venues, recreating the community's vibes and rich musical past through pit stops on Ellington's A Train to Minton's Playhouse, the Lafayette Theater, the Savoy Ballroom and beyond. Iconic artists such as James P. Johnson, Cab Calloway, Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker are reimagined by this extraordinary ensemble performance, narrated by spoken word artist and poet Orlando Watson.

Featured in The Spirit of Harlem alongside bandleader and trumpeter Dominick Farinacci and spoken word artist Orlando Watson are the likes of "history in the making" (Boston Globe) vocalist Shenel Johns, "prodigy" (New York Times) tap dancer Michela Marino Lerman, and "world-class" (BBC) Christian Tamburr, vibraphone. The ensemble also features some of the best and brightest instrumentalists out of the current NYC jazz scene; saxophonist Patrick Bartley Jr, bassist Russell Hall, pianist Mathis Picard, and drummer Kyle Poole.

Following its New York City stop in Harlem, The Spirit of Harlem will have its official world première in Florence, Italy at The New Generation Festival on Friday, August 30. The festival première culminates in an original commissioned orchestral arrangement, composed by Steven Feifke and performed by The New Generation Festival Orchestra under the baton of Maximilian Fane.

"The performing arts play a truly vital role in creating dialogue and communication across societies," says Catskill Jazz Factory founder/artistic director Piers Playfair. "It is an honor to be participating in this trans-Atlantic project of enormous cultural substance."

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About Harlem School of the Arts at The Herb Alpert Center: New York City's premier community arts institution, the Harlem School of the Arts at the Herb Alpert Center stands uniquely apart as the sole provider of arts education in four disciplines: music, dance, theatre, and art & design, all within our award-winning 37,000 square foot facility. The School's reputation for artistic rigor and excellence attracts students of diverse socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds from the five New York City boroughs, including Westchester County, and the tristate area, which includes Connecticut and New Jersey. HSA's alumni and faculty are counted among the most talented leaders in the arts.

For over 50-years, HSA has enriched the lives of tens of thousands of people through world-class training in the arts. HSA offers its students the freedom to find and develop the artist and citizen within themselves in an environment that teaches discipline, stimulates creativity, builds self-confidence, and adds a dimension of beauty to their lives, empowering them to become the creative thinkers and innovative leaders of tomorrow. To learn more about the Harlem School of the Arts, please visit www.HSAnyc.org.

The National Jazz Museum in Harlem, a Smithsonian Affiliate, is a thriving center for jazz that stimulates hearts and minds and reaches out to diverse audiences to enjoy this quintessential American music. The Museum was founded in 1997 by Leonard Garment, Counsel to two U.S. Presidents, and an accomplished jazz saxophonist, Abraham D. Sofaer, a former U.S. District Judge who gave the initial gift in honor of his brother-in-law Richard J. Scheuer, Jr., and matching funds from the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone.

Our mission is to preserve, promote and present jazz by inspiring knowledge, appreciation and the celebration of jazz locally, nationally and internationally. The Museum is committed to keeping jazz present and exciting in the lives of a broad range of audiences: young and old, novice and scholar, artist and patron, enthusiast and curious listener. Each year, the Museum produces and presents more than 80 free programs in New York City, engaging hundreds of professional jazz artists and reaching nearly 20,000 people from around the world. The Museum is a hub for live performances, exhibitions and educational programs. It is also home to our widely acclaimed Savory Collection, which includes more than 100 hours of live recordings of jazz legends made from New York City radio broadcasts aired between 1935 and 1941. <http://jazzmuseuminharlem.org>

Based in the heart of the Catskills, the Catskill Jazz Factory (CJF) is a "regional arts think-tank" and "formidable jazz incubator" (HV One) founded in 2012 with an aim to support today's best young jazz artists. Catskill Jazz Factory offers year-round school workshops, concerts, mountaintop residencies, lectures, and world-class performances in diverse spaces to a variety of regional audiences across the Hudson Valley, NYC and beyond by partnering with educational facilities, arts organizations, and a variety of businesses and non-profit organizations. Venues range from mountaintop coffee & donut shops and local high schools to recent collaborations with the New York Botanical Garden, the Fisher Center at Bard College, and the Uncharted Series at Greenwich House. <http://www.catskilljazzfactory.org>

The New Generation Festival (NGF) is a privately-run festival founded in 2017 which has achieved great success in attracting a young, influential and international audience to its events. Under the patronage of H.R.H. The Duke of Kent, the NGF, co-founded by a trio of British producers: Maximilian Fane, Roger Granville and Frankie Parham, is a platform for young artists from across the globe and offers audiences an array of awe-inspiring productions, showcasing rising stars of the opera, theatre and music industry in a unique and picturesque setting: the Gardens of the Palazzo Corsini al Prato in Florence, Italy, hosted by Prince Filippo and Princess Giorgiana Corsini.

The purpose is to kindle the infinite potential of the human spirit, championing emerging talent across artistic disciplines with an ambitious desire to bring about no less than a new global renaissance. <https://newgenerationfestival.org>

Harlem School of the Arts
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<https://spiritofharlem-aug26.eventbrite.com>

Schedule
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