



For Immediate Release

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NEW FALL FESTIVAL ANNOUNCED:
ART IN THE PARK PRESENTED BY JAZZ BEYOND BORDERS

A new fall festival will take place in Severna Park on Sunday, September 19 from 1:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. Created as an annual community event, the attraction will feature top shelf jazz groups and fine art in the courtyard and interior of Cafe Mezzanotte at 760 Ritchie Highway (Route 2). The event rain date is September 26 and parking is free and plentiful.

The courtyard and gardens will be open to ticket holders at 1:00 p.m. giving attendees an opportunity to enjoy viewing and purchasing fine art and gift selections from Benfield Gallery, Gallery 564, McBride Gallery and Side Street Framers. Festival foods and wine tasting stations will be available and the restaurant will offer its full Mediterranean menu.

Music begins at 2:00 p.m. with some of the most popular and innovative sounds to come out of the nation's capital in decades. Led by international saxophonist and former Chuck Brown protégé Elijah Jamal Balbed, The JoGo Project combines jazz and Go-Go music in one highly entertaining band consisting of vocalist Paul Spires, trumpeter Brad Clements, guitarist Zachary Cutler, bassist Delorean Fullington, drummer Willie Howell and percussionist Lewis Mike Burney. Set highlights include originals such as Balbed's "One for Pops," a composition dedicated to his mentor Chuck Brown and jazz standards such as Nat Simon's "Poinciana," written in 1936.

Balbed will also perform a soothing set of jazz and Brazilian music with a smaller group - the Balbed/Arnold/Berkowitz Trio. Along with Balbed, the trio features two of the busiest musicians in the region: bassist Steve Arnold and drummer Julian Berkowitz.

Elijah Jamal Balbed is one of the District's premiere jazz artists, having won the 2020 DC Jazz Prix Competition and earned the titles of Best Tenor Saxophonist and Best New Jazz Musician from the *Washington City Paper*. He has since been featured by *Capital Bop*, *Smithsonian Magazine* and *The Washington Post*. He has performed at The Kennedy Center, Strathmore, Bethesda Blues & Jazz and Bohemian Caverns. He has toured internationally (Japan, the U.K., Qatar and the Caribbean Islands), performing with such names as Lalah Hathaway, Eric Roberson, Jonathan Butler and Maysa. He was featured in cultural diplomacy tours in Russia on behalf of the U.S. State Department and U.S. Consulate. Balbed performed with Chuck Brown, the "Godfather of Go-Go," from 2011 until Brown's passing in 2012. Two years later, he founded his fusion band, The JoGo Project, preserving the legacy of D.C.'s unique art form.

Stephen Arnold is a bassist, composer in Washington, D.C. Known for his open ears, earnest expression, and unique musical voice, he is one of the region's most in-demand upright and electric bassists. He graduated from George Washington University, diving headfirst into D.C.'s vibrant music scene, playing straight-ahead jazz, funk, Brazilian, rock and improvised music. In 2018 he was selected for Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead program at the Kennedy Center. He performs in diverse ensembles with such artists as Donvonte McCoy, Alison Crockett, Samuel Prather's Groove Orchestra, Sharón Clark, George V. Johnson Jr., Aaron Myers, Sarah Hughes, Keith Butler, Jr. and Simone Baron.

Julian Berkowitz is a popular drummer, percussionist, and educator rooted in American jazz, fusion, funk and the rhythms of Brazil. In 2013, he studied with virtuoso Brazilian percussionist Alejandro Lucini, whose mentorship played a crucial role in his development in the straight-ahead, Brazilian and Latin jazz spheres. Berkowitz has performed with Chuck Redd, Mike Pope, Herman Burney, Jr., Tim Murphy, Thad Wilson and Todd Simon. He backed international Brazilian artist Michel Nirenberg on 2017 and 2018 U.S. tours and accompanied smooth Latin jazz diva Debora Galán on her 2019 East Coast tour. He has played regional venues such as Blues Alley, Rams Head Onstage, Twins Jazz, An die Musik and Avalon Theatre.

Art in the Park grew out of the "Jazz at the Mezz" series begun by Paulina Phillips and Theresa Sise of Jazz Beyond Borders. Now in its sixth year, the organization brings international performing and recording artists to festivals, concert halls and classrooms. They have presented world music and jazz concerts online, indoors and outside at Café Mezzanotte since 2019. The restaurant's Mediterranean cuisine and 100 seat-room are a perfect match for their diverse musical offerings performed by artists from Spain, Canada, United Kingdom, Russia, Brazil, and the U.S.

The idea of sponsoring a community event arose as they watched their jazz audience swell in numbers month after month. The desire for outside activities had grown exponentially after 18 months of lockdown. To produce the new festival they partnered with Cafe Mezzanotte owner Kosmas "Tommie" Koukoulis and Jonathan Katz, representing The Voice Media. Event proceeds will benefit The Food Project.

Kosmas is a life-long "restaurant guy" and independent restaurateur for over 13 years. He owns and operates Cafe Mezzanotte in Severna Park and Uncle's Hawaiian Grindz in Fallston, Maryland. Vastly different in cuisine, the two restaurants are known for their scratch kitchens using locally sourced organic ingredients. Both restaurants have long supported The Food Project, a center in Southwest Baltimore that uses food, music and art to motivate and inspire city youth. Kosmas believes that restaurants should contribute to their surrounding communities and uses his platform to encourage healthy eating and sustainable living.

Tickets are on sale now. The discounted admission of \$35 is available through September 1. Admission will be \$40 thereafter. Purchase from instantseats: <https://instnt.us/aitp>