



For Immediate Release

Contacts: Paulina Phillips 514-816-8423

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

A new jazz festival will be held 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 features 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. Parking is free and plentiful.

The courtyard and gardens will 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 food and wine tasting stations will be available and the restaurant will offer its full Mediterranean menu.

The master of ceremonies for the event is WRNR radio host Michael Buckley, known as the host of the long-running eclectic and award-winning radio program "Sunday Brunch." Music begins with Amoroso as the opening act. The global jazz trio features some of Anne Arundel County's most influential and beloved players: Annie Award winning multi-instrumentalist and vocalist Elizabeth Melvin (Wooden Hands, Mama Jama, Caribbean Art Jazz Ensemble), guitarist and vocalist Richard Rausch and Dick Glass, who plays flugelhorn in this concert.

Headliners, The JoGo Project, will deliver 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 band 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 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. International tours have taken him to Japan, the U.K., Qatar and the Caribbean Islands. He toured Russia on behalf of the U.S. State Department and U.S. Consulate. He 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. The group was recently featured at the D.C. Jazz Festival.

Before the afternoon’s festivities are over, Balbed will also appear in a soothing set of jazz and Brazilian music with the Balbed/Arnold/Berkowitz Trio. Joining him are two of the busiest musicians in the region: bassist Steve Arnold and drummer Julian Berkowitz.

Art in the Park grew out of the “Jazz at the Mezz” series begun by Paulina Phillips and Theresa Sise of Jazz Beyond Borders in Severna Park. The organization brings international performing and recording artists to festivals, concert halls and classrooms and helps launch album releases. Their diverse musical offerings have featured indigenous artists and others from the United States as well as performers from such countries as Spain, Canada, United Kingdom, Russia and Brazil.

The idea to create an annual community event arose as they watched their jazz audience swell in numbers. The desire for outside activities had grown exponentially after 18 months of lockdown. To produce the new festival, they partnered with Jonathan Katz of the *Severna Park Voice* and Cafe Mezzanotte owner Kosmas “Tommie” Koukoulis and began gathering volunteers, who like them, had a history of volunteering with cultural festivals.

Koukoulis owns and operates Cafe Mezzanotte in Severna Park and Uncle’s Hawaiian Grindz in Fallston, Maryland. 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 Part of Art in the Park jazz festival proceeds will benefit The Food Project.

Tickets for Art in the Park are on sale now. The discounted admission of \$35 is available in advance. Admission will be \$40 at the door. Purchase from instant seats. (Donations toward future festivals can also be made.) The short link is: <https://instnt.us/aitp>.

