

VISION FESTIVAL

BY ARIELLA STOK

BROOKLYN GUITAR FESTIVAL

BY TOM GREENLAND

SARATOGA JAZZ FESTIVAL

BY KURT GOTTSCHALK



Joe Morris @Abrons Arts Center



Vernon Reid, Eric Gales @Warsaw Brooklyn



Cécile McLorin Salvant @Saratoga Jazz Festival

The night before the music started, 30-odd people sat at Anthology Film Archives (AFA) watching film portraits of the music's elders—some gone (e.g. Kidd Jordan and Charles Gayle), some very much still with us, such as pianist Dave Burrell, who would be on stage for Vision Festival's 30th anniversary (Jun. 23-28). Looking around AFA, nearly everyone present was an artist playing the festival later that week. During the break they greeted one other. Asked how he was doing, tenor saxophonist James Brandon Lewis answered, "Managing the illusion. You know it's all just an illusion?" Festival founder Patricia Nicholson Parker told the room the spirits were with us: "Their music is with us and we can access it any moment." She recalled the sign that hung over the door at Studio Rivbea—the Lower Manhattan Sam Rivers loft where she and her husband, bassist William Parker, met in 1972—a sign, which addressed to everyone who wasn't in the room: "Tell them what they missed." That is roughly the assignment.

For the 2026 edition of Arts For Art's Vision Festival—six nights at Abrons Arts Center on Manhattan's Lower East Side—two honored artists were chosen, and the distance between them is an apt portrait of the festival's ethos. Guitarist-bassist Joe Morris is an educator at New England Conservatory of Music who codified his ideas about improvisation in the book, *Perpetual Frontier*, rendering the practice legible even while defining it as perpetually becoming. Woodwinds musician and trumpeter Daniel Carter, who closed the festival, swore off playing changes decades ago, refuses charts, and picks collaborators not by status but by openness—an oral philosopher who plays as readily with musicians 50 years younger as with coevals like bassist Parker. The festival holds both as equal goods.

Joe Morris' night was five configurations wide. It opened with a duo, with Nicole Mitchell coaxing multiphonics from her flute, while electronics turned Morris' electric guitar into something like a spacecraft, the two sounds merging until you could no longer disentangle which was coming from which instrument. Whenever the echo-soaked tones drifted toward dreaminess, they were yanked back into dissonance, refusing to coast. A string quartet followed—Tomeka Reid, Melanie Dyer, Solomon Caldwell—playing Morris' compositions in the lineage of Wilber Morris, Billy Bang and Fred Hopkins; a passage of relentless

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Those attending the first (and hopefully not last) Brooklyn Guitar Festival (Jun. 12-13) could engorge themselves with almost fifteen hours of music: four acts the first day at Warsaw ballroom, and nine more on the closing Saturday at Arlo Hotel. Co-curated by Joel Harrison and Alex Skolnick, the event's timing was apropos: James "Blood" Ulmer had recently passed (Jun. 3); West 8th Street, site of Electric Ladyland Studios, had just been renamed Jimi Hendrix Way (Jun. 10); and—though attendees couldn't know it yet—later that night the New York Knicks would end their 53-year NBA championship drought, less than an hour after Al Di Meola, the festival's final act, had finished his encore.

The line-up was diverse. For the jazz folks, there were long-established stars: Di Meola, Bill Frisell, John Scofield and Mike Stern, as well as younger, equally stellar players: Harrison, Steve Cardenas, Lolivone de la Rosa, Nir Felder, David Gilmore, Gilad Hekselman and Adam Rogers—plus blues rockers Eric Gales, Greg Koch, Ally Venable and Jackie Venson, acoustic finger-stylist Andy McKee, and two (for want of a more precise term) "eclectic avant-shredders": Skolnick and Vernon Reid. Two sets paid tribute to Scofield and Jeff Beck, respectively, and the aura of Hendrix hung in the air: his name dropped, his tunes covered, his influence heard in many participants' playing.

Friday's opener was Jackie Venson, who, in lieu of a full band, played and sang her songs along with a drummer and backing tracks—which could've killed the immediacy of the performance if not for her manifest talent and distinctive style blending pop, funk, George Benson-style jazz and Hendrixian psychedelia. John Scofield's trio set—with Vicente Archer (bass) and Bill Stewart (drums)—proved that, at 74, he's still one of the most creative improvisers playing, reeling out long narratives chockful of plot points, punctuated with crunchy (sometimes audacious) comping chords, redolent with funk and soul—a standout performance. Equally impressive in his own right was Adam Rogers' DICE trio powered by the uber-funky drumming of Nate Smith. Wielding a wide-open Stratocaster tone with a deft touch on whammy bar and wah-wah pedal, Rogers mixed chunky chording, bluesy bends and chromatic but lyrical phrasing that would've made Hendrix proud to have been an inspiration. The night concluded with the Jeff Beck tribute kicked off by Skolnick's muscular but nuanced reading of "Freeway Jam". The

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Assembling a two-day, 22-act music festival is no doubt something like putting together a jigsaw puzzle in which the pieces don't actually fit. Artist schedules are just one variable that certainly can force difficult decisions. Still, putting Bill Frisell's trio with guest saxophonist Greg Tardy on the smaller stage at three in the afternoon was at best a surprise. Having them overlap with Cécile McLorin Salvant on the main stage was if not an unfortunate necessity, then malignant neglect. Fortunately, the Saratoga Jazz Festival (Jun. 27-28) attracts audiences enough to keep both stages occupied.

Day one of this 49th annual event was filled with difficult choices and seemed unevenly stacked against the second. First up was a New Orleans second line from Brooklyn at 11 am to make it clear for anyone not sure where we were at. Brass Queens brought tradition, energy and taut arrangements, crowd-pleasing even before the Motown medley and Prince cover. Second was First Meeting—Gonzalo Rubalcaba (piano), Chris Potter (tenor, soprano), Larry Grenadier (bass) and Eric Harland (drums), who had encountered one another before and released a recording last year. They played an easy groupthink groove in the '60s Blue Note tradition with open flow energy. Potter stunned, especially on soprano, or when pushing his tenor into the soprano range, and his interplay with Rubalcaba suggested they were having a sublime good time. Harland and Grenadier were endlessly in-the-pocket inventive.

The first competing-stages dilemma (the two are a short walk apart, but usually fairly well sonically isolated) pitted Tyreek McDole's slightly yelping take on the male vocal tradition against Terri Lyne Carrington on the main stage. There was enough time to devote a bit to McDole before catching Carrington's Social Science playing songs off their upcoming *Trip the Night Fantastic*. It's a full band, with keys, flute, guitar, bass and three (sometimes four) singers, plus the leader's drums—not quite the same lineup, or the same sound, as on the front-and-center, heavily produced album. They sounded, arguably, even better, thanks in part to the clear and expansive sound in the amphitheater (although there was a small and persistent feedback problem throughout the weekend). The music was big and warm, falling between jazz fusion and contemporary R&B, infectious grooves messaging justice. The bluesy "Solidarity Song" was a highlight.

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tribute also included Harrison, Reid and Rogers, but even these prodigious talents were hard-pressed to match the larger-than-life presence of **Eric Gales**, who, hunched over his Stratocaster, playing left-handed and upside-down, huge hands engulfing its neck, unleashed a torrent of notes and emotion on “Goin’ Down”, then topped himself on “Cause We’ve Ended as Lovers”, finally leading the five other guitarists in a charge over Stevie Wonder’s “Superstition”.

Friday was hard to top, but Saturday offered even more. **Andy McKee**, an acolyte of the Michael Hedges school of acoustic fingerstyle, employed a gorgeous tone and unusual extended techniques, his hands and fingers dancing up, down, over and across the guitar with exquisite choreography. **Greg Koch**, a master chicken-picker, coaxed a plethora of sounds from his Telecaster, including two of the festival’s trickiest licks: a cello-like effect created by rapid rolling of the volume knob, and another executed by dragging his right thumb along a string to emit a series of rising harmonics. **Ally Venable** joined him onstage, trading riffs on Howlin’ Wolf’s “Killing Floor”, then led her own set of rockin’ blues and yet another Hendrix cover with powerful down-stroked phrases, fast strums and gritty vocals.

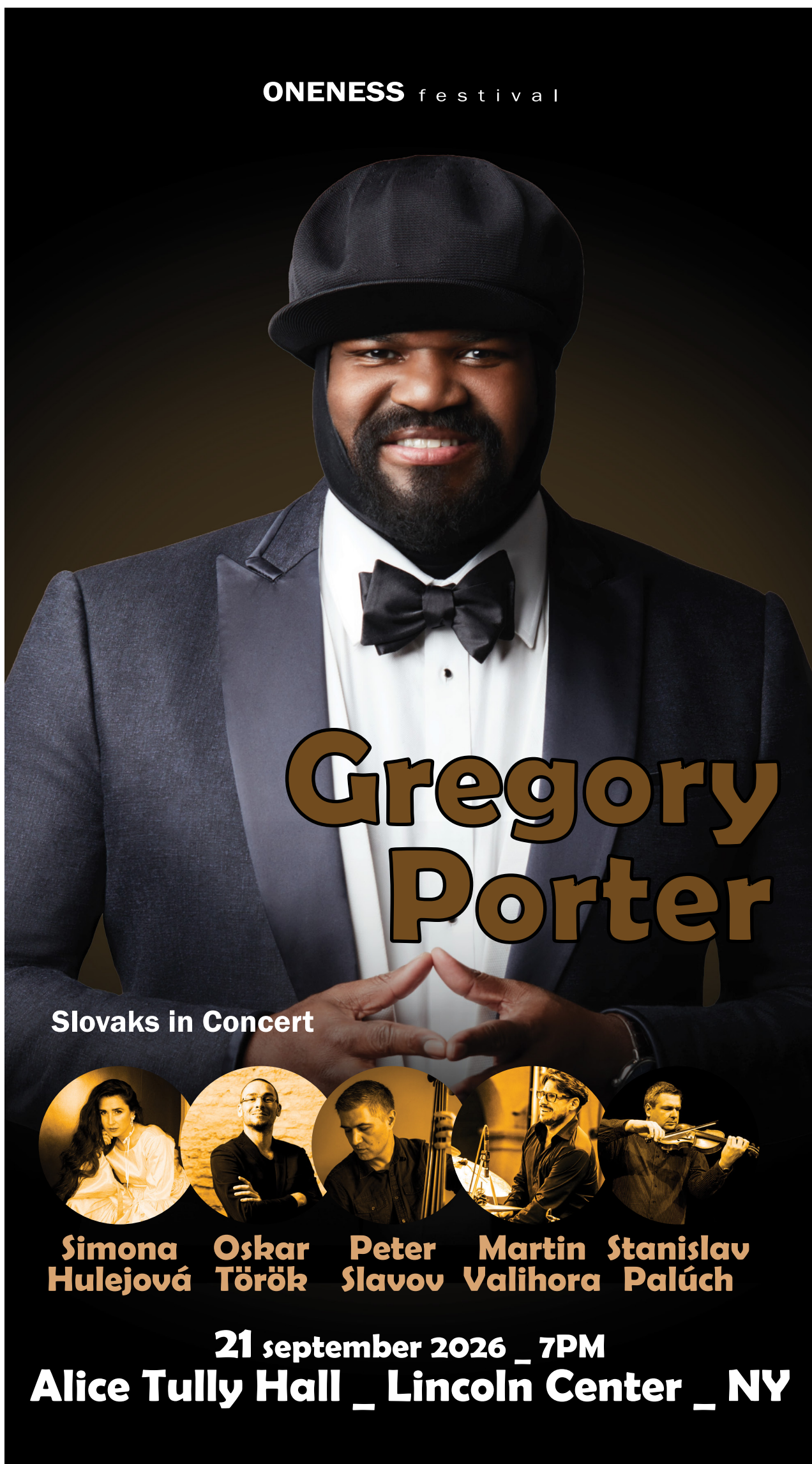
The Stardust Reunion Band presented **Joel Harrison**’s original songs with vocals by Everett Bradley, Nicki Richards and Keith Fluitt, the leader adding tasty touches on slide guitar, and **Nir Felder** a trip-hammer solo on electric. Co-curator **Alex Skolnick**’s set with his trio—Nathan Peck (bass), Matt Zebroski (drums)—was another festival highlight, showcasing his range and versatility as each number (one a fresh take on Aerosmith’s “Dream On”) morphed through a series of mood- and mode-swings, the leader executing astounding passages that belied his calm poise. **Mike Stern**’s set showed, like Scofield, that he’s still (at 73) in the prime of his powers, his damaged but in no way deterred right arm oscillating like a flywheel over rapid runs, yet equally capable of hushing the crowd with sensitive melody readings and tender chording. His guitarist-wife **Leni Stern** also earned house for her on-point soloing.

The next living legend to appear was **Bill Frisell** who, at 75, was the senior member of the septuagenarian squad. Playing a camouflage Telecaster, covering tunes including “I’m an Old Cowhand” and the James Bond theme, John Barry’s “You Only Live Twice”, his trio set was a paragon of space and decorum, though prodded by the time-warping antics of drummer Timothy Angulo. In a sea of shredders, Frisell bucked the tide by making the most of each note, his musical message heard in pregnant silences floating between notes.

The John Scofield tribute showcased a bevy of (mostly) younger talents: de la Rosa, Cardenas, Felder, Gilmore and Hekselman. Each played a Scofield tune alone and/or in duo with another guitarist, backed by Jerome Harris (bass) and Rudy Royston (drums), the latter’s simmering pulse an inspiration to all. Felder’s take on “Camp Out” was a standout. Reid opened his set with “Trouble in Mind”, a testament to the late “Blood” Ulmer, rocked Hendrix’ “Are You Experienced?”, then worked his fingers and (18!) pedals to find those storytelling tones. Last was **Al Di Meola**—at 71, the youngest senior shredder—who presented his set in two parts: first an acoustic duo with Isaac Romagosa Torrellardona (who deserves an award for most relaxed playing technique); second an electric quartet playing the high-voltage fusion he’s famous for. He too was in peak form.

Judging from the sheer quantity and high-quality of guitar excellence on display at the festival, we can cautiously, optimistically look forward to a second annual go-round.

For more info visit bklynguitarfest.com



ONENESS festival

Gregory Porter

Slovaks in Concert



Simona Hulejová Oskar Török Peter Slavov Martin Valihora Stanislav Palúch

21 september 2026 _ 7PM
Alice Tully Hall _ Lincoln Center _ NY

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two hours, and he said, ‘OK, great.’” It’s the one and only Quincy Jones live recording, which is not a bootleg and not produced by Quincy since 1958. And once Jones legitimized TCB’s efforts to distribute the recordings, other artists quickly followed and TCB was able to put together its vast catalog. “We got Louis Hayes, Woody Shaw, and it went on and on. Dizzy Gillespie. Slide Hampton...It’s absolutely gorgeous,” Ischer enthuses.

Pianist Marc Copland participated in a unique project for the Swiss Radio Days series in 2022. He recorded a solo piano set where he dueted with a pre-recorded track of himself playing an additional piano line. “That Marc Copland project was absolutely beautiful,” Ischer says. Copland adds, “Peter was and Barbara is just great people, really interested in just supporting the music and putting out quality product.” Pianist Lynne Arriale recorded several contemporary TCB projects as well, including a “red line” release, titled *A Long Road Home* (1997). “I had a wonderful experience with TCB,” she says. “Peter was incredibly supportive. He was a phenomenal musician himself, and so he really supported and promoted the artists on the label and did everything he could to help.” Trombonist Ed Neumeister recorded a “yellow line” series album *The Mohican and the Great Spirit* (1996). “That was my first recording as a leader,” Neumeister fondly recalls. “We came through Switzerland, and Peter heard us play. He was the kind of guy you just couldn’t not like—friendly, personable, he respected us (and) knew what we were doing...It was a great opportunity.”

Today, with some outside help with social media and distribution (TCB is distributed in the US through Dot Time), Frei Schmidlin continues with unwavering determination. New releases may come in dribs and drabs (this year the label released new music by near-nonagenarian, German pianist Klaus Koenig), and digitization and distribution of the label’s archive remains a challenge—but Frei Schmidlin is resolute. “Barbara is just a lovely person,” Arriale says. “I’ve been in touch with her over the years since Peter passed away. It’s great that she’s decided to keep TCB going. I know she’s been putting out projects, but it takes a lot of energy to run a record label to say the least.” “Slowly, but surely, we’re progressing!” Frei Schmidlin says with a laugh.

For more info visit tcbrecords.com. TCB artists performing this month include: Jon Davis at Jazzcultural Aug. 17 (with Paul Bollenback); Roni Ben-Hur at Smalls Aug. 6 and Five Spot Jazz Aug. 16, as well as Horan’s Landing (Sleepy Hollow, NY) Tuesdays (with Mark Morganelli); Buster Williams at Mezzrow Aug. 1, and at The Side Door Jazz Club (Old Lyme, CT) Aug. 8 (with Benito Gonzalez); Steve Nelson at Dizzy’s Club Aug. 11 (as leader) and Jazzcultural Aug. 1 (with Steve Davis) and Thursdays; Dizzy Gillespie All-Star Big Band at Blue Note Aug. 11-16 and Duane Eubanks at Matthiessen Park (Irvington, NY) Aug. 13 (with Tony Jefferson). See Calendar and 100 Miles Out.

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The hard choice of catching only part of Bill Frisell’s set and that from the back was compensated to a small degree by getting to experience him in the county fair setting of the Jazz Discovery stage and, to a greater degree, how beautifully Tardy (himself a frequent Frisell playmate) fit in with the trio. Cécile McLorin Salvant played a set that included songs by Bob Dorough and Cy Coleman, a few of her own and a couple of selections from her astounding new album, *With Every Breath I Take*, although without the orchestra. Backed by a trio including her ever stalwart pianist Sullivan Fortner, she showed that a keen sense of vocal interpretation can weather multiple arrangements and settings, even of her own songs. Exquisiteness

maybe shouldn’t be such a reliable quality, but Salvant delivers like the greats. Her set spilled over into the first part of the Orrin Evans Trio, who evidenced the unhurried ease of old friends.

It is, or has become, a jazz festival tradition to book non-jazz acts, “jazz” seemingly having become a catchall term for catchall programming, so attendees also got the Americana of the Dip and The Revivalists, the groove of Ana Popovic + Cimafunk and first night closer Patti LaBelle, who didn’t pull from her 2017 jazz album but instead from her upcoming R&B album, connecting immediately and consistently with the audience in a charming and confident concert. We also got the Miles Electric Band (M.E.B.) celebrating the Davis centennial and the Skidmore Jazz Institute Faculty All-Stars marking John Coltrane’s 100th, tributes to two musicians who radically broke from tradition. M.E.B. is led by drummer (and Davis’ nephew) Vince Wilburn, Jr, with rotating players. At least on this night, it seemed a showcase for trumpeter Keyon Harrold, and why shouldn’t it be? But the ground Davis broke ends up being jammy as repertory. Likewise, the Coltrane tribute was no doubt heartfelt but lacked oomph—at least for the first half, before the main stage and saxophonist Lakecia Benjamin called. At least in spirit, her set seemed more of a Coltrane tribute than were the Skidmore stars. Hard-edged, modal post-bop, with heavy chordal piano, called the master to mind even before Benjamin’s rendition of “My Favorite Things”, dedicating it not to John but to Alice Coltrane. Elsewhere, shades of Latin rhythms and her Washington Heights upbringing shone through. She closed with an impassioned “I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free”.

Benjamin also gave Dianne Reeves her second shout-out from the stage, following Salvant’s the previous day. Reeves’ own afternoon set opened with her scatting through Fleetwood Mac’s “Dreams” and included a take on “What’s New?”, which foreshadowed her forthcoming Coltrane/Johnny Hartman tribute album with Branford Marsalis. The soon-to-be septuagenarian’s voice was in fine form, as was that of the 82-year-old LaBelle. Both also sang barefoot—there may be a lesson there. The high point was a handful of songs in duo with guitarist Romero Lubambo, including a lovely “Our Love is Here to Stay”. The Sunday spirit carried on in Kyle Russo’s New Orleans piano with Beethoven interpolations and some more muscular rhythms than might be expected, and in vocalist Sasha Dobson’s with violinist Charlie Burnham, drawing influence from ’60s French pop and classic country. But much of the day fell in Saturday’s shadow, one of the few shadows to be found under the bright, hot sun. Still it was a fine weekend in a beautiful park, carrying on in the honored, Jazz on a Summer’s Day tradition.

For more info visit spac.org

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“college circuit,” a sheerly brilliant idea based on the notion that college kids largely didn’t have the funds for jazz clubs. And according to son, Chris, she changed the business model of jazz. Iola wrote to hundreds of colleges, providing a 40-page guide on how to organize a Dave Brubeck Quartet concert. Tremendous success—and a fan base—followed, leading to albums such as *Jazz Goes to College* and *Jazz at Oberlin*. No wonder Dave called her his “greatest inspiration.” But according to Iola biographer, John Bolton: “She was his biggest fan.”

In 1959, the landmark hit album *Time Out*—with Paul Desmond (alto), Eugene Wright (bass) and Joe Morello (drums)—was released, leading to a major 1960 relocation to Wilton, CT, close to the major cultural, media and entertainment hub of NYC. “One of her greatest contributions to Dave’s career,” says Chris, “was to encourage him to keep working with Desmond

even after they were on the outs at times. She always talked my dad back into working with Paul because she knew they had a legendary magic in their musical language.” In Wilton, the Brubeck home was itself a hub, becoming known as the “Wilton Hilton.” Iola added welcoming hostess to her resumé, as musicians, friends, associates and family were welcomed to the pastoral grounds. Like Ginger Rogers, who famously said she made all the moves Fred Astaire did, but backwards and in heels, Iola was called on to handle a spouse’s huge fame and popularity. Darius Brubeck muses, “My mother ran a complicated household, raised six children, dealt with schedules and itineraries and kept a diary. It seemed natural to me growing up, but now I understand what it must have been like to be constantly busy and on deadline. Right from the beginning, she must have believed that Dave Brubeck would become ‘Dave Brubeck.’”

All the while, her creativity flowed freely and abundantly. A seminal composition, 1962’s musical, *The Real Ambassadors*, starring Louis Armstrong and Carmen McRae, with original lyrics by Iola, broke ground as a commentary on racial segregation and the hypocrisy of the US government promoting American freedom abroad while failing to address racism at home. The indefatigable Iola also wrote lyrics for songs such as “In Your Own Sweet Way”, and for Dave’s sacred works, including *The Light in the Wilderness*, *The Gates of Justice* and *Truth is Fallen*; she wrote liner notes and initiated the *Dave Brubeck Newsletter*, a communication tradition still carried out by the Brubeck children. “Many people after meeting our mother would say there was something very ‘regal’ about her, it glowed from the inside out. She emoted a sense of authority and kindness simultaneously,” Chris observes. “Our family was extraordinarily blessed to have such an elegant, wise, talented, loving mother guiding the family through post-WWII years into the next century.”

For more info visit brubecklivinglegacy.com/who-we-are/iola. *Photo of Iola Brubeck at Brubeck home, 1940s (Oakland, CA) [Courtesy of The Brubeck Collection, Wilton Library]

Recommended Listening:

- Louis Armstrong, Dave Brubeck, Lambert Hendricks & Ross—*The Real Ambassadors* (CBS-Columbia, 1961)
- Dave Brubeck—*The Light in the Wilderness* (Decca, 1968)
- Dave Brubeck—*The Gates of Justice* (Decca, 1969)
- Dave Brubeck—*Truth is Fallen* (Atlantic, 1972)
- Dave Brubeck—*La Fiesta De La Posada* (CBS-Columbia, 1979)
- Dave Brubeck—*Songs* (Naxos, 2005)



FREE CONCERTS
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National Jazz Museum in Harlem 58 West 129th St., 2PM 8/6 - Ra Kalam Bob Moses and the Heart Breath Ensemble* 8/13 - Bernice Brooks and Friends* 8/24 - Charlie Parker Jazz Festival: Monday Night Jam feat. Kim Clarke, Roxy Coss, Anisha Rush, 6PM *and livestreaming on JFA Facebook and YouTube	Hudson River Park Jazz at Pier 84 555 12th Ave, 7PM 8/5 - Pucci Amanda Jhones 8/12 - Ghanniyya Green Blues BBQ Festival - Pier 76 408 12th Ave, 1PM 8/15 - 2nd Stage: feat. the Hammond B3 organ: Radam Schwartz, Mel Davis, Kathryn Farmer, Gregory Lewis - Organ Monk Sings
Brooklyn Museum 200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, 2PM 8/16 - Peter Apfelbaum Heiroglyphics Sextet 8/23 - Chemo Corniel	Charlie Parker Jazz Festival In Partnership with City Parks Foundation, NJM, The New School, Studio Museum, Stay for the Credits, Summerstage, and Ariana's List Studio Museum, 144 W. 125th St, 1PM 8/23 - James Stewart Quartet // Screening of <i>Sun Ra: Do The Impossible</i>
Riverside Park West Harlem Piers W. 125 St & Marginal St, 7PM 8/7 - Trio Cachimbo This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York Legislature and by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and by the Howard Gilman Foundation.	Glass Box at The New School 55 W. 13th St, 6PM 8/25 - Eddie Allen Quintet preceded by a student ensemble El Sol Brillante, 522 E. 12th St, 5:30PM 8/26 - Xiomara Laugart feat. Reverse Audio Harlem Rose Garden, 6 E. 129th St, 5:30PM 8/28 - David Lee Jones Quartet

