

*Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning
presents
Downtown Jamaica Jazz Festival*

*Free Two-Day Explosion of Jazz
Headlined by Ravi Coltrane*



POSTER CONTENT:

DOWNTOWN JAMAICA

JAZZ

festival



MAY 15TH & 16TH • 12 - 7:30PM

HEADLINER - RAVI COLTRANE
RSVPS ARE FREE

FEATURING SOME OF THE MOST EXCITING ARTISTS
IN JAZZ MUSIC TODAY

153-10 JAMAICA AVE



After a pause in 2020 due to COVID-19, Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning is thrilled to announce the return of its acclaimed **Downtown Jamaica Jazz Festival**, taking place on the lawn of Jamaica Performing Arts Center on Saturday, May 15 and Sunday, May 16, 12pm to 7:30pm both days. Admission is free; RSVPs are strongly encouraged.

In the past, JCAL's **Downtown Jamaica Jazz Festival** has paid tribute to such legends as the late Milford Graves while also showcasing some of the prominent emerging musicians. This year's



For Immediate Release

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lineup—curated by Rio Sakairi, Artistic Director of The Jazz Gallery—is especially strong, starting with Grammy-nominated saxophonist Ravi Coltrane as headliner.

The son of legendary jazz artists John Coltrane and Alice Coltrane, Ravi is a highly regarded bandleader and composer. In the course of his long career, Ravi has worked as a sideman to many, recorded noteworthy albums for himself and others, and founded a prominent independent record label, RKM.

The two-day festival features eight musicians, including the likes of Joel Ross, who released his Blue Note debut album *KingMaker* to eruptive critical acclaim, and Melissa Aldana, who was an audience favorite during JCAL's 2nd Thursday Night Jazz season, which has been live-streamed every month since last October from JCAL's black-box theater.

During the **Downtown Jamaica Jazz Festival**, all COVID-19 protocols will be observed, with only 100 people at a time permitted inside the grounds of JPAC, with social distancing.

JCAL's **Downtown Jamaica Jazz Festival** is made possible by the Queens Delegation of the New York City Council, Queens Borough President Donovan Richards, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, Flushing Bank, Con Edison, and individual supporters of the Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning.

“It’s true! Our **Downtown Jamaica Jazz Festival** is coming back to life—live on the JPAC lawn,” said Interim Executive Director Leonard Jacobs. “This wouldn’t be possible without many people coming together, starting with the generous support of our colleagues in city government. And look that lineup! Kudos to Rio Sakhari of the Jazz Gallery and to Courtney Ffrench, our Interim Artistic Director, for creating this incredible roster of top-tier talent!”

“This is a collaborative experience—a true celebration of life, of music, in every sense,” added Interim Artistic Director Courtney Ffrench. “In addition to this lineup, we are seriously blessed to have a staff and production and backstage team that is second to none, and an audience that we think is really ready to come out of their homes and safely enjoy amazing jazz here on the JPAC lawn. Everyone is welcome, and we’re looking forward to seeing you!”



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Downtown Jamaica Jazz Festival Lineup

Saturday, May 15

- **12pm - Samara Joy**
- **2pm - Godwin Louis**
- **4pm - Becca Stevens**
- **6pm - Miguel Zenón**

Sunday, May 16

- **12pm - Joel Ross**
- **2pm - Melissa Aldana**
- **4pm - Sachal Vasandani**
- **6pm - Ravi Coltrane**

About the Artists

Samara Joy: With a voice as smooth as velvet, Samara Joy's star seems to rise with each performance. Following her winning the 2019 Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition, she is currently recording her debut recording, backed by the Pasquale Grasso Trio.

Godwin Louis: Born in Harlem, New York, Godwin Louis began playing saxophone at age nine. He has performed as a bandleader, sideman, guest soloist and has conducted clinics and master classes worldwide.

Becca Stevens: The Grammy-nominated Brooklyn-based and North Carolina bred Becca Stevens has established an outstanding career blending effortless vocal talent with exquisite compositions that draw inspiration from pop, jazz, indie-rock, and traditional Appalachian folk music.

Miguel Zenón: Widely considered one of the most groundbreaking and influential saxophonists of his generation, Miguel Zenón has also developed a unique voice as a composer and conceptualist, concentrating his efforts on perfecting a fine mix between Latin American folkloric music and jazz.

Joel Ross: For the past several years, Joel Ross has been refining an expression that's true to his sound and his generation. In 2017, he became one of the youngest artists to receive a coveted Residency Commission from The Jazz Gallery.

Melissa Aldana: Inspired by the life and works of Frida Kahlo, Melissa Aldana creates a parallel between her experiences as a female saxophone player in a male-dominated community and Kahlo's experiences as a female visual artist working to assert herself in a landscape dominated by men.



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Sachal Vasandani: Sachal Vasandani's deeply creative approach to improvisation across lyrics, melodic changes and time signatures is always soulful; he has come to be regarded as one of the eminent vocal improvisers of his generation.

Ravi Coltrane: Ravi Coltrane is a critically acclaimed Grammy-nominated saxophonist, bandleader and composer. In the course of his 20-plus-year career, he has worked as a sideman to many, recorded noteworthy albums for himself and others and founded a prominent independent record label, RKM.

About JCAL

Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning (JCAL), founded in 1972, is a multidisciplinary arts center based in the diverse community of Southeast Queens. Our mission is devoted to offering quality visual, performing, and literary arts, and to providing accessible education programs to encourage participation in the arts. JCAL's offices and arts spaces are open in strict accordance with state and local COVID-19 guidelines. Operating hours by appointment: Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm, and galleries on Saturdays; closed major holidays. For additional information, call JCAL at 718-658-7400 or visit **www.JCAL.org**.

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