



The 3rd Annual Art Of Jazz Celebration
June 4 - 8, 2008 - The Distillery District, Toronto
www.artofjazz.org

Performer's Bios:

CINDY BLACKMAN



Appearing Sunday, June 8th at 4:30 p.m.

She is thunder. She is fire. She is energy. She is passion. She is world-renowned jazz drummer Cindy Blackman. Born in Ohio and raised in Connecticut, Blackman attended Berklee College of Music in Boston, Massachusetts and began studying with legendary teacher Alan Dawson. Cindy soon moved to New York City where she began her musical career as a street performer and playing with her own group. In 1993, Cindy gained great visibility when she began an 11-year stint with retro funk rocker Lenny Kravitz. In 1998, she released her first drumming instructional video entitled, *Multiplicity* through Warner Brothers publications and has been touted as one of the top drummers in the world. She is a solid, dependable drummer who can easily move from straight-ahead jazz to rock to funk and back again. She's upheld the backbeat and created texture for such venerable jazz performers as Jackie McLean, Joe Henderson, Don Pullen, Hugh Masekela, Pharaoh Sanders, Sam Rivers, Cassandra Wilson, Angela Bofill, Bill Laswell and Buckethead. In early 2000, Cindy released her acclaimed solo album *Works on Canvas* and in 2004 she released her seventh solo effort *Someday*. Her latest release features J.D. Allen-Tenor Saxophone, Carlton Holmes-Piano/Fender Rhodes and George Mitchell-Bass. According to Cindy herself, "The life of music is bigger than all of us." **www.cindyblackman.com**

EGBERTO GISMONTI



Appearing Sunday, June 8th at 8:00 p.m.

Born in 1947 in Carmo, Brazil, Egberto Gismonti began his formal music studies at the age of six on piano. After studying classical music for 15 years in Brazil, and later Paris, Gismonti began to explore beyond the world of classical music. He became attracted to "choro", a popular Brazilian instrumental music that features various kinds of guitars. Inspired by choro, he soon made the transition from piano to guitar beginning on the 6-string classical instrument and switching to the 8-string guitar in 1973. As his influences grew, he began listening to musicians as wide-ranging as Django Reinhardt and Jimi Hendrix; for Egberto, Hendrix's achievements were proof that "popular" and "serious" idioms need not remain opposite poles. In 1977 Gismonti released first record *Dance Das Cabeças* featuring percussionist Nana Vasconcelos. His next release, *Sol Do Meio Dia*, found the duo augmented by saxophonist Jan Garbarek, percussionist Collin Walcott and guitarist Ralph Towner - Gismonti dedicated this album to the Xingu Indians of the Amazon, with whom he had lived for a period of time in the jungle. With the release of 1979's *Magico*, Gismonti formed a trio with bassist Charlie Haden and saxophonist Jan Garbarek and toured Europe, including an appearance at the Berlin Jazz Festival. Through his subsequent albums and career Gismonti has successfully merged the music and culture of Brazil with Western music. His rhythms, at times extremely fragile and always carefully constructed, convey, capture and celebrate Brazilian culture. **www.myspace.com/egbertogismonti**



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HERMETO PASCOAL ***Appearing Saturday, June 7th at 8:00 p.m.***



In the 1960's self-taught musician and composer Hermeto Pascoal began to rise through Brazil's music scene, but he would gain wide attention in the jazz world after playing on Miles Davis' 1971 release *Live/Evil*. Davis selected two of Pascoal's compositions for that album: "*A Igreja*" and "*Nenhum Talvez*." In fact, Davis had selected eleven of Pascoal's compositions, but with a solo record on the horizon, Pascoal only offered two of his songs to Davis. At the time, Davis had said that Pascoal was "the most impressive musician in the world". In the late 1970's, Hermeto's profile swelled as he began to front and record with his own groups. His first self-titled solo effort was recorded in 1971 in New York and was produced by Ron Carter and Flora Purim. Hermeto earned a reputation for being a prolific renegade as he began to incorporate unconventional 'instruments' such as teapots, children's toys and found objects in his performances. Inspired by nature and his surroundings, Hermeto's music is truly organic - he is credited with developing the '*Sound of the Aura*' in which music is inspired from people's speech, traffic noise, and out of every possible source of sound. Hermeto's proficiency as a player is astounding, performing on keyboards, button accordion, saxophone, guitar, flute, voice, various brass and folkloric instruments. An inexhaustible composer, he is also known for his project *Calendario do Som*, in which he composed a song every day for a year so that everyone would have a song for his or her birthday. **www.hermetopascoal.com**

JOVINO SANTOS NETO ***Appearing Saturday, June 7th at 8:00 p.m.***



The barriers between classical music, jazz, and indigenous Brazilian music have been obscured by Rio de Janeiro-born and Seattle-based pianist, flutist, and composer Jovino Santos Neto. Studying classical piano from the age of 12, Santos Neto moved to Beatles and Rolling Stones-influenced pop by his 15th birthday. He began to focus on jazz while studying biology at McGill University in Montreal. Invited to tour Brazil with Hermeto Pascoal in 1977, Santos Neto remained an important part of the Brazilian multi-instrumentalist's band for 15 years, co-producing six albums. A member of Hermeto Pascoal's legendary band from 1977 to 1992, Santos Neto has built a solid reputation as a creative and inspired musician, producer and arranger. He has also worked with such artists as Aíto Moreira, Flora Purim, Mike Marshall, Gary Stroutsos and Richard Boukas. Santos Neto's 1997 debut album, *Caboclo*, featuring his compositions with the accompaniment of quartet members Hans Teuber (saxophones, flute), Chuck Deardorf (bass) and Mark Ivester (drums), was followed by *Live in Olympia* in 2000 (with the addition of percussionist Jeff Busch and Harvey Wainapel on saxes and clarinet) and by *Canto do Rio* in 2003, which was commissioned by Chamber Music America's New Works program and was nominated for a 2004 Latin Grammy Award for Best Latin Jazz Album. His latest CD, *Roda Carioca*, was released in 2006 on Adventure Music and earned Jovino a second nomination for a Latin Grammy. Jovino relocated to the U.S. in 1993 and studied conducting at the Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle, where he continues to teach piano, composition, and jazz ensemble. **www.jovisan.net**



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RANDY WESTON

Appearing Friday, June 6th at 7:30 p.m.



Randy Weston, born in Brooklyn, New York in 1926, didn't have to travel far to hear the early jazz giants that were to influence him. Though Weston cites Count Basie, Nat King Cole, Art Tatum, and of course, Duke Ellington as his other piano heroes, it was Monk who had the greatest impact. "He was the most original I ever heard," Weston remembers. After contributing six decades of musical direction and genius, Randy Weston remains one of the world's foremost pianists and composers today, a true innovator and visionary. Encompassing the vast rhythmic heritage of Africa, his global creations musically continue to inform and inspire. In the late 60's, Weston left the U.S. But instead of moving to Europe like so many of his contemporaries, Weston went to Africa. Though he settled in Morocco, he traveled throughout the continent tasting the musical fruits of other nations. One of his most memorable experiences was the 1977 Nigerian festival, which drew artists from 60 cultures. "At the end," Weston says, "we all realized that our music was different but the same, because if you take out the African elements of bossa nova, samba, jazz, blues, you have nothing... to me, it's Mother Africa's way of surviving in the new world." Randy Weston has never failed to make the connections between African and American music. His dedication is due in large part to his father, who told his son that he was, "an African born in America." "He told me I had to learn about myself and about him and about my grandparents," says Weston, "and the only way to do it was I'd have to go back to the motherland one day." **www.randyweston.info**

BILLY HARPER

Appearing Friday, June 6th at 7:30 p.m.



Billy Harper's unique music creativity was first noted in Houston, Texas, where at age 5 he began singing at both sacred and secular functions. By age 14, he formed his first Billy Harper Quintet. After studying saxophone and music theory at North Texas State University, Harper moved to New York in 1966 and began attracting attention from some of jazzdom's giants - Gil Evans, Max Roach, Thad Jones, Mel Lewis, Lee Morgan, Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers. But in 1966, The Billy Harper Quintet began receiving notoriety of its own when Harper and his group appeared on the NBC-TV special, "The Big Apple." With more exposure came bigger audiences and bigger demands for appearances. As a recording artist, Billy Harper's album, *Black Saint* exploded on the international jazz scene in 1976. The reviews all applauded his innovations and prompted the Modern Jazz League of Tokyo to name the album, "Jazz Record of the Year - Voice Grand Prix." As a teacher and lecturer, Harper has taught at Livingston College and Rutgers University. He has also received a special grant from the New Jersey State Council for the Arts to teach improvisation at 15 high schools. Throughout Harper's career, there has been a pattern of spiritual growth and innovation. Says Harper: "My feeling is that music should have a purpose. In the past, it always has been used for healing and uplifting and meditation. And that's the way I see my music. I've had people come up after a program to tell me that they felt a spiritual healing from the music. When that happens, then I feel we're fulfilling what we're supposed to do. If people are entertained, that's ok too. But I certainly see a purpose in my music beyond that." **www.billyharper.com**



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SHEILA JORDAN ***Appearing Saturday, February 14, 2009 at Chalker's Pub
& Sunday February 15, 2009 at the Art of Jazz Studio***



Born in 1928, Sheila Jordan was raised in poverty in Pennsylvania's coal-mining country. She began singing as a child and by the time she was in her early teens was working semi-professionally in Detroit clubs. Her first great influence was Charlie Parker and most of her influences have been instrumentalists rather than singers. As a member of the vocal trio, Skeeter, Mitch And Jean (she was Jean), she sang versions of Parker's solos in a manner akin to that of the later Lambert, Hendricks And Ross. After moving to New York in the early 50s, she married Parker's pianist, Duke Jordan, and studied with Lennie Tristano, but it was not until the early 60s that she made her first recordings. In the mid-60s her work encompassed jazz liturgies sung in churches and extensive club work, but her appeal was narrow even within the confines of jazz. By the late 70s jazz audiences had begun to understand her uncompromising style and her popularity increased - as did her appearances on record, which included albums with pianist Steve Kuhn, whose quartet she joined, and an album entitled *Home*, which featured a selection of Robert Creeley's poems set to music. 1983's *Old Time Feeling* was followed by 1990's *Lost And Found*, an album that pays tribute to her bebop roots. Jordan has several unique musical trademarks, such as the frequent and unexpected sweeping changes of pitch, which still tend to confound an uninitiated audience. www.sheilajordanjazz.com

STEVE KUHN ***Appearing Saturday, June 7th at 2:00 p.m.***



Brooklyn-born Steve Kuhn was fascinated with jazz very early in his life. He began classical piano lessons at age five and in his early teens, Kuhn studied with legendary teacher Margaret Chaloff. Chaloff's son, Serge, baritone saxophonist for Woody Herman, hired the 13 year-old pianist to play in his group. Throughout his teens Kuhn continued to play in Boston jazz clubs with the likes of Coleman Hawkins, Chet Baker and Vic Dickenson. After graduating from Harvard, Kuhn attended the Lenox School of Music where he met and played in a group with fellow-students Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry. After a two-year two-year stint with trumpeter Kenny Dorham, Kuhn next joined Stan Getz's band, and eventually formed the first Steve Kuhn Trio, with drummer Pete LaRoca and bassist Steve Swallow. At the end of the 1960's he spent four years living in Europe, where his performances had a significant impact upon local players. Upon returning to the U.S., Kuhn released a string of important albums including *Trance*, *Ecstasy*, *Non-Fiction* and the collaborations with Sheila Jordan, *Playground* and *Last Year's Waltz*. In the mid-80's, Kuhn co-founded the popular 'All Star Trio', with bassist Ron Carter and drummer Al Foster, and launched a new and still evolving edition of his trio with bassist David Finck. In the 90's and up to the present, he has recorded CDs for Venus, Reservoir and Sunnyside. In 2004, Kuhn recorded *Promises Kept*, which includes a string orchestra for ECM Records. He is most proud of this recording. Kuhn continues to tour widely throughout the world, with a strong following in Europe and especially Japan where his CDs frequently appear on the jazz charts. www.myspace.com/stevekuhntrio



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JON HENDRICKS

Appearing Saturday, June 7th at 2:00 p.m.



Eighty-six year old Jon Hendricks is not only one of the world's favorite jazz vocalists, but is widely considered to be the "Father of Vocalese", the greatest innovator of the art form. As the creative force behind the legendary jazz vocal trio, "Lambert, Hendricks & Ross", Jon Hendricks literally invented a new jazz vocal language, based on an instrumental approach to the music, freely using both lyrics and "scat". His 1985 album Vocalese won five Grammy Awards. His television documentary, Somewhere To Lay My Weary Head, received an Emmy, Iris and Peabody Award. His stage work, Evolution of the Blues, ran an unprecedented five years at the Broadway theatre in San Francisco. Throughout his career, Hendricks has worked with the likes of Count Basie, Dizzy Gillespie, Art Blakey, Buck Clayton, Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, Wynton Marsalis, and Bobby McFerrin. For his work as a lyricist, jazz critic and historian Leonard Feather called him the "Poet Laureate of Jazz" while *Time* dubbed him the "James Joyce of Jive." www.harmonyware.com/JonHendricks

KELLY LEE EVANS

Appearing Saturday, June 7th at 4:00 p.m.



Toronto-born, Ottawa-based Kellylee Evans is a unique voice in the urban-jazz world, and since the release in May 2006 of her debut *Fight or Flight?*, her profile has soared. In 2004, Kellylee was awarded second place in the prestigious Thelonious Monk International Jazz Vocals Competition, held at The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. The judges – Quincy Jones, Al Jarreau, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Kurt Elling, Jimmy Scott and Flora Purim chose Kellylee out of a pool of over 160 gifted vocalists from around the world. Since her win, she has performed with award-winning saxophonist Jane Bunnett and has been invited to open for Tony Bennett, Chris Botti, Derek Trucks and Maceo Parker. In 2006, she performed to two sold out shows at the Kennedy Center Jazz Club in Washington, D.C. In the summer of 2007, Kellylee embarked on her first tour of the major Canadian jazz festivals, including Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal. Evans was the winner of a 2007 Canadian Smooth Jazz Award for Female Vocalist of the Year and nominee for a 2007 Juno Award for Vocal Jazz Album. www.kellyleeevans.com

ELIZABETH SHEPHERD ***Appearing Friday, June 6th at 6:30 p.m.***



Elizabeth Shepherd pushes the boundaries of what is considered conventional jazz, all the while creating a sound completely her own. From London to Tokyo, Elizabeth has captivated audiences and critics on both sides of the pond. Raised by ministers of the Salvation Army Band, an early exposure to the brass band sounds mixed with her love for house, disco, classical and hip hop, lay the foundations for this soulful musician. Trained extensively in conservatories from Alberta to France, Elizabeth completed a degree in music from McGill University, Montreal. She returned to Toronto in 2004 and formed the Elizabeth Shepherd Trio with Scott Kemp on bass, Colin Kingsmore on drums. Within the following few years EST gained international recognition, performing on BBC Radio 1, sold out shows at London's Jazz Café, and a week-long residency at the prestige Cotton Club in Tokyo, Japan the summer of 2007. Her Juno nominated debut album, *Start To Move* continues to receive critical acclaim, and was voted the Top 3 Jazz Albums of the Year by the listeners of the Gilles Peterson show on BBC Radio 1 UK in 2006. Her follow-up full-length album *Parkdale* is an older, wiser Shepherd teamed with her ever youthful, graceful soul. As far as being a "jazz performer", Elizabeth does not count herself as one to be defined by a particular genre; her music comes straight from the soul, and is more than just what she does, but what she loves. www.myspace.com/elizabethshepherd