

JazzBoston October newsletter

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## October with JazzBoston

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## Save the date: John Coltrane Memorial Concert "An Evening of Ballads & Blues"



Since 1977, the annual John Coltrane Memorial Concert (JCMC) has earned its reputation as Boston's annual "rite of fall" by continuously presenting one of the most diverse cultural performance events in the New England area. Originating from the Friends of Great Black Music Loft near Boston's Chinatown, the concert now presents a JCMC ensemble composed of master musicians, many of whom are from the Boston-area, along with numerous special guests from over the years.

This year the 39th Annual John Coltrane Memorial Concert's theme is "An Evening of Ballads & Blues." This focus will provide an opportunity for the performers to come together and breathe new life into the signature songs and melodies of Coltrane, which are often overshadowed due to his legacy as a brilliant improviser. Coltrane's works, "Naima," "Crescent," and "Blue Train," highlighted in the concert will be presented in new arrangements showcasing the ensemble's great musicianship, prowess and flexibility.

The John Coltrane Memorial Concert is co-produced by Leonard Brown and Emmett G. Price III and is presented in collaboration with the Northeastern Center for the Arts and the Department of City & Community Affairs. Dean of Boston Jazz Radio, Eric Jackson, will serve as the host for the evening, delivering historical facts as well as information about each song.

This year the JCMC will feature Carl Atkins (reeds and woodwinds), Billy Buss (trumpet), Consuelo Candelaria (piano), Jeff Galindo (trombone), Jason Palmer (trumpet), Bill Pierce (reeds and woodwinds), Ron Savage (percussion), Nat Reeves (acoustic bass), Rick Stepton (trombone), Stan Strickland (reeds, woodwinds and voice), and Bobby Tynes (reeds and woodwinds).

To honor Coltrane's musical legacy, the JCMC wants to keep true to Coltrane's desire to

be “a force for good” by using their musical gifts to make the world a better place for all people. Co-producer Leonard Brown comments, “I want people to take away an enriching experience. We play and perform in order to touch people. People should expect to hear creative improvisation. Come with an open mind and go with the music.”

*Saturday October 29, 7:30 pm. Blackman Auditorium, 360 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02115. Tickets: \$30 general admission, \$25 students/seniors, \$40 VIP [all ticket prices include service charge]. For tickets: [mytickets.northeastern.edu](http://mytickets.northeastern.edu), 617-373-4700; further information: [www.friendsofjcmc.org](http://www.friendsofjcmc.org), 617-671-0789.*

*fJCMC would like to offer a 10% discount off the regular admission price of \$30 (service charge included) to all JazzBoston members. The code to use is JazzBoston, and is in effect from now through October 28th. Visit [www.friendsofjcmc.org](http://www.friendsofjcmc.org) for more information.*

## FiLmprov's 20th Anniversary with Kate Matson



The FiLmprov ensemble

*Filmmaker Kate Matson's FiLmprov ensemble is celebrating its 20th Anniversary season with a concert at Arts at the Armory. I was able to talk to Kate Matson about the ensemble, and the upcoming show on October 13th.*

**GM: FiLmprov combines film, animation, poetry and improvisation together in one performance. Can you describe how you came up with the idea to blend these art forms, and how FiLmprov came to be?**

KM: My film work began after I visited a friend's animation class and thought of a way to combine my theater background with my day gig in a graphic design studio. I purchased a Super 8 camera and leapt right into experimenting with frame by frame animation. I have the great fortune of being closely associated with musician, bandleader, composer Mark Harvey. We started viewing my films while playing recordings chosen by him of his small and large group ensembles. We found an immediate connection of my images with

his sounds. We did a trial run at the Old South Church Coffeehouse with Mark on piano. The producer of that series, Richard Chrisman, will be joining us October 13th with his poetry at the Armory show. We presented our inaugural performance as FiLmprov July of 1996 at the now defunct Book Cellar Café in Cambridge.

**GM: As the filmmaker, you create your own visual improvisation originating on Super 8 film by animating objects. What is this process with the film like, and how do you decide what each film should be about?**

KM: I begin by choosing objects that attract me as animation actors – it's a theatre to me! The objects might have appeal because of a particular visual quality and sometimes have a personal (my oboist father's reeds) or social significance (condoms in "Moths" premiered to benefit AIDS Walk/Boston). Each film is different in the amount of preplanning and experimental discovery. I, like the musical improvisers, allow room in the process for the development of stories, connections, and movement patterns during filming and later in editing.

**GM: What guidance do you give Mark Harvey, the musical director for the project, to ensure that the music adheres to your vision of the film but is also spontaneous enough for improvisation? Does Mark Harvey compose any material or have certain timing notes for the musicians?**

KM: Mark and I view the films together. If I have a certain feel or sound in mind I share that with him. He develops a general scheme of orchestration and a rough cue sheet for the musicians. On the day of a show, the musicians view the film(s), then play in spontaneous composition at the performance. Each show is obviously unique, exciting, and in-the-moment!

**GM: Many of the musicians performing at FiLmprov's 20th anniversary concert are Boston-based. How did you go about finding musicians for the project and does the instrumentation choice depend on each film?**

KM: Most of the musicians play or have played in Mark's Aardvark Jazz Orchestra. Most are active in the Boston area and on the international scene as well, like Boston favorite Bill Lowe, trombonist extraordinaire. A few of the poets like Peter Bloom are also musicians. Peter and Phil Scarff cover a wide range of woodwinds and played on the very first FiLmprov show. We have a wonderful range of instruments from piccolo to tuba. Our most recent member, Rob Bethel on cello, brings yet another dimension to the array of instrumentation we have to choose from for an ever growing array of my film work.

Unless we have a specific choice for a certain film sequence, the musicians know which of their instruments to pick up to create our sound. Dan Zupan may play his clarinet, or choose to go deeper with his bari sax or bass clarinet. Experimentation is encouraged so we may see/hear Harry Wellott choose his hands in favor of sticks on his drums; John Funkhouser may play the inside of the piano or on the outside of his bass. And FiLmprov music director Mark Harvey could do anything with his single trumpet!

**GM: How has FiLmprov grown and evolved throughout the 20 years of its existence? What have been the most memorable experiences of this group?**

KM: A spirit of exploration is what has kept us excited to continue our collaboration. As individual artists and as a group we have all grown in creativity. I am inspired by the musicians' comments and performances to design programs that permit closer connections between the images and the sounds, so that each successive show becomes a more cohesive totality.

Each experience with the group is memorable! In 2007 FiLmprov was selected to be part of the First Annual Cambridge Science Festival. Our program, A Moment in Chaos, included audience participation as FiLmprovisers vocalizing that chaos. Working with the theme of duets with pairs of superimposed films and pairs of musicians, the vocalist Lisa Thorsen, pianist Tim Ray, Mark, and John Funkhouser performed another exciting

journey in music and film.

**GM: Can you describe what the audience should expect from the 20th anniversary concert at Somerville Arts at the Armory Café? What do you hope the audience will take away from the event?**

KM: Expect a montage of film clips from the archive, a new film with improvised score, and a sensual poem married to swirling on-screen linen. One will hear the unexpected with music of the moment by the FiLmprov ensemble for October 13th. We hope the audience will join us in the spirit of exploration, celebration, and fun as part of this singular visual, aural experience. I hear the café menu is worth checking out too!

**GM: Do you have any more thoughts or comments you would like to share?**

KM: I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to share with the JazzBoston community the FiLmprov vision. I also want to thank all the FiLmprovisers over the years for giving me such pleasure every time I project my film work and hear these most talented musicians compose a score in real time as the film rolls! And one more shout out to those who have watched the progression of our project of learning and ever-evolving experiment in the union of film, musical improvisation, and beyond...!

*Free admission. 7:30 PM, Thursday, October 13, Center for Arts at the Armory, 191 Highland Avenue, Somerville. [Click here](#) for more information.*



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## Artist Spotlight: Jaki Byard



Jaki Byard

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February 11, 1999) was born in Worcester, Massachusetts to a musical family. He began playing the piano at the age of six, inspired by such artists as Benny Goodman and Fats Waller, and soon took up several other instruments including saxophone, trombone and trumpet.

Byard started playing professionally at the age of sixteen and soon was drafted into the army, where he continued with piano lessons and also studied the classical works of Stravinsky and Chopin. After leaving the army Byard learned music through discussions, library materials, and music school syllabuses.

While staying in the Boston-area, Byard performed solo in various clubs, as well as in bands alongside such artists as violinist Ray Perry, saxophonists Earl Bostic and Sam Rivers; he also arranged music as a member of trumpeter Maynard Ferguson's band. After moving to New York in the 1960s, Byard frequently performed with bassist Charles Mingus and was on such important albums as *Mingus Mingus Mingus Mingus*. Similarly, Byard was also a sideman on numerous Eric Dolphy, Booker Ervin, Roland Kirk and Sam Rivers albums.

As a leader, Byard recorded albums for the Prestige label, and received much critical acclaim for such albums as *Here's Jaki* (1961), *Out Front* (1961), *Hi-Fly* (1962), *Freedom Together* (1966), *Sunshine of My Soul* (1967), and *Jaki Byard with Strings!* (1968). He also led two big bands and often recruited players from his own students. His style of jazz piano was humorously lifted from numerous influences including; Art Tatum, Fats Waller, Thelonious Monk, and Cecil Taylor. Byard's improvisations were articulated with a clear, bright sound and his harmonies blended modern dissonances with cool blues and boogie woogie bass lines.

Byard was an important jazz educator renowned for his knowledge of the history of jazz piano as well as his experimentation with different styles. He is known for his contribution in establishing the jazz studies program at New England Conservatory, and was a longtime teacher there. Byard also taught at Hartt School of Music, the Manhattan School of Music, the New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music and lectured at Harvard University. His students include pianists Fred Hersch and Jason Moran, both of whom described him as an eccentric, yet critical teacher.