



# THE JAZZ GALLERY ALL-STARS

CELEBRATING 25+ YEARS OF CREATIVE MUSIC

**ALTO SAXOPHONE** Miguel Zenón

**SAXOPHONE** Melissa Aldana

**GUITAR** Charles Altura

**PIANO** Gerald Clayton

**BASS** Matt Brewer

**DRUMS** Kendrick Scott

**SPECIAL GUEST VOCALIST** Renee Neufville

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FRIDAY, **FEBRUARY 4** @ 8 PM

Annenberg Center, Zellerbach Theatre

There will be no intermission.

## PROGRAM NOTES

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Since its founding in 1995 by Roy Hargrove, Dale Fitzgerald and Lezlie Harrison, New York City's The Jazz Gallery has been a key institution in the city's jazz and creative music scene. Known as "the most imaginatively booked jazz club in New York" (*The New York Times*), the Gallery has welcomed and nurtured several generations of musicians from around the world, including many who have gone on to critical acclaim as Grammy® Award nominees and winners, MacArthur Fellows, Thelonious Monk Competition winners and finalists, Critics' Poll winners, and headliners at major international festivals.

The Jazz Gallery had planned to celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2020 with a special ensemble featuring many of the leading creative voices in jazz—all of whom cut their teeth on their stage. The pandemic has postponed the celebration in 2020 but The Jazz Gallery has survived and thrived through the lockdown and they are extending the festivities!

The original incarnation of The Jazz Gallery All-Stars celebrated the Gallery's 15th anniversary, performing at New York's Symphony Space as part of the 2010 JVC Jazz Festival; the line-up included vocalist Claudia Acuna, trumpeters Roy Hargrove and Ambrose Akinmusire, saxophonist Miguel Zenón, pianist Gerald Clayton, guitarist Lage Lund, bassist Ben Williams, percussionist Pedro Martinez and drummer Kendrick Scott. Performing to critical and popular acclaim at that time, the ensemble now reconvenes with a new line-up to tour the United States and Europe, representing the best that The Jazz Gallery has to offer and raising awareness for the organization and its mission.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

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### **Miguel Zenon** (Alto Saxophone)

Multiple Grammy® Award nominee and Guggenheim and MacArthur Fellow Miguel Zenón represents a select group of musicians who have masterfully balanced and blended the often contradictory poles of innovation and tradition. Widely considered as one of the most groundbreaking and influential saxophonists of his generation, he has also developed a unique voice as a composer and as a conceptualist, concentrating his efforts on perfecting a fine mix between Latin American folkloric music and jazz. Zenón has been featured in publications such as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Boston Globe* and *The Chicago Tribune*. In addition, he topped both the Jazz Artist of the Year and Alto Saxophonist categories on the 2014 Jazz Times Critics' Poll and was selected as the Alto Saxophonist of the Year by the Jazz Journalist Association in 2015, 2018, 2019 and 2020 (when he was also recognized as Arranger of the Year). As a composer, he has been commissioned by SFJAZZ, NYO Jazz, the New York State Council for the Arts, Chamber Music America, Logan Center for The Arts, the Hyde Park Jazz Festival, the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, MIT, Jazz Reach, Peak Performances, PRISM Quartet and by many of his peers.

### **Melissa Aldana** (Saxophone)

On her first jazz quartet Visions, award-winning saxophonist Melissa Aldana connects her work to the legacy of Latina artists who have come before her, creating a pathway for her own expression. Inspired by the life and works of Frida Kahlo, 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.

Aldana was born in Santiago, Chile. She began playing the saxophone when she was six, under the influence and tuition of her father Marcos Aldana, also a professional saxophonist. Aldana began with alto,

influenced by artists such as Charlie Parker, Cannonball Adderley and Michael Brecker. However, upon first hearing the music of Sonny Rollins, she switched to tenor; the first tenor saxophone she used was a Selmer Mark VI that had belonged to her grandfather.

She started performing in Santiago jazz clubs in her early teens. She was invited by pianist Danilo Pérez to play at the Panama Jazz Festival and went on to attend Berklee College of Music in Boston, where her tutors included Joe Lovano, George Garzone, Frank Tiberi, Greg Osby, Hal Crook, Bill Pierce and Ralph Peterson. Aldana graduated from Berklee in 2009, relocating to New York City to study under George Coleman. She recorded her first album, *Free Fall*, released on Greg Osby's Inner Circle Music imprint in 2010. Her live shows in this period included performances at the Blue Note Jazz Club and the Monterey Jazz Festival, and her second album, *Second Cycle*, was released in 2012. In 2013, she was the first female musician and the first South American musician to win the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Saxophone Competition, in which her father had been a semi-finalist in 1991. Reporting her win, *The Washington Post* described Aldana as representing "a new sense of possibility and direction in jazz".

### **Charles Altura** (Guitar)

Called a "blazingly precise young guitarist" by *The New York Times*, Charles Altura has put the international jazz world on notice with his unique blend of effortless lyricism and rich, atmospheric sound. Altura is as comfortable hanging with Chick Corea's fusion pyrotechnics as he is with Ambrose Akinmusire's reflective post-bop. He is a consistent face among many groups and has collaborated with Justin Brown, Terence Blanchard, Stanley Clarke, Tigran Hamasyan and Linda May Han Oh, among others. Altura holds BA in anthropology from Stanford University.

### **Gerald Clayton** (Piano)

Clayton is a six-time Grammy® Award-nominated pianist/composer and recent Blue Note Artist who began formal studies at Los Angeles County High School for the Arts. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in piano performance at USC's Thornton School of Music under the instruction of Billy Childs, following a year of intensive study with NEA Jazz Master Kenny Barron at The Manhattan School of Music. In 2006, Clayton won second place in the Monk Institute of Jazz Piano Competition. Inclusive sensibilities have allowed Clayton to collaborate with such distinctive artists as Diana Krall, Roy Hargrove, Dianne Reeves, Terence Blanchard, John Scofield, Terri Lyne Carrington, Peter Bernstein, Ambrose Akinmusire, Gretchen Parlato, Ben Wendel, the Clayton Brothers Quintet and legendary band leader Charles Lloyd. He currently serves as director of Next Generation Jazz Orchestra and has served as musical director for Monterey Jazz Festival On Tour. Over the years, Clayton's playing and original works have received Grammy® recognition for Best Improvised Jazz Solo, Best Jazz Instrumental Composition and Best Jazz Instrumental Album—a nomination he earned most recently for his debut release on Blue Note Records, *Happening: Live at the Village Vanguard*.

### **Matt Brewer** (Bass)

Brewer is one of the world's premier bassists. He was born April 20, 1983, in Oklahoma City but spent most of his youth in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Born into a musical family, Brewer was surrounded by music from an early age, both his father and grandfather being jazz musicians, and his mother an avid music lover and radio DJ. He started playing drums at age three, learning rudiments on a small practice pad, but didn't take music seriously until the age of ten, when he found the bass during a summer program at the Interlochen Center for the Arts.

He began studying classical bass from two world renowned bass instructors, Winston Budrow and Lawrence Hurst, while learning about jazz from his father. Brewer started gigging professionally at age 12 around the Albuquerque area and was soon winning awards from the top university jazz festivals, twice winning the festival's highest award which had never before been given to a middle school student. He continued his studies with the superb principal bassist of the New Mexico Symphony, Jean-Luc Matton.

He then attended high school at the Interlochen Arts Academy. During his junior and senior years, Brewer was selected from applicants across the country to participate in the Grammy® Band, performing on the 2000 awards telecast in a group that was the first ever to perform on the show without being nominated for a Grammy® Award. After graduating the Interlochen Arts Academy, Brewer attended the inaugural class of The Juilliard Jazz Program and studied with bassists Rodney Whitaker and Ben Wolfe.

After spending two years at Juilliard, he decided to leave school to make time for his busy touring schedule. Since then, he has worked with artists such as Greg Osby, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Lee Konitz, David Sanchez, Terence Blanchard, Aaron Parks, Jeff "Tain" Watts and many others. He is featured on dozens of recordings, including *Channel Three* by Greg Osby and *Avatar* by Gonzalo Rubalcaba. Brewer has also led bands in New York, performing at venues such as the Jazz Gallery, Fat Cat and the Tribeca Performing Arts Center. His band was also featured at the New Mexico International Jazz Festival. He is an adjunct faculty member at The New School, has been a guest artist/teacher at the Banff Center, and has taught lessons and masterclasses across the globe.

### **Kendrick Scott** (Drums)

Kendrick Scott was born in Houston, Texas and grew up in a family of musicians. By age eight, he had taken up the drums and he later attended Houston's renowned High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, a school which has produced an impressive array of musical talent including Scott's label mates Jason Moran and Robert Glasper, as well pop star Beyoncé and many others. While still attending HSPVA, Scott won several *DownBeat* Magazine student awards, as well as the Clifford Brown/Stan Getz Award from the International Association of Jazz Educators. He was later awarded a scholarship to attend Berklee College of Music, where he majored in music education. Scott has toured with Herbie Hancock, Charles Lloyd, The Crusaders, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Kurt Elling and Terence Blanchard, also appearing on several of the trumpeter's Blue Note albums including *Flow* (2005), *A Tale of God's Will* (2007) and *Magnetic* (2013). Scott has released three albums as a bandleader including two previous albums with his band Kendrick Scott Oracle: *The Source* (2007) and *Conviction* (2013). Scott is a member of the Blue Note Records 75th Anniversary all-star band that includes Ambrose Akinmusire, Robert Glasper, Derrick Hodge, Lionel Loueke and Marcus Strickland. His Blue Note debut, *We Are The Drum*, was released in 2015 and sophomore album, *A Wall Becomes A Bridge*, in 2019.

### **Renee Neufville** (Vocals)

Renee Neufville was one-half of Zhané. The duo's sweet and easy grooves, released on the Motown label, were a significant ingredient of commercial R&B radio during the '90s; "Hey Mr. DJ," "Groove Thang," "Sending My Love," and "Request Line" were all top ten R&B hits. Upon Zhané's split, Neufville became a valued collaborator with the likes of Next, Will Downing and Heather Headley all benefiting from her input. More prominently, she became a recording and touring member of Roy Hargrove's RH Factor project, as heard on the Verve releases *Hard Groove* (2003), *Strength* (2004) and *Distractions* (2006). In 2015, following several years of additional collaborations, Neufville released her debut solo single, "Watching Me." The uplifting midtempo song recalled her late-'70s/early-'80s-inspired work with Zhané. Upon the passing of Roy Hargrove, who was her musical collaborator and mentor for over 15 years, Neufville co-wrote an inspirational ballad dedicated to Hargrove entitled "Something to Believe," with saxophonist Justin Robinson. The song was later recorded and released by Willie Jones III.