



# JOEL ROSS

## GOOD VIBES

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**Vibraphone** Joel Ross  
**Alto Saxophone** Immanuel Wilkins  
**Piano** Jeremy Corren  
**Bass** Kanoa Mendenhall  
**Drums** Jeremy Dutton

### PROGRAM

*There will not be an intermission.*

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**Thursday, November 21 @ 7:30 PM**

Prince Theatre

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

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### **Joel Ross** (Vibraphone)

"I never had a doubt that I was going to do music," says Joel Ross, the most thrilling new vibraphonist in America. "My whole life it was just about finding a way to do it." In the past few years, keeping up with all of those ways has, for aficionados, turned into a virtuosic practice unto itself. The Chicago-born, Brooklyn-based player and composer has a way of being everywhere interesting at once: from deeply innovative albums (Makaya McCraven's *Universal Beings*, Walter Smith III & Matthew Stevens' *In Common*) to reliably revolutionary combos (Marquis Hill's *Blacktet*, Peter Evans' *Being & Becoming*) to the buzzing debut of Blue Note's 2018 breakout star James Francies (*Flight*). Even with his own bands, which includes quartets and a large ensemble dedicated to works of and in-the-style-of Ornette Coleman and the Keith Jarrett's American Quartet, Ross is basically a living blur of mallets, talents and ideas. But, 2019 is his year to be the star as he joins the Blue Notes Records roster and adds his name to an illustrious jazz vibraphone legacy on the label that extends from Milt Jackson and Bobby Hutcherson to Stefon Harrison.

Ross grew up in a harmonious home with three older sisters and police officer parents in a quiet South Side neighborhood. By three, he and his twin had spent enough time beating on things around the house that it was deemed wisest to buy them separate toddler-sized drum sets. Before long, they were taking turns sitting in at church, where dad was choir director at one point. They joined the school band as soon as they could, at age 10, and since Joel was the younger twin, he was consigned to xylophone while his brother hit skins. They auditioned for the multi-school All City concert and jazz bands as well.

"To be fair my brother was the better drummer," Ross admits. "We both made the cut, and since I already played mallets they said 'Why don't you try vibraphone?' I was like 'I don't know what a vibraphone is. I don't want to do this.'" But he did, and found it the most natural way to express himself. He practiced and played constantly through numerous opportunities from the Jazz Institute of Chicago, and later became one of the first students at the city's first public arts high school, Chicago High School for the Arts. Through ChiArts' partnership with the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, Ross got to meet kindred spirits at other high schools around the country, jam with Herbie Hancock (his class of 2013 keynote speaker), and learn from special guest Gerald Clayton, a gateway to the beguiling music of Akinmusire, in particular the trumpeter's own Blue Note debut *When the Heart Emerges Glistening*, which Ross didn't immediately understand, so, naturally he became keenly devoted to unpacking every note.

Still, he'd never had a dedicated vibraphone teacher. Enter Stefon Harris, who, after meeting Ross at a festival, invited him to try out for his Brubeck Institute Quintet at University of the Pacific in Nor Cal. Ross won it, and for two intense years worked to tear down and rebuild his approach to the instrument. "Stefon completely revamped my technique," says Ross. "We were also learning his [now-famous] ear-training method, applying emotions to chords and hearing harmony in new ways. I figured out how I wanted to sound." Ross soon transferred to the New School and formed his band Good Vibes, featuring favorite players whom he met at camps, contests, and gigs along the way.

### **Immanuel Wilkins** (Alto Saxophone)

Wilkins is an American saxophonist, composer, arranger and band leader. While growing up in the Philadelphia area, he played in his church and programs dedicated to teaching jazz music such as the Clef Club of Jazz and Performing Arts. Wilkins has had the opportunity to play in Japan, Europe, South America, The United Arab Emirates and the United States, working and/or recording with Jason Moran, the Count Basie Orchestra, Delfeayo Marsalis, Aaron Parks, Hubert Laws, Gretchen Parlato, Lalah Hathaway, Solange Knowles, Bob Dylan and Wynton Marsalis. He currently attends the Juilliard School, where he studied with saxophonists Bruce Williams and the late Joe Temperley. Having emerged in the scene at a young age around various masters, he continues to pursue his goals of being a force in music and society today. His mission is to create a sound that has a profound spiritual and emotional impact and to become a great leader in the lineage of jazz musicians

throughout history. Through studying the human pathos of the music and the culture of jazz, he aspires to bring people together through the commonality of love and belief in this music.

### **Jeremy Corren** (Piano)

Corren began studying serious jazz piano and musical composition at the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts in 2009. In 2013, he was named a Presidential Scholar in the Arts, a Silver Award winner in the National Foundation for the Advancement of the Arts 'YoungArts' program. Corren is a five-time winner in the *DownBeat* Student Music Awards and a three-time performer at the Monterey Jazz Festival. He has also performed at the Vail Jazz Festival under the direction of Grammy® Award-winner John Clayton. In 2011, he served as a musical ambassador in the Thelonious Monk Institute Peer-to-Peer Education Program, mentoring inner city music students in Denver, Colorado.

### **Kanoa Mendenhall** (Bass)

Mendenhall is a bassist, cellist, composer and radio DJ currently residing in NYC. Born in Yokohama to a Japanese mother and American father, Mendenhall was raised in Monterey, California and grew up listening to jazz, enka, classical and the music of Brazil. She started playing the cello at age 10 after being introduced to Oscar Pettiford's music by her father, a jazz pianist. At the age of 12, Mendenhall began playing the upright bass, and by age 13, she was regularly performing in the Monterey and San Francisco Bay areas.

Now 21, Mendenhall lives in NYC, where she studies East Asian Languages and Cultures at Columbia University. Her area of focus is on Japanese traditional arts, and she is currently studying the koto and shō through the school's world music program. Mendenhall also has a regular jazz rotation on the university's acclaimed radio station, WKCR-FM.

Mendenhall has worked on the faculty of Jazz Camp West and Stanford Jazz Workshop for the past three years. She has performed at venues throughout the United States and Japan, such as the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Davies Symphony Hall, Dizzy's Club Coca Cola, Akasaka B Flat, the Jazz Gallery and the Monterey Jazz Festival. She has performed with musicians such as Cecil McBee, Bruce Forman, Allison Miller, Ron Carter, Antonio Hart, Scott Robinson and Roy McCurdy, and has recorded with Tom Pierson, Lew Soloff and Pheeroan akLaff. She studied cello with Margie Dally, and bass with John Shifflett, Rufus Reid, Ben Wolfe and Ugonna Okegwo.

### **Jeremy Dutton** (Drums)

Born and raised in Houston, Texas, drummer Jeremy Dutton is poised to become the next major voice on his instrument and is already being lauded as a rising star in music. Coming from the tutelage of Craig Green and drummer Sebastian Whittaker, Dutton is the continuation of a lineage of fantastic and surprising drummers from Houston. Having attended the nation's premier arts high school, HSPVA (a school that has housed an impressive amount of talent), Dutton is making waves in the New York and global music scene. A recent graduate of The New School University, Dutton is considered one of the most dynamic and exciting musicians today.

Dutton has performed with Ambrose Akinmusire, Gerald Clayton, Sachal Vasandani, Taylor Eigsti, Camila Meza, Jacky Terrasson, Joel Ross, Mike Moreno, Charles Altura, James Francies, Linda Oh, Benito Gonzalez, Keyon Harold, Ben Williams, Matt Stevens, Andrew Hayward, Philip Dizack, Matt Penman, Stefon Harris, Bobby Watson, Alan Hampton, Dayna Stephens and many more.

As a resident of New York City, Dutton's dynamic talent has been featured in many media outlets such as AT&T's *The Bridge* and *The New York Times*. Jeremy Dutton endorses Vic Firth Sticks.