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Feel the soulful sounds and let the music play! @EnsembleArtsPhilly (Facebook/Instagram) is thrilled to unveil the 2025-2026 Jazz Season lineup! Dive into an ocean of rhythms and unique performances, showcasing the best in jazz with @samarajoysings, @rhiannongiddens, and more! 🎷 📱 For more info, visit www.ensembleartsp Philly.org.

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ENSEMBLE ARTS PHILLY ANNOUNCES 2025-2026 JAZZ SERIES

SPECTACULAR LINEUP INCLUDES
GRAMMY® AWARD-WINNING
SAMARA JOY, RHIANNON GIDDENS,
JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER WITH WYNTON MARSALIS,
AND MORE!

PACKAGES ON SALE TODAY!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (Philadelphia, PA, April 15, 2025) – This Jazz Appreciation Month, Ensemble Arts Philly announces its jam-packed 2025-2026 Jazz Season, showcasing a vibrant and diverse lineup of new and emerging talents, as well as veteran performers. The lineup brings fresh energy and innovative perspectives to the stage, offering audiences an opportunity to experience an array of performances that appeal to both longtime jazz fans and newbies alike – all season long.

The season kicks off on October 11, 2025, starting with GRAMMY-nominated internet sensation **Nate Smith**. On November 11, 2025, Philly favorite and five-time GRAMMY Award-winning vocalist **Samara Joy** returns, followed by banjo master and 18-time GRAMMY-winning artist Béla Fleck appearing as part of the **Bela Fleck & the Flecktones** holiday reunion tour on December 12, 2025. The new year begins with GRAMMY-nominated pianist **Alfredo Rodriguez** with GRAMMY-nominated drummer **Pedrito Martínez** on January 22, 2026, and GRAMMY Award-winning singer **Kurt Elling** on February 27, 2026. Critically acclaimed pianist **Emmet Cohen** performs on March 20, 2026; rising star and GRAMMY Award-winning bassist

Endea Owens on March 28, 2026; and on April 21, 2026, Philadelphia's own bassist and winner of nine GRAMMYs **Christian McBride** joins friend, collaborator and seven-time GRAMMY winner **Edgar Meyer**, followed by the standout vocalist and two-time GRAMMY-winning **Rhiannon Giddens** on May 5, 2026. The season concludes with a favorite of jazz enthusiasts, the legendary **Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra featuring Wynton Marsalis**, acclaimed trumpeter and winner of nine GRAMMY Awards, on May 26, 2026.

“For nearly 170 years, we have presented innovative artistic experiences along Broad Street, reinventing ourselves and evolving for new audiences and genres – just like the journey of jazz, from its birth in New Orleans and heritage in Black American music, to its many forms in modern-day music,” said Ryan Fleur, Interim President and CEO. “With this year’s lineup, celebrated artists blend the past and present, bringing works to three of our stages that highlight distinct styles, varied voices, and instruments.”

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Tickets

Save 10% by purchasing a 2-show package.

Tickets can be purchased by calling 215-893-1999 or online at www.ensembleartshilly.org. In-person ticket sales can be conducted daily from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. at the Academy of Music Box Office, located at 240 S. Broad Street. See www.ensembleartshilly.org for more information.

Single tickets will go on sale to the public on Tuesday, May 13, at 10:00 a.m.

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A complete list of the 2025-2026 Jazz Series programming can be found below:

NATE SMITH

Perelman Theater

Saturday, October 11, 2025 | 7:30 p.m.

Internet sensation, drummer, composer, and producer Nate Smith has won millions of fans for his thoughtful, engaging compositions and performances that fuse jazz, R&B, hip-hop, and pop in irresistible ways. His visceral, instinctive, and deep-rooted style of drumming has led to three GRAMMY nominations and work with esteemed artists including Pat Metheny, Dave Holland, Brittany Howard, Van Hunt, The Fearless Flyers, Norah Jones, and Somi.

If you've only experienced this phenomenal artist via video, get your tickets for this performance and upgrade your appreciation to a whole new level!

AN EVENING WITH SAMARA JOY

Miller Theater

Tuesday, November 11, 2025 | 7:00 p.m.

In a remarkably short time, this extraordinary young vocalist has leapt from newcomer to bona fide star status, conquering the GRAMMY Awards three years in a row, with a perfect score of

five wins for five nominations. Among her other conquests are the critics, who lavish praise upon Joy's creamy voice, pitch-perfect tone, and engaging, intuitive way with lyrics – hailing her as a reincarnation of Sarah Vaughn, Ella Fitzgerald, and Billie Holliday, with a special something of her own.

She comes by those talents naturally, coming from a deeply musical family: her grandparents, who helmed the Philadelphia gospel group the Savettes, and her father, the musician and songwriter Antonio McLendon, who has produced, composed, and arranged his own astounding original work.

Perhaps Joy's greatest conquest, for the future of the great American art form of jazz, is her multi-generational, cross-genre fan base. A hit with old-school jazz fans, she's also converting a new generation to the art form; *NPR* calls her a "classic jazz singer from a new generation."

A word to the wise: Samara Joy's Ensemble Arts Philly performances have sold out two years in a row. Act now to avoid missing out!

BÉLA FLECK & THE FLECKTONES: *JINGLE ALL THE WAY*

Featuring Victor Wooten, Roy "Futureman" Wooten & Howard Levy with special guests Jeff Coffin & Alash

Miller Theater

Friday, December 12, 2025 | 7:30 p.m.

Banjoist Béla Fleck, harmonica and keyboardist Howard Levy, bassist Victor Wooten, and percussionist/drumitarist Roy "Future Man" Wooten have been creating some of the most forward-thinking music throughout their remarkable careers. Drawing from a vast array of genres – from classical and jazz to bluegrass, African music, electric blues, and Eastern European folk – their sound is impossible to define. It's a unique musical language forged by the union of four brilliant minds, each contributing something distinct to the whole. Simply put, it is The Flecktones: music that only emerges when these four musicians come together.

This winter Béla Fleck & The Flecktones return to bring you *Jingle All the Way*, a reunion tour featuring the group's greatest hits along with reinvented, jazz-infused holiday classics from their GRAMMY-winning album by the same name. Performing this music together for the first time in over 15 years, the band reunites for a unique and unforgettable evening as founding members Fleck, Wooten, Wooten & Levy take the stage alongside former Flecktones bandmate and saxophonist Jeff Coffin and Tuvan throat singing ensemble, Alash – both of whom appeared on the album.

Hitting #1 on the Top Contemporary Jazz chart and earning the 2009 GRAMMY for Best Pop Instrumental Album, *Jingle All the Way* is a playful and innovative take on often cliché holiday tunes – whether it's "The Twelve Days of Christmas" performed in 12 different keys and 12 different time signatures over the course of the tune, or a medley of five Christmas tunes being played together, simultaneously. "Christmas music is inside everyone's DNA," says Fleck. "*Jingle All the Way* is a doorway for listeners to understand the Flecktones' music."

ALFREDO RODRIGUEZ & PEDRITO MARTÍNEZ

Perelman Theater

Thursday, January 22, 2026 | 7:30 p.m.

GRAMMY-nominated artists Alfredo Rodriguez and Pedrito Martínez leave audiences completely mesmerized by their fearless and virtuosic playing. A classical pianist by training, Rodriguez was discovered by his mentor Quincy Jones at the Montreux Jazz Festival while Martínez honed his craft on the streets of Havana, learning the deeply-rooted percussion and vocal style of Afro-Cuban folkloric and religious music.

Their unique backgrounds create an extraordinary synergy. Rodriguez trained in Havana's rigorous classical conservatories. His artistry is as much shaped by Bach and Stravinsky as it is by Afro-Cuban rhythms and jazz. Martínez's musical training came directly from the streets of the Cayo Hueso neighborhood of Old Havana. Over the years, he has collaborated with icons such as Sting, Paul Simon, and Wynton Marsalis. Together these two master musicians take listeners on a unique and exciting journey through a variety of moods and influences, from Cuban classics to collaborative original compositions and unexpected favorites.

KURT ELLING: *WILDFLOWERS*

Perelman Theater

Friday, February 27, 2026 | 7:30 p.m.

GRAMMY Award winner Kurt Elling is without question today's preeminent male jazz vocalist, renowned worldwide for his unparalleled virtuosity and flair for trailblazing artistic exploration. From his stunning reinvention of timeless standards to his own captivating original songcraft, Elling has fused his dazzling talents across a monopoly of musical approaches, emblazoning each with his signature imagination, insight, and emotional intelligence.

With a one-of-a-kind brand of contemporary beat lyricism and vocalese-writing ingenuity, the Chicago-based musician has extended the parameters of vocal jazz and enlarged its vocabulary. Over a twenty-five-year career of touring and recording, Elling has won three Prix du Jazz Vocal Awards (France), two German Echo Awards, two Dutch Edison Awards, and has been nominated for a GRAMMY Award sixteen times. He has had a 14-year run atop the *DownBeat* Critics and Readers polls and has won twelve Jazz Journalists Awards for "Male Vocalist of the Year."

EMMET COHEN: *MILES AND COLTRANE AT 100*

Miller Theater

Friday, March 20, 2026 | 7:30 p.m.

Multifaceted American jazz pianist and composer, Emmet Cohen is one of his generation's pivotal figures in music and the related arts. Leader of the Emmet Cohen Trio and creator of the Masters Legacy Series, Cohen is an internationally acclaimed jazz artist, a dedicated educator, the winner of the 2019 American Pianists Awards, and a finalist in the 2011 Thelonious Monk International Piano Competition.

Cohen headlines regularly at Jazz at Lincoln Center, the Village Vanguard, and Birdland and has appeared at the Newport Jazz Festival, Monterey Jazz Festival, and North Sea Jazz Festival, among other renowned festivals. His artistry has taken him to venues and festivals in over 30 countries. Cohen's entrepreneurial energies led to his developing "Live From Emmet's

Place," a live-streamed "Harlem rent party" that unites a worldwide audience via tens of millions of internet views.

Besides leading the "Emmet Cohen Trio," Cohen has appeared regularly with Ron Carter, Benny Golson, Jimmy Cobb, George Coleman, Jimmy Heath, Tootie Heath, Houston Person, Kurt Elling, Billy Hart, and Brian Lynch, among others.

ENDEA OWENS & THE COOKOUT

Perelman Theater

Saturday, March 28, 2026 | 7:30 p.m.

Known as one of jazz's most vibrant and versatile artists, Endea Owens is a Detroit-raised recording artist, bassist, and composer. She has been mentored by jazz icons like Marcus Belgrave, Rodney Whitaker, and Ron Carter. She has toured and performed with Wynton Marsalis, Jennifer Holliday, Diana Ross, Rhonda Ross, Solange, Jon Batiste, Jazzmeia Horn, Dee Dee Bridgewater, and Cyrus Chestnut, to name a few.

In 2018, Owens graduated from The Juilliard School and joined *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* as a member of the house band, *Stay Human*. Since then, she has won an Emmy, GRAMMY Award, and a George Foster Peabody Award. Owens' work has appeared on Jon Batiste's GRAMMY Award-winning album *We Are*, Oscar-nominated film *Judas and the Black Messiah*, and H.E.R.'s widely acclaimed Super Bowl LV performance.

In 2022, Owens composed an original piece about the life of Ida B. Wells entitled "Ida's Crusade" for the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and was also performed by the NYO Carnegie Hall Orchestra. She has written for brands such as Pyer Moss and Glossier. Owens has also premiered a newly commissioned work with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra as the 2023 MAC Music Innovator with the organization. In addition to her work with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Owens is the curator for the National Arts Club and also a fellow for "Jazz Is: Now!" with the National Jazz Museum in Harlem, where she presents original compositions, curates series, and headlines performances. Owens' debut album *Feel Good Music* was released in 2023.

CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE & EDGAR MEYER

Miller Theater

Tuesday, April 21, 2026 | 7:00 p.m.

The heart and soul of jazz, the bass sets the beat and raises your pulse. In this must-hear concert, two of the world's foremost bassists take the stage for a performance like no other. Spanning genres from jazz to classical, folk, and bluegrass, this dynamic duo blends their unmatched talents in an intimate evening of musical brilliance.

Philadelphia native Christian McBride, a nine-time GRAMMY-winning bassist, composer, and 2023 Downbeat Producer of the Year, has set the bar for virtuosity. Bringing his unmatched skill and passion to the stage, he joins the phenomenally gifted Edgar Meyer, hailed as the most remarkable virtuoso on his instrument by *The New Yorker* – whether he's playing jazz, classical or adding thrills to high-flying collaborations with such great artists as Yo-Yo Ma, Bela Fleck, Chris Thile, Zakir Hussain, and Joshua Bell, among others.

Expect an evening of stunning jazz standards, original compositions, and breathtaking surprises. This is a rare chance to witness these two virtuosos – friends and collaborators – perform together in an unforgettable concert.

RHIANNON GIDDENS

Miller Theater

Tuesday, May 5, 2026 | 7:30 p.m.

Rhiannon Giddens has made a singular, iconic career out of stretching her brand of folk music, with its miles-deep historical roots and contemporary sensibilities, into just about every field imaginable. A two-time GRAMMY Award-winning singer and instrumentalist, MacArthur "Genius" grant recipient, Pulitzer Prize winner, and composer of opera, ballet, and film, Giddens has centered her work around the mission of uplifting people whose contributions to American musical history have previously been overlooked and erased, and advocating for a more accurate understanding of the country's musical origins through art.

As *Pitchfork* once said, "few artists are so fearless and so ravenous in their exploration" – a journey that has led to *NPR* naming her one of its 25 Most Influential Women Musicians of the 21st Century and to *American Songwriter* calling her "one of the most important musical minds currently walking the planet."

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER ORCHESTRA WITH WYNTON MARSALIS

Marian Anderson Hall

Tuesday, May 26, 2026 | 7:00 p.m.

The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis is a world-renowned ensemble celebrated for its mastery of the jazz genre and its commitment to preserving and promoting the rich tradition of American jazz. Led by trumpeter and composer Wynton Marsalis, a leading figure in contemporary jazz, the orchestra comprises some of the finest jazz musicians from around the globe. With a repertoire that spans classic standards to innovative compositions, the ensemble showcases the diversity and dynamism of jazz music while paying homage to its historical roots. Renowned for their impeccable musicianship, vibrant performances, and deep respect for the legacy of jazz, the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis continues to captivate audiences worldwide and serve as ambassadors for the enduring legacy of this quintessentially American art form.

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ABOUT ENSEMBLE ARTS PHILLY

For more information about ENSEMBLE ARTS PHILLY, visit www.ensembleartsp Philly.org.

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