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12th annual Scranton Jazz Festival features world class musicians

FEATURES

12th annual event features world class musicians



By Matt Mattei - [Click for more information on Matt](#)



Keystone College Jazz Institute Students Combo perform at a previous Scranton Jazz Festival. A week-long jazz program introduces students to the genre and prepares them for performances at the festival.



Blues/soul singer Alexis P. Suter and her band perform at 8:30 p.m. Aug. 5 at the main stage at the Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel during the annual Scranton Jazz Festival.



Jazz legend and national endowment for the arts master, Jimmy Heath, joins The Scranton Jazz Festival Big Band at this year's Scranton Jazz Festival.



The Jost Project performs original jazz arrangements of '60s and '70s classic rock songs.

SCRANTON — In its 12th year, the Scranton Jazz Festival rivals some of the more high profile jazz festivals in the country according to artistic director Marko Marcinko.

The annual festival takes place Aug. 5 through 7 at the Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel and throughout venues in downtown Scranton. The music lineup features nationally and internationally known artists, showcased on the main hotel stage and, local and regional artists along a Scranton “jazz walk.”

Among artists to perform at the Lackawanna Station covered “train shed” main stage are jazz-rock veterans Blood, Sweat and Tears with “American Idol” alumnus Bo Bice on lead vocals, blues/soul outfit the Alexis P. Suter Band, jazz/funk fusion act The Tizer Trio and jazz ambassadors The Jost Project.

“We present a super high quality festival that’s as good as anywhere else in the world,” Marcinko said. “We produce the same artists in Scranton that you’d see at the Newport, Montreal or New Orleans jazz festivals.

Performing along the “jazz walk” are The Organic Vibe Trio, Indigo Moon Brass Band, La Cuccina and Rogue Chimp among others at venues like Adezzo, Ale Mary’s, The Bog and Posh.

“The fest, this year, has grown so much that the people from First Friday partnered up with the jazz festival to offer more venues and attractions with live music,” Marcinko said.

Between national and local acts, the festival showcases diversity within the genre.

“It’s a big umbrella, jazz,” Marcinko said. “There are a lot of different styles and genres, and we try to represent them very properly over three days.”

The Jost Project plays at 7:30 p.m. Aug. 6 on the main stage. Comprised of multi-instrumentalist, singer and arranger Paul Jost, vibraphonist and arranger Tony Miceli, bassist Kevin MacConnell and drummer Doug Hirlinger, the Jost Project performs original jazz arrangements of ’60s and ’70s classic rock tunes.

Their 2013 album, “Can’t Find My Way Home,” includes interpretations of Simon & Garfunkel’s “Bridge Over Troubled Water,” Led Zeppelin’s “Kashmir” and Paul McCartney’s “Maybe I’m Amazed” in addition to the Blind Faith title track.

Jost said he and fellow arranger Miceli take standards of their time and put them in a jazz format the same way the previous generation took songs from the American songbook and Broadway.

“Those became part of the jazz literature,” Jost said. “We’re not doing anything different than was done before, just with songs that were popular in our time.”

The ubiquity of the American classic rock era has brought The Jost Project to a wider audience.

“It really hits with the baby boomers, people of our age,” Jost said. “What we’re really trying to do, and it’s been an adventure for us, is to bring younger people to jazz.”

Jost said playing festivals provides an opportunity to perform and be a fan of fellow musicians. On the performance end, Jost likes to put out an intimate feel, even with larger crowds.

“Festivals naturally have more people, but I always personally like to make it feel like its a club no matter where we are,” Jost said. “I want to connect with people.”

Jost said he is grateful to Marcinko, his friend and former collaborator, who he called an extraordinary musician, for inviting him to the Scranton Jazz Festival. “I know he put a lot of hard work and love into this,” Jost said.

If you go:

What: 12th annual Scranton Jazz Festival

Where: Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel, 700 Lackawanna Ave., Scranton

When: Aug. 5 through 7

Additional information: Tickets for cost \$10 for Aug. 5 and \$25 for Aug. 6. Aug. 5 and 6 tickets are general admission only. Ticket for Aug. 7 cost \$25 for general admission and \$35 for gold seating. Tickets are available by phone at 570-575-5282 or online at scrantonjazzfestival.org.