FREE 24th ANNUAL BALCONES HEIGHTS JAZZ FESTIVAL

Celebrating a diverse line-up of headlining artists all new to the Balcones Heights Jazz Festival!

What:  For over two decades, the Balcones Heights Jazz Festival has been a summer highlight captivating jazz aficionados from across Texas with a free stellar line-up of renowned jazz stars from across the country. This year’s performance features a diverse line-up of headlining and special opening acts, new to the Jazz Festival. These performers include: Los Angeles-based trumpeter Rick Braun; UK’s Smooth Jazz keyboardist Oli Silk; Grammy nominated guitarist Paul Jackson, Jr.; D.C. saxophonist Phillip “Doc” Martin; world jazz duo guitarists Strunz & Farah; national recording artist and saxophonist Chase Huna; and contemporary guitarist Steve Oliver.

Locally singing sensation (and the only returning artist) MELINA will join Texas guitarist Ruben V on stage at the Wonderland of the Americas.

For four consecutive Friday evenings, the festival’s laid back and family-friendly atmosphere will welcome an estimated 4,000 jazz fans, surpassing the city’s entire population of 3,000. Die-hard fans have been known to stake out their claim, with lawn chairs and blankets in tow, days in advance of the event at favorite spots along the edge of the sparkling reflecting pool and fountains of the city's main hub Wonderland of the Americas.

David Munoz, host of “Sunday Morning Jazz” on Q101.9 is emcee of the festival. He’s hosted the Jazz Festival for the past 23 years and has hosted the “Sunday Morning Jazz Show” for more than 27 years.

“This year, we are proud to celebrate a diverse line-up of headlining and opening act performances new to the Balcones Heights Jazz Festival,” said Balcones Heights Director of Economic Development & Public Affairs Lorenzo Nastasi. “We are also thrilled to bring back local favorite MELINA to perform with local guitarist Ruben V on stage. She dazzled the audience with her debut performance during last year’s Jazz Festival.”

Where:  Wonderland of the Americas Amphitheater, 4522 Fredericksburg Rd.

When:  July 7, July 14, July 21, and July 28 (rain or shine)
7:30 pm – 10:00 pm (opening act at 7:30 p.m. / headline at 9 p.m.)

More:  Free General Admission. Outdoor seating on the amphitheatre lawn is free on a first-come, first-served basis. Food and beverages are available for purchase at a variety of booths, as well as the adjacent food court inside Wonderland of the Americas.

Live Stream:  A live stream of the opening acts will be available for download.

Visit www.bhtx.gov, call 210-732-0055 or follow us on Facebook Balcones Heights Jazz Festival, Twitter @BalconesJazz or via Instagram @BalconesJazz.
2017 Line Up
July 7, 7:30 p.m. – OPENING ACT – Ruben V featuring MELINA

Ruben V (Guitarist) is an accomplished artist, having released eight solo CDs and 14 group albums. With performing more than 120 shows a year, he is a guitar player, songwriter and producer. He’s built a huge following of Ruben V Band fans – all while keeping a sense of humor and a genuine Texas charm. But first and foremost, there is the music. It’s a fresh, smooth blend of blues, Latin, soul, and rock. It’s an ambitious mix of the music that moves him and in his skillful hands, becomes a truly energizing and enjoyable experience. The result is stylistically different from his peers – it’s alluring, soulful, fun and mature. “The power of music is amazing. I’ve known my whole life that this is what I’ve wanted to do and I’ve had confirmations at every step that this is what I’m supposed to do.” As he says, “it’s everything I love about music.”

MELINA (National Recording Artist) Local artist Melina is making waves on the smooth jazz charts with her first album “Wishing On Love,” produced by guitarist Paul Brown. In the mystical, starry cover art of Melina’s breakthrough full length recording album we see a silhouette of someone sitting on the hood of a sedan, gazing into the night sky with anticipation, perhaps in search of fresh and transformational magic. Helping guide her lifelong dreams and evolving musical vision is producer Brown, a two-time Grammy winner with over 60 #1 smooth jazz radio hits who has brought his Midas touch in the studio over the years to R&B and jazz vocal greats like Luther Vandross, Al Jarreau, George Benson and Jonathan Butler.

July 7, 9:00 p.m. – HEADLINER – Rick Braun (Trumpeter)
Chart-topping trumpeter, composer and producer Rick Braun is known for his impeccable technical chops, melodic wizardry and keen compositional prowess. The consummate Los Angeles-based musician has been thrilling audiences for decades. Braun has made a mark staying true to his own musical voice and eclectic influences that have allowed him to collaborate across genres with some of the biggest names in music including Rod Stewart, Tom Petty, Sade, Natalie Cole and REO Speedwagon. Having clenched over 20 #1 Smooth Jazz hits, Braun has collaborated with all of the brightest stars in contemporary jazz from Kirk Whalum, Norman Brown and Peter White, to Dave Koz, Boney James and Brian Culbertson. Earlier this year, Shanachie Entertainment released Braun’s 17th recording as a leader, “Around The Horn.” The dynamic trumpeter’s label debut is an adventurous mix of originals as well as exhilarating reinventions of hits by Coldplay, Alicia Keys and Charlie Puth and Selena Gomez. Shanachie VP of A&R, Danny Weiss states, “Rick’s tone, chops and phrasing link him to the jazz giants of the past. He can hold his own in any setting. Yet he communicates to a vast audience far beyond the jazz aficionado. His warmth, wit and musical spirit make him a great communicator - a hit maker!”

July 14, 7:30 p.m. – OPENING ACT – Oli Silk (Keyboardist)
Oli Silk is the UK’s smooth jazz ambassador! Silk began writing and recording music as part of jazz funk duo ‘Sugar and Silk’ in the late 1990’s. The pair released two albums to much European acclaim and this grabbed the attention of Trippin’N’Rhythm Records’ CEO Les Cutmore who signed Silk on a multi-album deal which first gave us his debut solo CD ‘So Many Ways’ in 2006. Fast forward a decade, and Silk now has five CD’s to his name, all under the Trippin’N’Rhythm label. The most recent album, released in July 2016, and first single, ‘Where I Left Off’ features one of Silk’s musical mentors and pals Peter White on guitar. Silk has had many chart-topping radio singles over the years, most notably one of the biggest hits of 2009 ‘Chill Or Be Chilled’, and also the 2014 chart-topper ‘At Your Service’. Silk remains one of the most dynamic and energetic keyboardists in the genre, and his unique mix of jazzy instrumentals, funky vocal cuts and down-right dirty ol’ school keytar and vocoder, give his live shows that real wow factor and have garnered him a loyal and dedicated US fan-base!
July 14, 9:00 p.m. – HEADLINER – Paul Jackson, Jr. (Guitarist)
Born and based in Los Angeles and a member of numerous local bands from his early teens, including a band composed of himself and his siblings, Paul Jackson, Jr. very quickly established his skill and sensitivity and was soon called upon to do many R&B and pop sessions, as well as jazz dates. Jackson began his own solo recording career in the late 1980’s. However, it was not until a decade later that his musical and technical skills made him a favorite among live audiences. He is now recognized as one of the most recorded guitarists in the world. Jackson, Jr. is a successful Grammy nominated artist with seven previous albums and multiple television appearances, and an individual regarded as a highly respected and accomplished musician throughout the entertainment industry. Jackson, Jr.’s new album is "Stories from Stompin' Wille".

July 21, 7:30 p.m. – OPENING ACT – Phillip “Doc” Martin (Saxophonist)
Most artists who put a “Doc” in their name do it out of cleverness, for marketing reasons, or as a crafty way to express their mastery of their instrument or vibe. Since the release of his 2003 debut “Saxappeal”, Phillip “Doc” Martin has all that down pat, wowing audiences everywhere from Blues Alley in D.C. to the St. Lucia Jazz Festival, and earning inspiring amounts of airplay. His latest Innervision Records release “Pocket Love” further establishes this powerful expertise via his dynamic flow and tight, funky old school driven alto vibe. While many independent artists with cool, successful “day jobs” prefer to avoid references to them when they talk about their music, Martin is the complete opposite, fully embracing the inspirational factor of being a top notch practitioner in two very different professions. Beyond his ever-expanding musical fan base, hundreds of patients in the Washington D.C. area know him as “Dr. Martin,” a board certified dentist in group practice there.

July 21, 9:00 p.m. – HEADLINER – Strunz & Farah – (Guitarists)
Performing together since 1979, Strunz & Farah are the innovators of an entirely new expression for the acoustic guitar. Well ahead of their time they created an original style that now is widely influential. Originally from Costa Rica and Iran respectively, Jorge Strunz and Ardeshir Farah have brought the musical influences of their native lands into their highly virtuosic, rhythmic, and improvisation-rich original instrumental compositions, inspiring fans and many guitarists worldwide. Their meeting in 1979 in Los Angeles, where they are still based, marked the first time that Latin American and Middle Eastern music, along with other important elements, came together on the guitar. They remain the undisputed masters of the style they created. S&F’s music is perhaps best described as original multi-cultural acoustic instrumental improvisational guitar music, or world jazz. Their music emphasizes and luxuriates in sensuous melody and rhythm with a colorful and passionate expression, and is saturated with their cultural roots. Afro-Caribbean, Latin American folk, flamenco and Middle Eastern music all converge in an essentially jazz context, especially in the sense of improvisation, and is a unique contribution to the diversity of contemporary guitar music.

July 28, 7:30 p.m. – OPENING ACT – Chase Huna (Saxophonist)
Saxophonist Chase Huna is a national recording artist who has performed with artists such as Slim Man, Craig Chestnut, and Tateng Katindig. Huna’s debut album "On the Chase" was recorded while Chase was still in his teens. It features top billboard artist and producer Steve Oliver. "Pure" is the first radio single with a great groove and memorable hooks. "Into the Sun" features sonic audio soundscapes taking you on a journey. The album features multi instrumentalist/vocalist Steve Oliver, bassist Eddie Reddick, keyboardist Tateng Kinidig, drummer Eric Valentine and also features a song written around a drum groove that famed drummer Ricky Lawson played, "Time Keeper" (which was Ricky's nickname). Huna was nominated for the 3rd year in a row for the CV Music Awards. This year, he was nominated in two different categories, “Best Jazz Instrumental” and "Best Instrumental Performance Artist".

July 28, 9:00 p.m. – HEADLINER – Steve Oliver (Guitarist)
After 15 years of #1 billboard jazz instrumental hits, the multi-talented singer, songwriter and guitarist goes full on adult contemporary with “Pictures and Frames,” his first ever all-vocal album, perfectly capturing the soul-searching music of our times and the universal sense of wonder human beings have been contemplating since the beginning of time. “Pictures and Frames” is currently shipping to pop contemporary stations nationwide. It's Oliver's first official venture into the pop format after nine albums and over 15 years of dominance on the Billboard Contemporary Jazz chart. Oliver has always sprinkled a few pop/R&B vocals into his instrumental albums -- but "Why" and many of the other tracks on the album mark a deeper emergences as an observational, socially conscious songwriter.

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