

CHARLIE PARKER JAZZ FESTIVAL
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HONORING THE LEGACY OF JAZZ ICON
CHARLIE PARKER
WITH 3 DAYS OF FREE LIVE JAZZ
IN NEW YORK CITY PARKS

FRIDAY, AUGUST 24, 2018
Marcus Garvey Park, Harlem

CHARLES TOLLIVER'S 50 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF
"PAPER MAN" FEATURING GARY BARTZ,
JACK DEJOHNETTE & BUSTER WILLIAMS
+ SURPRISE GUEST • BRIANNA THOMAS

SATURDAY, AUGUST 25, 2018
Marcus Garvey Park, Harlem

MONTY ALEXANDER - HARLEM KINGSTON EXPRESS
• CATHERINE RUSSELL •
KEYDON HARROLD • MATTHEW WHITAKER TRIO

SUNDAY, AUGUST 26, 2018
Tompkins Square Park, East Village

GARY BARTZ QUARTET • THE BAD PLUS
• AMINA CLAUDINE MYERS •
UNHEARD: ADAM O'FARRILL, IMMANUEL WILKINS, JOEL ROSS
COMMISSIONED IN ASSOCIATION WITH
THE JOYCE AND GEORGE WEIN FOUNDATION
AND THE JAZZ GALLERY

CityParks
SUMMER STAGE 2018

PRESENTED BY
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With the passing (Jun. 9th) of Lorraine Gordon, proprietor of the Village Vanguard for almost 30 years, the hallowed venue now has yet one more spirit inhabiting the room, listening to the jazz. Her presence was felt Independence Day Eve (Jul. 3rd) when pianist **Barry Harris** began a week residency with bassist Calvin Hill and drummer Leroy Williams. At 88, he, like Gordon, witnessed the birth and growth of bebop. His early set of midtempo swingers and ballads drew on the history of standard song—besides the originals “To Duke with Love”, “Casbah” (a contrafact of “Out of Nowhere”) and his closing theme, “Nascimento”, his covers of George Shearing’s “She”, Billy Strayhorn’s “Lotus Blossom”, Thelonious Monk’s “Pannonica” and the standards “I Want to Be Happy”, “Somebody Loves Me”, “Star Eyes” and blues “Goin’ to Chicago” brought renewed luster to these often-polished melodic/harmonic gems. At a time of life when just getting to the piano stool without a cane is daunting, Harris’ wit (musical and otherwise) remains remarkably fresh: he repeatedly regaled the room with clever repartée and melodic surprises over the well-worn chord changes. The crowd sang “karaoke” on an improvised tune based on the third, seventh and fifth scale tones and knew exactly when to clap (once then twice, alternating) on the ‘band intros’ music. The heart of the set was “Sweet Lorraine”, Harris’ eulogy to Gordon with the ad hoc lyrics: “It’s not goodbye but so long, we will meet again.” —Tom Greenland



Barry Harris @ Village Vanguard

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The Museum of Modern Art has been presenting its Summergarden concert series in conjunction with Jazz at Lincoln Center for the past 17 years, music wafting under the petals of Isa Genzken’s *Rose II* or past the watchful gaze of Pablo Picasso’s *She-Goat*. The first concert of the 2018 edition (Jul. 15th) was especially fitting in these surroundings. Trumpeter **Michael Rodriguez’** quintet is eminently sculpted, a classic trumpet-tenor frontline with rhythm section, recalling moments of Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers or Miles Davis Quintet. The leader, who had turned 39 the day before, presented pieces by his brother, pianist Robert, and former teacher at University of Miami, pianist Ron Miller, alongside his own originals, including one commissioned especially for the evening. His band was an accomplished one: tenor saxophonist John Ellis, pianist Gary Versace, bassist Carlos Henriquez and drummer Obed Calvaire. As with the French Impressionists and their habit of painting *en plein air*, Rodriguez and company crafted long, fluttering pieces skirting hard- and postbop, with an emphasis on melody both in the pieces and what the members did with them during their solos, Versace especially memorable in a Billy Joel-like fashion (a high compliment). The commission, “Pathways”, spoke to the trumpeter’s musical lineage and, at 22 minutes, traversed planes of musical thought, mixing brain and heart, featuring music-box like piano and a hithertofore unknown romantic side to Ellis. —Andrey Henkin



Michael Rodriguez Quintet @ MoMA Summergarden

ADRIEN H. TELLMANN

In a city jam-packed with world-class jazz guitarists **Jack Wilkins** is one of the classiest. The day after Independence Day, while a few neighborhood kids were setting off their last rockets and sparklers, Wilkins was quietly setting off a few fireworks of his own at Jazz at Kitano. Accompanied by bassist Essiet Essiet and drummer Sylvia Cuenca, he began the early set with “Without a Song”, which, like Jim Hall’s work with Sonny Rollins, was relaxed, intelligent, brimming with ideas, but with the added firepower of Wilkins’ signature double-time runs and fluent chord melodies, both heard to great effect on the following song as well, Sergio Mihanovich’s waltz “Sometime Ago”. For “Arthur’s Theme” (from the 1981 movie), Wilkins brought guitarist Jeff Barone onstage, who, for the rest of the set, played the role of *enfant terrible* to Wilkins’ *éminence grise*. Where Wilkins was smooth, contained, cool under pressure, his protégé turned up the volume and had at it, his brash, blunt style often bringing an appreciative smile to Wilkins’ face. They continued with Tony Bennett’s pop hit “Who Can I Turn To?” (both trading phrases with Cuenca towards the end), James Taylor’s “Blossom” (Barone switching to acoustic guitar for a more folk-rock feel), Duke Ellington’s “Prelude to a Kiss” (Wilkins’ beautiful coda a highlight of the set) and Spiral Staircase’s late ‘60s hit “More Today than Yesterday”, a bouncy romp showcasing, among other things, Wilkins’ agile contrapuntal comping behind Barone. (TG)

Free improvisation is for sitting. Long, continuous sets, complex forms, peaks and valleys are all best appreciated from a comfy chair. But there are times, such as at Ibeam Brooklyn (Jul. 7th) when an irresistible urge to leap from said chair happens frequently. Why? Well, when listening to a quintet of visiting Catalan pianist **Agustí Fernández** with tuba player **Ben Stapp**, trumpeter **Nate Wooley**, guitarist **Joe Morris** and percussionist **Ben Hall**, it was to help in sound identification, i.e., who the hell just made that sound and how. All five members of this ad hoc ensemble are capable of moving far away from the expected timbres of their respective instrument with a panoply of extended techniques (Morris ‘cheating’ a bit with pedals at his aid). The group played two improvisations, one cresting 50 minutes, the other a freeish encore at 17 minutes. While the latter began strong as a percussion duet between Fernández, inside his piano with various blocks, and Hall, it lacked sonic and dynamic diversity, bubbling along with an electronic blandness. The first piece, however, was astonishing in its breadth: opportunities for unusual pairings like tuba and guitar; lava-like oozing of crescendos; fire at the zoo with elephantine bleating and frenzied whinnying; Wooley bringing the piece almost to silence towards the end with a Zen-like whistle; Stapp transforming his lumbering tuba in a box-car harmonica; Hall providing mystical drones. It all vaporized into quiet and your correspondent could finally rest his legs. (AH)