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For Immediate Release

Baby Grand Jazz Kicks Off 14th Season at Hartford Public Library

December 8, 2016 — The 14th Annual Baby Grand Jazz Series, sponsored by The Charles H. Kaman Charitable Foundation, opens Jan. 8 and runs through April 30. The free, hour-long concerts are held Sundays, 3 pm, in the Center for Contemporary Culture on the main floor of the Downtown Library at 500 Main St. The concerts are presented in partnership with the Hartford Jazz Society and WWUH 91.3 FM. The concerts will be held this year in the Center for Contemporary Culture in the Downtown Library, 500 Main St. (No concert on Easter Sunday, April 16.) The CCC has a seating capacity of 240. When the auditorium is full the doors will close. The CCC will open at 1 pm. HPL will livestream the concerts and post them for later viewing on its website, www.hplct.org.



The James Weidman Apertuistic Trio , Jan. 8

Pianist James Weidman was playing organ at age 14 in his father's jazz band in Youngstown, Ohio. He earned a degree in classical music from Youngstown State University, earning his keep behind the keyboard, heeding his father's advice: "Keep the time, stay out of the way, and tell a story." He has worked with Abbey Lincoln,

Cassandra Wilson, Kevin Mahogany, and Joe Lovano.

Weidman's trio includes Harvie S and drummer Steve Williams, who make up the Aperturistic Trio.

Sherry Winston Band, Jan. 15

Connecticut's Sherry Winston is a jazz flutist who has led her own jazz fusion band for almost 30 years. She has released several albums, performed with Stevie Wonder, played for two U.S. presidents, and been Director of Jazz Promotion at Columbia, Arista, GRP and Elektra Records.

The band includes: Nick Bariluk on keyboards and piano; Steve Clarke on bass.



Orice Jenkins, Jan. 22.

Orice Jenkins is a Hartford native. He's been performing since he was a teen and recently released his first album, *Soar*, which includes his interpretations of Stevie Wonder's *Golden Lady*, the gospel favorite *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, and the jazz standard *Body & Soul*. His original compositions are "But It's Not Me," "My Heart," and "Anatolian Sunset."



Orice has studied voice with Shawn Monterio, Kevin Mahogany and Sheila Jordan. He is a student at the Hartt School of Music.

Orice Jenkins will sing, play piano and guitar with Nathan Davis on trombone and piano, Frank Brocklehurst on bass, and Jocelyn Pleasant on percussion.

Heshima and Ofrecimiento: Walking In the Footsteps of the Masters, Jan. 29

Heshima Moja is an internationally renowned bassist, vocalist, and composer who has



performed with some of the most important artists in modern music.

Heshima and his band combine Afro-Latin music styles to take audiences on a journey throughout the African diaspora.

Heshima has shared the stage and/or recorded with Avery Sharpe, William Cepeda, Patti Labelle, La India, James Carter, Guru, Quest Love (of the Roots), Jazz violinist John Blake, and Fred Ho.

The band includes: Haneef Nelson on trumpet and flugelhorn; Ron Smith on reeds; Damian Curtis on piano; David Allan Rivera on congas; and Kevin Sharpe on drums.

The Afro-Semitic Experience, Feb. 15

The Afro-Semitic Experience was co-founded by African-American jazz pianist Warren Byrd and Jewish-American jazz bassist David Chevan in 1998.

The group celebrates the musical and cultural heritage of the African and Jewish diasporas.

Their CDs include *Jazz Souls on Fire*, which pays tribute to some of the Afro-Semitic Experience's favorite composers, including Leon Thomas, Duke Ellington, Hank Mobley, and Sister Rosetta Tharpe.

The group includes David Chevan on bass on vocals, Warren Byrd on piano and vocals, Alvin Carter Jr. on drums, Abu Carter Sr. on percussion and vocals, Will Bartlett on saxophone and clarinet, Stacy Phillips on violin dobro and lap steel, and Saskia Laroo on trumpet.



Nita Zarif, Feb. 12

Nita Zarif is one of Hartford's best-loved vocalists. She was mentored by the legendary Betty Carter and Connecticut's own "Kitty" Catherine Riley. Nita counts Angela Bofil, Dionne Warwick and Hartford's own Nikki Mathis among her influences.



Nita was born and raised in Hartford, attended Weaver High School and graduated from Trinity College with a degree in Performance. She pursued her career in Colorado and returned to Hartford in the 1990s. She performs at major venues, festivals and private parties.

She will perform with Warren Byrd on piano, Doug Long on bass, Saskia Laroo on trumpet, and Alvin Carter Jr. on drums.

Jimmy MacBride, Feb.19

Jimmy MacBride is a drummer/composer who played in West Hartford's elite Hall High Jazz Band, now lives in New York City. He has performed with Herbie Hancock, Terence Blanchard, Wynton Marsalis, Kenny Barron, Nir Felder, and Adam Rogers. Jimmy is a recent graduate of The Juilliard School, where he studied privately with Carl Allen, Billy



Drummond and Kenny Washington. He is a regular at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola, Smalls, The Jazz Gallery, and The Blue Note. He performed with Jimmy Greene on the 2015 Hartford Jazz Society's popular Riverboat Cruise.

He toured Europe with trumpeter Terence Blanchard, Asia with Nir Felder, and Japan with pianist Frank LoCrasto. He has played at the Montreal and Newport jazz festivals. Jimmy MacBride will play drums with Miki Yamanaka on piano, and Phil Donkin on bass.

Greg Abate Jazz Quartet, Feb. 26

Greg Abate is a veteran jazz musician who plays saxophone and flute, composes and leads a band.

He's a Rhode Islander who graduated from the Berklee College of Music, played lead also sax in the Ray Charles Orchestra, and tenor sax in the Artie Shaw Orchestra conducted by Dick Johnson.

His most recent recording is Kindred Spirits:

Live at Chan's, with Phil Woods and the Tim Ray Trio.

Greg Abate will play saxophone with Matt DeChamplain on piano, Lou Bocciarelli on bass, and Ben Bilello on drums.





Atla & Matt DeChamplain: Tribute to Ella Fitzgerald, March 5

Atla and Matt DeChamplain met at the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts where they began their musical relationship, which blossomed into marriage and their careers.

They share a mutual love of jazz with Matt as pianist and Atla on

vocals.

Atla studied for a year with jazz vocalist Jon Hendricks at the University of Toledo, where she and Matt returned for master's work after they graduated from the Jackie McLean Institute of Jazz at the Hartt School of Music.

Atla and Matt are dedicated interpreters of the American Songbook.

They will be joined by Matt Dwonszyk on bass.

The Amanda Monaco Three, March 12

Pianist Noah Baerman and guitarist Amanda Monaco met in high school at the Educational Center for the Arts in New Haven. They formed Playdate in 2008, releasing their debut CD on Positone Records.

The group is now performing at the Amanda Monaco Three.

Monaco has released five albums and works with the quartet Deathblow, organ trio Kiss the Leslie, and chamber jazz trio MO-Fi-Co. She is an assistant professor at Berklee College of Music.

Baerman has released nine CDs as a bandleader, teaches at Wesleyan, and is the founder of the Noah Baerman Resonance Ensemble.

Bassist Henry Lugo will join Baerman and Monaco.



The O-Tones, March 19

The O-Tones trio features Mary Witt on vocals, Wayne Roberts on bass and Chris Haynes on piano.

Mary Witt, founder and leader of The O-Tones Swing and Motown band, sings jazz standards, blues, R&B, and Motown tunes. She grew up singing harmonies with her sister and formed The O-Tones in the early 1990s to play at weddings, parties and dances. Chris Haynes, music professor at Springfield College, plays piano and accordion and has produced Mary's two latest albums, *Dance with Me* and *Groove Duets*.

He graduated from Berklee College of Music and received his Master's from Ithica College. Wayne Roberts studied at New England Conservatory of Music and received a Master's from Juilliard School. He is Visiting Lecturer at Westfield State University and runs *Ellingtonia* Youth and Adult Jazz Workshops at Community Music School of Springfield.



Eugene Uman's Convergence Project, March 26

Composer and pianist Eugene Uman put together the Convergence Project to perform his jazz compositions. Uman spent several years in Colombia, South America, and that experience informs the music he composes for the Convergence Project. His work references Colombian rhythms, bebop, rock, gospel and funk. The band includes Michael Zsoldos, saxophones; Jeff Galindo, trombone; Uman, piano; David Picchi, bass (electric and acoustic), and Jon Fisher on drums.



The Earl MacDonald/Felipe Salles Quartet, April 2

Earl MacDonald is a composer, arranger, pianist and educator specializing in jazz. Originally from Winnipeg, Manitoba, the former musical director for Maynard Ferguson is now the Director of Jazz Studies at the University of Connecticut. MacDonald earned a bachelor of music degree in jazz performance at McGill University and a master of music degree at Rutgers, where he apprenticed with Kenny Barron.

Earl MacDonald performs on piano with Felipe Salles on tenor saxophone, Ben Bilello on drums, and Henry Lugo on string bass.



Nicki Mathis: Afrikan American Jazz, April 9

Nicki Mathis is probably best known in Hartford for *The Many Colors of a Woman* shows, which began in 1987. Mathis runs the organization and its concerts to promote women and their contributions to jazz. Nicki started singing in Hartford when she stepped up to sing with Emery Austin Smith's band in the old Mad Murphy's bar downtown. She formed the Afrikan American Jazz Resurgence Band and made her debut album in 1986.

Nicki Mathis will sing with Mary DiPaola Davis on piano, Jim Daggs on bass, and Jocelyn Pleasant on drums.

Theresa Wright & The Distinguished Gentlemen, April 23

Theresa Wright is a jazz vocalist who also performs R&B, blues, and gospel. Wright, the daughter of a preacher, was honored named Best Gospel Vocalist in Connecticut for 2016 by CT Now.

Jazz is her first love, and she has twice performed at the Hartford Jazz Festival. She has worked as a background vocalist for Jeff Pitchell, J Giles, Phil Lesh, Michael Allman and Charles Neville. She has also worked with Jaimoe, a founding member of the Allman Brothers Band.

Wright's band includes Brad Rickert on piano and Steve Clarke on bass.





The Alvin Carter Project: Confluence of Influence IV, April 30

Alvin Benjamin Carter, Jr. has been the drummer with the Afro-Semitic Experience, Tony Harrington and Touch and People of Goodwill. He currently leads LEGACY: The Keepers of Tradition and The Alvin Carter Project.

Known as “Babafemi” to his friends, his diverse music experience includes jazz, R&B, blues, Latin jazz, gospel, and world beat. He is also a lead drummer for

Sankofa Kuumba Cultural Arts Consortium, where he plays west Afrikan and Afro-Caribbean drums. Alvin is also an in-demand stage and production manager, at events such as The Litchfield Jazz Festival, The Wesleyan Folk Music Festival, The Sigourney Square Festival, Family Day at Keney Park, and The Greater Hartford Festival of Jazz. The musicians are: Alvin Carter Jr. on drums; George Blackman on tenor saxophone; Morris Trent on bass; and Warren Byrd on piano.