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The Flynn Announces the 2022 Burlington Discover Jazz Festival Lineup, Including George Clinton and Parliament Funkadelic Playing a Free Show on the Waterfront

BURLINGTON, VT — The **2022 Burlington Discover Jazz Festival**—produced by the Flynn in association with Burlington City Arts, and presented by New England Federal Credit Union—takes place **June 3-12**, with events all over Downtown Burlington and beyond. The Flynn is thrilled to welcome **Michael Mwenso**, leader of the captivating band Mwenso & The Shakes and co-founder of Electric Root, and his creative partner **Jono Gasparro** as the curators for this year's festival. Collaborating with the Flynn and many community partners—including Colin Henkel, who helped book local artists—Michael and Jono have created an exciting lineup with a clear thematic vision.

“The heart of the festival is creating a holistic experience of immersing oneself into Black music,” said festival curator Michael Mwenso. “Music is a potent force for healing and connecting with spaces, artists, and the community in new and unexpected ways. This year's Burlington Discover Jazz Festival takes audiences through a journey of experiencing many styles of music as well as the deep ancestral lineages that shaped them, as told by a phenomenal lineup of local and visiting artists. Throughout the festival, we're shining a light on forebears and forgotten heroes—great artistic visionaries of the past through the lens of the present.”

View the full Burlington Discover Jazz Festival lineup at flynnvt.org.

The festival begins with an uplifting, tone-setting performance on the Flynn Main Stage. On **June 3 at 8 pm, *The Sound of (Black) Music*** reinterprets and reframes the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical through an Afrofuturistic lens. Conceived and created by Michael Mwenso and Jono Gasparro, this show brings together a powerful group of musicians and vocalists—including Michael Mwenso, Brianna Thomas, Chareene Wade, Vuyo Sotashe, and many more—to pay tribute to the rich history of Black music with rapturous, electric performances and a communal spirit.

The final day of the festival brings the festivities back to the Flynn Main Stage with a performance by saxophonist **Joshua Redman**, presenting his new work *3x3*, which draws from the songbooks of Duke Ellington, Thelonious Monk, and Wayne Shorter, presented in a tight, dynamic sax/bass/drum arrangement.

Tickets for Joshua Redman and *The Sound of (Black) Music* are on sale now at flynnvt.org.

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"This year's Burlington Discover Jazz Festival is really special because we have put together a lineup that cuts across generations to convey a musical lineage," said Jay Wahl, executive director of the Flynn. "We are honoring the legacy of the festival's 39 years, and the legends who have shaped this beloved annual celebration, but we are also looking to the future. Michael and Jono's amazing stewardship of the festival this year exemplifies the next generation of artistic leaders engaging with their music's past and injecting their personalities, styles, and perspectives to create something new and thrilling."

This week that is devoted to exploring ancestral roots and celebrating Black music is anchored by performances by three octogenarian legends. On June 8, Grammy-winning Blues Hall of Famer **Bobby Rush** plays two intimate shows in Flynn Space. On back-to-back nights, June 7-8, master saxophonist **Gary Bartz**—sideman to Max Roach and bandmate of Art Blakey, McCoy Tyner, and Miles Davis—brings his signature fiery fusion to the after-hours club Big Joe's. And on Friday, June 10, the mothership lands in Burlington when **George Clinton and Parliament Funkadelic** play a free show on the waterfront stage.

In the spirit of honoring and communing with musical forebears, each day of the festival begins and ends with experiences that acknowledge the artists who played key roles in the history and narrative of Black music. The days start with **Reflection/Meditation sessions** featuring solo acoustic performances. This is immediately followed by **Ancestral Communal Listening gatherings**, where Michael Mwenso and guests guide audiences through different musical styles of Black roots music to discover and celebrate significant, formative artists in these spaces.

When night falls, the party is just getting started. This year's festival features an abundance of nightlife activities that extend into the early morning hours. For the 10 days, the **Vermont Comedy Club** transforms into an after-hours jazz lounge called **Big Joe's**, in honor of renowned Vermont jazz musician, and key figure in the early days of the Burlington Discover Jazz Festival, saxophonist "Big Joe" Burrell. These evening gigs bring each day full-circle, creating a gathering space for the local artist community to convene, socialize, and collaborate, and presenting freeform sets that summon jazz greats through their music. On June 5 there is a special performance at Big Joe's by **The Unknown Blues Band**, the storied local group that used to play at this location when it was a jazz hotspot in the '80s. Joe Burrell was a longtime player in the band, helping draw big crowds with his signature sax stylings.

The rest of the festival is stacked with local and touring performers across many venues and performance spaces. **Free shows are scheduled for Church Street Marketplace, City Hall Park, Radio Bean, Light Club Lamp Shop, Clemmons Family Farm, Starr Farm Park, Roosevelt Park, Leddy Park, the Amy E. Tarrant Gallery at the Flynn, the BCA Gallery, the Burlington waterfront, and more.** The whole city will be filled with jazz music for the duration, with additional pop-up

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performances, **school bands from across the region** performing in multiple locations, and special events at many other local establishments.

There are so many exciting shows worth highlighting at this year's festival. Brilliant alto saxophonist **Lakecia Benjamin**, bandleader of Lakecia Benjamin and Soul Squad, who is acclaimed for her signature fusion of jazz, hip-hop, soul, and dance-floor rhythms, plays the waterfront stage before George Clinton's headlining show on June 10. On June 4, **Charenee Wade**, one of the greatest jazz vocalists working today, anchors an extended afternoon of festivities at Starr Farm Park. The penultimate day of the festival, June 11, features a second day of waterfront performances, with a lineup that includes The Legendary Ingramettes, Treme Brass Band, and a climactic show by Mwenso & The Shakes. New Orleans' stalwart **Treme Brass Band** also leads a community procession on the last day of the festival. And on June 12, local favorite singer-songwriter **Myra Flynn** kicks off an exhilarating final day on the Church Street Marketplace stage in front of City Hall. A number of outstanding performers play in **Flynn Space** throughout the week as well, including **The Brianna Thomas Band, Pedrito Martinez, Chicken Fat Injection, Vuyo Sotashe & Chris Pattishall, Caylen Bryant, and Joe Farnsworth.**

View the full Burlington Discover Jazz Festival lineup and get tickets at flynnvt.org/Community/Burlington-Discover-Jazz-Festival.

Burlington Discover Jazz Festival is a program of **the Flynn**, produced in association with **Burlington City Arts**, and is **presented by New England Federal Credit Union**. Thank you to festival sponsors New England Federal Credit Union, the Waterwheel Foundation, NBC5, Lake Champlain Chocolates, Comcast, Farrell Distributing, Zero Gravity Craft Brewery, Dark Horse Wine, StaticWorx, New Vitality, Hall Communications, AARP, Luke Awtry Photography, Signarama, Seven Days, and the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing.

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