

Jazz at Lincoln Center Presents: *New Orleans* *Songbook*

Mar 25 / Cobb Great Hall

Luther S. Allison, *Lead Pianist*

Quiana Lynelle, *Vocalist*

Milton Suggs, *Vocalist*

Marcus Grant, *Drums*

Mariel Bildsten, *Trombone*

Brandon Woody, *Trumpet*

Liany Mateo, *Bass*

Patrick Hill, *Saxophone*

Program to be announced from stage.

The performance will run approximately 90 minutes, with no intermission.

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JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER PRESENTS

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER PRESENTS brings the soul of New Orleans and the spirit of Mardi Gras to this amazing event, celebrating the composers and inspired songs of the Cresecent City, the historic epicenter of jazz. From Jelly Roll Morton and Louis Armstrong, to Ellis Marsalis and James Black, New Orleans has long been an apex of innovation and inspiration. Led by pianist Luther S. Allison, and vocalists Quiana Lynelle and Milton Suggs, New Orleans Songbook immerses audiences in the captivating and timeless spirit of this vibrant city.

For over three decades, Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC) has been a leading advocate for jazz, culture, and arts education globally. Under the direction of Wynton Marsalis, Jazz at Lincoln Center has brought the art form of jazz from the heart of New York City to over 446 cities in more than 40 countries.

The JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER PRESENTS touring initiative provides an affordable opportunity to present great jazz programming, featuring up-and-coming musicians who have been identified as rising stars by JALC. The initiative also allows for expansion of the mission of JALC "to entertain, enrich, and expand a global community for jazz through performance, education, and advocacy."

Approximately 150,000 students participate in Jazz at Lincoln Center's education programs each year. "What is Jazz?" from the renowned education department at JALC is being offered in conjunction with the tour.

This tour appears by arrangement with IMG Artists and is represented by Toby Tumarkin.

www.IMGartists.com

www.jazz.org

Luther S. Allison, Music Director and Pianist

Hailing from Charlotte, North Carolina, Luther S. Allison is multi-instrumentalist specializing in both piano and drum set. In 2017, Allison earned his BM in Studio Music & Jazz from The University of Tennessee, and his MM in Jazz Studies from Michigan State University in 2019. Early on in his collegiate studies, Allison was recruited by trombonist Michael Dease to record on his 2016 release *Father Figure* with Posi-Tyone Records, becoming Allison's professional recording debut at 19 years old. Soon after, Allison went on to record as a sideman on several more albums with Posi-Tone Records including Diego Rivera's *Connections* (piano), Michael Dease's *Reaching Out* (piano), Dease's *Give It All You Got* (drums), Dease's *Never More Here* (piano) and Markus Howell's *Get Right* (drums). Allison is a Grammy Award winning pianist with Samara Jo on her 2023 release "Tight" and performed on the Grammy stage alongside Samara Joy the year prior.

Upon graduation, Allison moved to New York City where he quickly became a regular on the bandstand at some of the city's premiere jazz clubs including Dizzy's Smalls Jazz Club and Minton's. Allison has performed nationally and internationally alongside the likes of Rodney Whitaker, Jazzmeia Horn, The Baylor Project, Samara Joy, Gregory Tardy, Ulysses Owens Jr., and many more. In addition to teaching on faculty every year at the Brevard Jazz Institute summer camp in North Carolina, Allison has worked as a clinician in Mexico, China, Japan, Switzerland, St. Lucia, and Trinidad & Tobago. Outside of his work as a sideman, Allison band-leads his trio, sextet, and octet featuring original compositions and arrangements rooted in his influences from all forms of black American music. Additionally, Allison co-leads a project with dancer John Manzar.

Quiana Lynelle, Vocalist

Quiana Lynelle is a dynamic vocalist, music educator, and advocate whose artistry spans jazz, soul, gospel, and blues. Raised in Texas and deeply influenced by her musical roots in church and the rich cultural landscape from Texas to New Orleans, she developed a unique style that blends musical tradition with a contemporary edge. In 2017, Quiana gained national recognition by winning the Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition, propelling her career to new heights. Her debut album, *A Little Love*, released in 2019 on Concord Records, was met with critical acclaim, with DownBeat

Magazine praising her “velvety tone and expressive phrasing.” The album, produced by Grammy-winner Brian Michel Bacchus, showcases her five-octave range and her ability to reinterpret both originals and classics. Quiana has performed at prestigious venues such as The Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, and the Playboy Jazz Festival, sharing stages with legends like Job Batiste, Herbie Hancock, and Patti Austin. Her most recent project, *Pillow Talk*, reflects her growth as an artist, exploring themes of self-discovery, love, and reflection. A passionate educator, Quiana has over 20 years of experience, teaching at the Interlochen School for the Performing Arts and Loyola University, as well as mentoring young musicians through the Trombone Shorty Foundation. Her commitment to arts education and advocacy is evident in her work as Vice President of the Memphis Chapter of the Recording Academy, where she champions the rights of artists. Quiana Lynelle’s performances and teachings are a testament to her belief in the transformative power of music, leaving a lasting impact on audiences and students alike.

Milton Suggs, Vocalist

Milton Suggs’ voice and approach to music is a reflection not only of his direct lineage, but of the many great voices in Black American music and culture from the past century and beyond. Firmly rooted in the blues, Milton sports a rich baritone with the breadth and power reminiscent of singers like Jow Williams, is able to emote

with soulful intensity of singers like Donny Hathaway and achieve a velvet palette suggestive of Nat King Cole. Milton possesses a unique ability to evoke emotion with a masterful sense of phrasing and dynamics. A gifted composer, arranger, and lyricist, Milton's music is both honest and inventive, drawing inspiration from a number of influences while forging a singular identity. As a visionary artist, Suggs seeks to pave new roads within the vast traditions that were laid before him; for it is the spirit, struggles, triumphs, and stories from the many generations that preceded him that make up the foundation upon which his own artistry stands. Voted repeatedly a top 10 rising star male, vocalist in DownBeat Magazine's annual critic's poll, the recognition of Milton's talents have continued to grow throughout the years as a fixture in jazz, working with artists and bands such as the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, Orrin Evans Wycliffe Gordon, Ulysses Owens, and Marquis Hill among others. Milton has also been consistent with his own efforts as a recording artist, producing four albums to date and continually developing new projects with new ensembles. Born in Chicago, Illinois, a third-generation musician, Suggs recognized musica as a gift from a young age; it was later that he would accept it as a calling. While growing up in Atlanta, Georgia, though continually exposed to music of varying styles, it was with his church choir at the age of seven that Milton garnered his first experiences with singing and performance. While in elementary and middle school, he gravitated toward

the upright bass, the instrument of his father and namesake, and later played the alto saxophone and drums. However, it was not until after high school that he committed to the pursuit of music as his life's work. Returning to Chicago, he began studying piano with the legendary Willie Pickens, while also honing his craft as a vocalist and performer. In 2012, Milton moved to New York where he immediately took to performing throughout the city, soon branching out internationally as a performer and educator. Presently, Milton Suggs continues to blaze a trail as a vocalist, composer, and educator touring throughout the world as both a collaborator and leader, embracing each opportunity to explore new creative terrain, and further the legacy left by his predecessors.

Marcus Grant, Drums

Marcus R. Grant is a professional drummer, percussionist, musicologist, and educator from West Chester, Pennsylvania. He is currently a Brown University Ph. D candidate in Musicology & Ethnomusicology with a secondary certificate study in the Department of Africana Studies. Grant holds a bachelor's in jazz performance from Temple University, a Master's jazz performance, a Masters in musicology from the University of Miami (FL), and a Masters in musicology and ethnomusicology from Brown University. His research focuses on Black American protest music which includes hip-hop, gospel, and jazz studies. As a

performer, Grant has shared the stage with Shelly Berg, Victor Goines, Warren Wolf, Dave Leibman, Nestor Torres, Ben Wolfe, Nicki Parrott, among others.

Mariel Bildsten, Trombone

DownBeat Magazine calls New York City-based jazz trombonist Mariel Bildsten “irrepressibly spontaneous.” Mariel has earned global distinction through her performances with Jon Batiste, Roy Hargrove, Jennifer Hudson, Dee Dee Bridgewater, and the Mingus Big Band at venues such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Radio City Music Hall, London’s O2 Arena, the Newport Jazz Festival, and the Apollo Theater. Her lyrical and swinging style has thrilled audiences around the world. Mariel Bildsten’s band ranging from duo to septet, headlines jazz festivals, plays internationally, and performs regularly in New York City. Her records *Backbone* (2020) and *Steppin’ Out!* (2023) received rave reviews.

Brandon Woody, Trumpet

The New York Times featured artist Brandon Woody started his musical journey at the age of seven. Since then, Woody has gone on to become an international artist, performing with his band UPENDO, curating projects for major museums, film scoring, collaborating with international bands, and performing at major venue sand institutions around the globe. Woody uses music as a tool for healing, genuine connection, and celebrating community. He has performed at venues and festivals

such as Jazz at Lincoln Center, Wharton Center for Performing Arts, the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall, Riverside Church, The Shed, and many more. Brandon has played as a sideman with Paul Russell, Solange, Standing on the Corner, Klein, Lafayette Gilchrist, Jonathan Barber, Luther S. Allison, and more. Woody started his band, UPENDO in 2018 while he was in college at Brubeck Institute and Manhattan School of Music studying with Ambrose Akinmusire and Cecil Bridgwater. Since then, Woody has gone on to perform nationally with regular concerts across the east coast. In 2021, Woody was named a Bach/Conn Endorsed Artist and was named the Best Musician to Watch by the Baltimore Magazine in 2022. Woody works to share his knowledge and love for music with those who want to learn. In his spare time, Woody teaches private group lessons and masterclasses at institutions such as the Peabody Preparator, University of Maryland, the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Poly Technic Institute, Accent Pontiac, and public schools such as Cecil Elementary, A Philip Randolph High School, Temple X Schools, and Highlandtown Elementary #215.

Lainy Mateo, Bass

Named one of *DownBeat* Magazine's "25 For the Future," Lainy Mateo has traveled across the globe performing, touring, and teaching music. Influenced by a mix of hard-hitting straight-ahead swing, Free Avant Garde, and music with dee pocket groove. Mateo is the bassist for Arturo O'Farrill's *Legacies* album recorded on Blue

Note records. Mateo was also featured on the PBS television show *NEXT* at the Kennedy Center, as a featured artist introduced as Christian McBride's protégé. She has performed with musicians such as Regina Carter, Geoffrey Keezer, Matthew Whitaker, Carl Allen, Steve Wilson, Fay Victor, and Brandee Younger. She holds a jazz degree from the esteemed Michigan State University, and a master's degree from the Berklee Global Jazz Institute. In 2023, she won the esteemed Next Jazz Legacy Award and grant through New Music U.S.A., led by Terri Lyne Carrington. You can find her playing across NYC's most notable venues such as Dizzy's, Smalls, The Jazz Gallery, The Django, and Mezzrow. In 2024, she was selected for the National Jazz Museum in Harlem's Curatorial Fellowship, programming events at the globally recognized museum.

Patrick Hill, Saxophone

Patrick Hill is an African American alto saxophonist, woodwind instrumentalist, arranger, and composer. As a native of Dallas, Texas, he grew up under the mentorship of critically acclaimed alto saxophonist, Brad Leali. He completed his undergraduate studies at the University of North Texas with a bachelor's in jazz performance. While studying at UNT, Patrick had the opportunity to learn in various ensembles including the UNT Latin Jazz Ensemble, under direction of Jose Aponté; The 3 O'Clock Lab Band, under direction of Tanya Darby; and the Grammy Nominated 1 O'Clock Lab Band, under direction

of Alan Baylock. He had the pleasure of performing as a side man and bandleader with several revered musicians such as Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, Joey DeFrancesco, Mike Boone, Shelley Carroll, Brad Leali, Conrad Herwig, Wycliffe Gordon, Kenny Werner, Ari Hoeing, Quincy Davis, and Kirk Whalum. He obtained his master's degree in jazz performance at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania under the mentorship of members of the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, Dick Oatts, and Terrell Stafford as well as Tim Warfield Jr. After graduation, he proceeded to tour with Michael Bublé and his big band performing music from his recent 2022 Grammy award winning record, *Higher*. While touring, Hill had the opportunity to perform in many different countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and South America. He currently resides in New York City where he is working towards an Artist diploma in jazz studies at The Juilliard School. During his short time spent at the school and the New York scene, he has already begun to establish himself as a very reliable sideman performing at established venues such as, The Village Vanguard, Smalls Jazz Club, Dizzy's Coco Cola, The Blue Note, Birdland Jazz Club, and the Jazz Gallery. His goal is to present a unique sound that pays homage to the previous innovators of this music while moving forward his own perception of melody, soul, and swing to bring forth a sense of community.