

## FESTIVAL HISTORY

The Greater Hartford Festival of Jazz is a non-profit organization originally conceived by Paul Brown, noted Hartford jazz bassist and music educator. For 25 years, Paul had produced the Monday Night Jazz Concerts in Bushnell Park, drawing thousands of music lovers to Hartford's Bushnell Park for picnics and world-class entertainment. That first Greater Hartford Festival of Jazz, in July of 1992, was dedicated to the 25th anniversary of those wonderful summers.

Paul gathered some friends to help plan that first festival, but ultimately turned the Festival over to a Board of Directors comprised of volunteers from the Central Connecticut area, who continued to fulfill his dream of a world-class jazz event in Hartford, while he concentrated on his professional career and the Monday Night Jazz Concerts. Now in its twentieth year, this free-of-charge Festival is supported by small and medium-sized charitable gifts and donations from foundations, businesses and corporations as well as City of Hartford and State of Connecticut grants. The Festival is also generously supported by contributions from individual jazz lovers throughout the region.

Notable performers at the Festival have included: The McCoy Tyner Big Band and Arturo Sandoval (1993); The Duke Ellington Orchestra under the direction of Mercer Ellington (1994); The George Shearing Quintet (1995); Nancy Wilson (1996); The Heath Brothers and John Hendricks (1997); Dave Brubeck (1998); Marion Meadows and The Dizzy Gillespie All Stars under the direction of Jon Fadis (1999); John Scofield, Chuck Mangione, the Ramsey Lewis Trio and Nicholas Payton (2000); Gerald Albright and Herbie Mann (2001); Phil Woods, Bobby Caldwell and Joe Sample (2002); Billy Taylor, Sonny Fortune and Euge Groove (2003); Joey DeFrancesco, Byron Stripling and Peter White (2004); Ahmad Jamal and newcomer Eric Darius (2005); Kim Waters and the Woody Herman Big Band (2006); Pamela Williams and Kevin Mahogany & The Kansas City Review (2007); Jeff Lorber, Nick Colionne and Kendrick Oliver & the New Life Orchestra (2008); Paul "Shiltz" Weimar, Bobby Lyle, Bob Baldwin, Azar Lawrence and The Rippingtons (2009);

The Greater Hartford Festival of Jazz has grown to be the largest FREE jazz event in New England, with an average attendance of over 45,000, and attracting more than 55,000 fans during the three day Festival in 2011!

The tradition continues in 2012 in Bushnell Park, America's oldest public park, when the Greater Hartford Festival of Jazz will presented its 21st annual event of three nights and two days of hot and cool jazz on the Performance Pavilion and the Friends of the Festival Arch Stage, featuring great artists from around the world and the USA, as well as young and up-and-coming performers from the local region. Connecticut's State Capitol Building and Hartford's skyline provide a beautiful, dramatic backdrop as the sun sets and the stars rise in the night sky and on stage.

Over 100 volunteers donate their time to work at the Festival, a true testimony to the popularity to which the Festival has risen since its 1992 debut. The Festival has a history of presenting national and international mainstream, cutting-edge, traditional and contemporary jazz performers, aspiring local and regional artists and some truly wonderful young musicians from area schools and noteworthy jazz programs.

During the Festival's lifetime, music history has literally been written on stage, perfectly matched by the intensity and appreciation of its audiences.