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DIABLO REGIONAL ARTS ASSOCIATION AND THE LESHER CENTER PRESENTS HEADLINERS SERIES ANNOUNCES SFJAZZ @ THE LESHER CENTER

In partnership with SFJAZZ, this new series to feature a thrilling lineup of internationally recognized jazz artists

WALNUT CREEK, CA (June 30, 2025)—Today, **Diablo Regional Arts Association (DRAA)** and the **Lesher Center Presents Headliners** series announced **SFJAZZ @ The Lesher Center**. Presented in partnership with **SFJAZZ**, this new series will feature a thrilling lineup of internationally recognized jazz artists, curated by SFJAZZ, at Walnut Creek's Lesher Center for the Arts throughout the 2025/26 Season.

"We are thrilled to partner with SFJAZZ on this momentous new series," said **Carolyn Jackson**, General Manager, Lesher Center for the Arts. "With a rich history of presenting incomparable jazz artists over the years at the Lesher Center, we are excited to join forces with one of the country's leading jazz organizations to help kick off our 35th anniversary season."

"It's exciting to see SFJAZZ expand its reach through this partnership with the Lesher Center," said SFJAZZ Executive Artistic Director **Terence Blanchard**. "Jazz has always been about connection and this series is a powerful way to keep that spirit alive across the San Francisco Bay Area."

"This partnership with SFJAZZ presents an incredible opportunity to introduce jazz to the next generation of music lovers through our comprehensive outreach programs, including our robust Pay What You Can, Arts Access School Time, and Lesher Center in Your Neighborhood initiatives," said **Peggy White**, Executive Director of Diablo Regional Arts Association.

The **SFJAZZ @ The Lesher Center** series kicks off October 8, 2025 with a celebratory concert by internationally acclaimed jazz master, **Branford Marsalis**, performing with his **Branford Marsalis Quartet**. The **SFJazz @ The Lesher Center** four-concert series launches in January 2026. Featuring a broad mix of acclaimed jazz artists, the series includes **The Kenny Barron Trio featuring Tyreek McDole (January 10, 2026)**, **Madeleine Peyroux (February 21, 2026)**, **Sarah McKenzie (March 20, 2026)**, and **Gerald Clayton (April 18, 2026)**. All concerts will take place at the Lesher Center for the Arts (1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek).

A limited number of packages for the Four-Concert series are on sale now by visiting LesherArtsCenter.org. Package prices for all four concerts run \$180–\$284.

Tickets to see The Branford Marsalis Quartet will be available to the general public Tuesday, August 5 at 10am. Priority Access tickets to see The Branford Marsalis Quartet will be given to those who purchase the SFJAZZ @ The Leshner Center Four-Concert Series by July 31, 2025.

BRANFORD MARSALIS QUARTET

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2025, 7:30 P.M.

Saxophonist Branford Marsalis is one of the most influential and revered figures in contemporary music. The NEA Jazz Master, Grammy Award winner, and Tony and EMMY Award nominee is equally at home performing concertos with symphony orchestras and sitting in with members of the Grateful Dead, but the core of his musical universe remains the Branford Marsalis Quartet.

After more than three decades of existence with minimal personnel changes, this celebrated ensemble is revered for its uncompromising interpretation of a kaleidoscopic range of both original compositions and jazz and popular classics. After receiving Grammy nominations on its last two albums, *Upward Spiral* and *The Secret Between the Shadow and the Soul*, the Quartet made its Blue Note Records debut with the release of *Belonging*, a full album interpretation of Keith Jarrett's 1974 ECM album of the same name. The New York Times commented "Marsalis has tackled imposing jazz masterworks before...but at its best, his 'Belonging' goes deeper...it's a performance that both honors and amplifies."

THE KENNY BARRON TRIO FEATURING TYREEK MCDOLE

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 2026, 7:30 P.M.

The Philadelphia native started playing professionally as a teenager with Mel Melvin's orchestra and Philly Joe Jones. He moved to New York City at 19 and freelanced with Roy Haynes, Lee Morgan, and James Moody. Upon Moody's recommendation, Dizzy Gillespie hired Barron in 1962 without even hearing him play a note. In the early 1970s, Barron began working with Yusef Lateef, whom Barron credits as a key influence on his art for improvisation. Encouraged by Lateef to pursue a college education, Barron balanced touring with studies, earning his degree from SUNY Empire State College. By 1973, Barron joined the faculty at Rutgers University as a professor of music. He held this tenure until 2000, mentoring many of today's young talents, including David Sanchez, Terence Blanchard, and Regina Belle. In 1974, Barron recorded *Sunset to Dawn*, his first album as a leader which led to over 50 others, including a duo album with Stan Getz which led to the first of 14 Grammy nominations. Barron has also received honorary doctorates from SUNY Empire State College and the Berklee College of Music and was awarded the Jazz Journalists Association's Best Pianist distinction (his eighth) in 2024.

Tyreek McDole, a 24-year-old Haitian-American vocalist from sunny Florida, shines brilliantly as his star rises in the bustling New York Scene. With a string of prestigious awards to his name, Tyreek stands out as a rising star in the music world. In November 2023, Tyreek won 1st place in the Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition. Noted as one of the most anticipated events in jazz, McDole's accolade now ranks him among the competition's previous winners including the standout artists Samara Joy (2019 winner) and Jazzmeia Horn (2013 winner). Tyreek is the 2nd male to ever win in the competition's 12 year history. McDole makes his Artwork Records debut with the June 6, 2025 release, *Open Up Your Senses*.

The trio includes Kiyoshi Kitagawa and Johnathan Blake.

MADELEINE PEYROUX

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2026, 7:30 P.M.

Peyroux is the proud curator of nine beguiling albums and an accomplished performer with sell out worldwide tours under her belt. Her atmospheric version of Serge Gainsborough's *La Javanaise* was

used in the soundtrack of Oscar-winner *The Shape of Water* and her countless accolades include the coveted BBC International Artist Of The Year honor.

SARAH MCKENZIE

FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 2026, 7:30 P.M.

Sarah McKenzie is an Australian jazz pianist, composer, vocalist, and bandleader whose breezy technical style, songwriting acumen, and pronounced lyrical sense of swing have drawn comparisons to Blossom Dearie and Diana Krall.

GERALD CLAYTON

SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 2026, 7:30 P.M.

Possessing an exquisite touch, astonishing technique, and a sound that somehow combines the dynamic finesse of Ahmad Jamal with the hurtling swing of Oscar Peterson, six-time GRAMMY nominee Gerald Clayton ranks among the very best pianists of his generation.

Just recently turning 40 years of age, Clayton has become a well-traveled veteran who has served as music director of the Monterey Jazz Festival On Tour, released numerous highly regarded albums, and collaborated with artists including Roy Hargrove, Charles Lloyd, Diana Krall, Ambrose Akinmusire, and Terri Lyne Carrington. With a compositional approach inspired by studies with Billy Childs, Clayton is the scion of a jazz dynasty. The son of esteemed Los Angeles bassist/arranger John Clayton and nephew of the late alto saxophonist Jeff Clayton, he's played and recorded with the Clayton Hamilton Jazz Orchestra and the Clayton Brothers, with whom he earned a GRAMMY nomination for a composition on 2010's *The New Song and Dance*.

His most recent album and Blue Note debut, *Bells on Sand*, was released in 2022, and his recent concert presentation, *Piedmont Blues*, is a multi-media production featuring a nine-piece ensemble dubbed The Assembly that explores the musical history of the Piedmont region in the Appalachian Highlands.

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