

18–21 MAY 2023 PROGRAMME
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FOREWORD



Welcome to the second Watford Jazz Junction. Once again, it is an absolute pleasure to sit alongside and work together with my fellow members of our Advisory Board and Programming Committee, in creating such a vibrant and exciting line-up of talent.

Next month will be the 75th Anniversary of the HMT Empire Windrush docking at Tilbury Docks, bringing the first wave of migrant Caribbeans to the UK.

Not only did they provide some of the skilled and much needed workforce to help to rebuild the UK's infrastructure after the Second World War but they also simultaneously enriched the country's cultural landscape with their art, culture, music, fashion and sport. Locally, Watford FC employed the skills of two Jamaican-born footballers Luther Blissett and John Barnes; more recently, Troy Deeney, who is also of mixed Jamaican heritage, has starred for the club.

Caribbean musicians have made many contributions in the UK that have been officially acknowledged and appreciated throughout the decades right up to the present day. They have constantly created, inspired and sustained new genres of music that have continued to be successful on the international music scene.

This year's Jazz Junction celebrates and showcases some of the new generation of musicians alongside some of the more established artists, composers and vocalists working here in the UK.

It's great to see my local area of Watford embracing so many communities that have helped to make the area such a vibrant cultural hub. It's a pleasure to help bring together family, friends and neighbours to see some world-class shows right here on our doorsteps. I am sure that we will all enjoy this year's programme happening across some wonderful local venues.

In the words of Keith Jarrett, "*Jazz is there and gone. It happens. You have to be present for it. That simple.*"

Orphy Robinson MBE

WELCOME TO THE WATFORD JAZZ JUNCTION 2023



Sharing in music is part of our identity.

Live music grounds us and allows us those most personal of moments to express emotions without uttering a word. But together it enables us all to share a common identity, no matter which side of the stage we are on, as participants in something unique and of a moment. Live music values us all.

This year, it's been a pleasure to explore the influence of the Caribbean on UK jazz – its rich history, the subsequent evolution of styles, and the new generations of musicians. My own grandfather lived in the Caribbean from the 1930s–1950s, knowing many musicians and sportspeople who subsequently became friends and legends of those precious islands. I remain forever an advocate of Caribbean culture and its influence on me and my family.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Arts Council England for their sustained belief in our festival, the Watford Cultural Support & Development Fund, and our festival sponsors, London Square. With their funding alongside our advertisers, other grant givers and volunteers we are able to exist and present a rich weave of jazz, soul and more at subsidised rates and wherever possible for free, in times when money is of such pressing concern to so many.

And finally, on behalf of Orphy and the whole Advisory Committee, our very great thanks to you. We hope we might all identify as proud residents, as lovers of music, and as friends to those we know already, and for all those we've yet to meet.

Chris Newstead
Festival Director

OUR GALA SHOW HITS NEW HEIGHTS

Opening night concert 18 May 2023,
from 7.30pm, at the Watford Palace Theatre

The opening night of the Watford Jazz Junction 2023 kicks off with a jaw-dropping double-headline show featuring jazz vocal sensation Zara McFarlane and legendary singer Omar – blurring the lines between jazz, reggae, nu-soul and classic soul. Taking to the stage with their respective full live bands, this is an evening of world class voices and soul-shaking musicianship.

Double Jazz FM Vocalist of the Year, Zara McFarlane, demonstrates why she is held in such acclaim across the UK, with her songwriting and range of material striking in its breadth. Lyrically conscious and unafraid to push outside of the jazz traditions, Zara's forward-thinking compositions reach audiences where few other jazz musicians dare not tread.

Omar is undoubtedly the UK's finest soul voice. His 1991 breakthrough hit '*There's Nothing Like This*', on Gilles Peterson's classic Talkin' Loud label, began a 30+ year international career that has seen him release several acclaimed albums and collaborate with artists as deeply loved as Stevie Wonder, Erykah Badu and Courtney Pine CBE. As full of energy and innovative power as he was three decades ago, we are expecting a Gala Concert overflowing with soul power!

More about Zara

Zara is much more than just one of the UK's foremost jazz vocalists. The multi award-winning singer and composer stretches her artistry with a tapestry of influences, both contemporary and timeless. Eloquent and provocative, her sound is distinguished by her melding of jazz, reggae, folk and the further reaches of nu-soul.

Zara McFarlane burst onto the musical map with a superb self-produced EP in 2010, instantly catching the ears of Gilles Peterson who quickly signed her to his label Brownswood Recordings, releasing her debut album '*Until Tomorrow*' in 2011. Her second album '*If You Knew Her*', released in 2014, saw her blossom as a lyrically conscious songwriter and set her apart as one to watch on the UK jazz scene.

The release of Zara's third album '*Arise*', produced by Moses Boyd, saw her complete an impressive string of live dates in the UK, Europe and internationally. She reached outside of the live jazz circuit by performing at the British Summer Time in Hyde Park, Field Day and Boomtown Festivals, as well as at prestigious international jazz festivals and venues such as Ronnie Scotts, The Jazz Cafe, Love Supreme, Rochester Jazz, Cully Jazz, St Lucia Jazz Festivals and SXSW.

Her recent album '*Songs of An Unknown Tongue*', released in July 2020, was a fresh departure in her creative direction, uniting her with experimental producers Kwake Bass and Wu-Lu.



Inspired by an exploration into Zara's Jamaican heritage, which included an extended trip to Jamaica in 2018 to meet academics and research the early folk rhythms unique to the island, her new sound is the culmination of this research and weaves a subversion of the colonial legacy of slavery.

Praise for *'Songs Of An Unknown Tongue'*:

★★★★ Uncut

★★★★ Songlines

★★★★ The Guardian

★★★★ Evening Standard

Unsurprisingly, she is much in demand as a featured vocalist internationally. She has collaborated with New York house legend Louie Vega on his Grammy-nominated album *'Starring XXVIII'*, as well as with Nicola Conte, Gary Crosby's Ska Orchestra Jazz Jamaica, the Swiss Harmonica player Gregoire Maret, US trumpeter Leron Thomas, Spanish flamenco pianist Ariadna Castellannos, Shabaka Hutchings, Moses Boyd, Ezra Collective and Camila George. She has also been a supporting act for the likes of the great Hugh Masekela, Gregory Porter, Dianne Reeves and Gwen McCrae.

Zara's impact is reflected in being awarded Jazz FM Vocalist of the Year Award (2015, 2018), Session of the Year at Worldwide Awards (2018), Best Jazz Act at Urban Music Awards (2015) and Best Jazz at the MOBO Awards (2014).

Tonight's Players:

Zara McFarlane – Vocals

Renato Paris – Keys

Jihad Darwish – Bass

George Bird – Drums

More about Omar

"Still...one of the best voices I've ever heard" Erykah Badu

Omar Lye-Fook MBE is one of the greatest soul music talents the United Kingdom has produced in the last 40 years. If anyone has doubts about that, then they might want to consider the list of legendary artists who happily line up to collaborate with him musically, or simply sing his praises – from Stevie Wonder, the late Leon Ware, Erykah Badu and Common, through to Carleen Anderson, D'Angelo, Soul II Soul's Caron Wheeler, Angie Stone and UK artists Courtney Pine, Rodney P, Kele LeRoc, Natasha Watts and Estelle.

The Lye-Fook family has musical talent embedded deeply in their DNA. Omar's father Byron worked as a studio musician and drummer with Bob Marley, Horace Andy and The Rolling Stones. Omar's younger brother is the Grammy-winning producer, remixer and DJ Scratch Professor, and Brit School alumnus Samia Lye-Fook (Omar's sister) is a renowned vocalist in her own right.

Born in London and raised in Canterbury, Omar was considered a musical prodigy. Learning his craft classically, he played the trumpet, piano, bass guitar and percussion, becoming the principal percussionist for the Kent Youth Orchestra and later a graduate of the Guildhall School of Music.

In 1985, he released his first single – *'Mr Postman'* – on his father's Kongo label. This was also the original home for his first album, which contained the track that changed everything, *'There's Nothing Like This'*. That album was reissued by Gilles Peterson on his Talkin' Loud imprint in 1991 with the single hitting the charts, beginning a musical chain of events

that has continued unabated up to the present day.

From this point on, Omar has taken his own unique path. Never one to focus on momentary commercial success, his records and many collaborations have made him your favourite singer's singer. He was neo-soul before that scene even emerged in the United States; his influence on his contemporaries and the generations to follow is undisputed. Omar's multi-instrumental chops and instantly recognisable voice situate him equally at home with Caribbean flecked soul-jazz groovers, whilst his authoritative yet sensual vocals have seen him collaborating with the best of the international electronic dance scene including Henrik Schwarz and Dimitri From Paris, and contemporary reggae producers such as Prince Fatty.

This Renaissance Man is also an actor and you may have seen him appearing on *Eastenders* as Avery Baker! Omar deservedly received his MBE in 2012 and continues his musical odyssey without limits. A beacon of soulful expression, innovative and authentic to his core.

Tonight's Players:

Omar Lye-Fook – Vocals/keys

Lennox Cameron – Keys

Gordon Mulrain – Bass

Westley Joseph – Drums

Tony Remy – Guitar

Jim Hunt – Sax

Shanti Jayasingha – Trumpet



THE INHERITANCE OF THE WINDRUSH JAZZ GENERATION

The history of the Caribbean influence on jazz in the UK is nearly as long as the history of jazz itself, with notable examples of West Indian musicians in the UK even before WW1 and several between the great global wars. Guyanese clarinettist Rudolph Dunbar began as a jazz musician in the 1920s, before earning himself acclaim as both a classical composer and a conductor, becoming the first black man to conduct the London Philharmonic in 1942 and the Berlin Philharmonic in 1945.

Other notable players included the multi-instrumentalist Leslie Thompson, who toured with Louis Armstrong, trumpet players Leslie 'Jiver' Hutchinson, Wally Bowen from Jamaica, and Ken 'Snakehips' Johnson and his Rhythm Swingers – who became The West Indian Orchestra and also the resident band at the Café de Paris. Unfortunately, Ken and other members of the band were killed during a performance at the Café de Paris by a Luftwaffe bomb in 1941.

After World War II, it was the Windrush Generation of 1948–1971 that would bring the incredible musical heritage and collective spirit of the islanders to the cold, barely welcoming shores of post-war Britain. The first journey of 802 immigrants from the Caribbean on HMT Empire Windrush wasn't exactly the first journey, but it was *THE* moment when the 1948 British Nationality Act, which granted citizenship to members of the British Empire, took on its most iconic form. The

legendary Trinidadian Calypsonian Lord Kitchener composed '*London Is The Place For Me*' during the journey, to celebrate the moment of arrival. Jazz was the music of this time, and London (and later other cities) became the focus for some of the Caribbean's best musicians, providing work for them and they, in turn, brought a new level of musicality to the UK. Here were the forebears of many of our current crop of world class jazz (and other genres) musicians.

There are densely woven links between this first generation of immigrants and where we are now. Arriving in 1954, the Barbadian trumpeter Harry Beckett had a dynamic and versatile career, becoming a co-founder and elder statesman of the all-Black big band The Jazz Warriors in 1984 – the unbroken bridge between the Windrush and contemporary generations. In 1949, the Jamaican tenor saxophonist Andy Hamilton MBE settled in Birmingham and established residencies in various bars that attracted visiting American jazz musicians. Most importantly perhaps, Hamilton supplemented his income by teaching successive generations of young musicians at his jazz workshops, his own gigs and jam sessions. Among some notable musicians to have benefited from those opportunities were award-winning saxophonist Soweto Kinch and clarinettist/saxophonist Shabaka Hutchings, in turn influencing younger Brummie musicians, including one of our festival artists, Xhosa Cole.

There are many other fine Caribbean musicians from this period who settled and prospered artistically in the UK: Joe Harriott, Yorke de Silva, Lauderic Caton, Coleridge Goode, co-founder of Notting Hill Carnival Russell Audley Ferdinand 'Russ' Henderson MBE, Dizzy Reece, Herman 'Herrington' Wilson, Ozzie Da Costa, Granville Edwards, and so many more.

The children of the Windrush generation would stand on the shoulders of these giants and stake their own claim. Not without difficulty of course. The reluctance of the British radio industry and print media to highlight Black British musicians (preferring to give tribute to US artists) enforced a do-it-yourself mentality, a resilience born from their ancestors' travails and journeys but from a British-born perspective. Out of this came the game-changing big band The Jazz Warriors in the 1980s. Formed by saxophonist and national treasure Courtney Pine CBE, Harry Beckett, Ray Carless, Gail Thompson, Adrian Reid and Claude Deppa, the revolving doors of the 25 plus strong band would be the jazz conservatoire for a whole generation of internationally successful players. Steve Williamson, Cleveland Watkiss MBE, Orphy Robinson MBE, Gary Crosby OBE, Tony Kofi, Jason Yarde, Philip Bent, Dennis Rollins MBE (who played with us last year), and Julian Joseph OBE are among the many who went through its hallowed ranks.

From here, the legacy that we feel most significantly during this great jazz revival in the UK is via the educational mentorship of certain Jazz Warriors' graduates. Gary Crosby co-founded the much-praised Tomorrow's Warriors educational and development organisation with Janine Irons MBE in 1991, and their multiracial student alumni includes many of the best young jazz musicians in the UK. Moses Boyd, key members of Kokoroko and Ezra Collective, Yazz Ahmed, Byron Wallen, Nubya Garcia, Zara McFarlane, Theon Cross, Denys Baptiste, Camilla George, Soweto Kinch and Shabaka Hutchings are just some of the award-winning talents who have graced their door. Julian and James Joseph's academy for young jazz talent and the arts organisation Kinetika are also significant in the development and nurturing of the Windrush descendants' jazz offspring (and of course others of different heritages).

There we have it, a shortened but richly flavoured sense of the influence of the Caribbean and the Windrush generation on the UK's proud jazz history. We are delighted to be able to include some of these artists in our festival programme this year.

With many thanks to Orphy Robinson for his original article '*Windrush Jazz Generation: The Caribbean = Carried Way Beyond*' for Jazzed.com, which was the foundation stone for this written piece and I have 'maggied' much.

**Words by Justin Turford
and Orphy Robinson MBE**

XHOSA COLE QUARTET

19 May 2023, from 8pm, at the
Watford Pump House Theatre

We are delighted to present one of the most exciting young saxophonists in the UK for our Friday evening show.

At only 26 years of age, Xhosa Cole has already won numerous awards and performed at some of the most illustrious venues and events across the UK. His versatility and hunger for musical investigation are both admirable and striking in their range. For our festival, Xhosa will be presenting his new ensemble 'Rhythm-a-ting', an exploration and re-imagining of the music of the great Thelonious Monk, taking those original timeless melodies and adding a contemporary touch with new arrangements and new rhythmic interpretations. A modest and charming young bandleader, we expect a fabulous evening in his company.

"There is no composer like Monk and there is no pianist like Monk. The depth of his groove, coupled with his harmonic commitment and integrity, makes for one BAD musician! I've learned so much trying to prize open his compositions – you have to mine for the abundance of gold and treasures he's left humanity." Xhosa Cole

More on Xhosa

Raised In Handsworth, Xhosa started playing tenor saxophone at Andy Hamilton MBE's Ladywood Community Music School, and has now established himself among the long legacy of Birmingham saxophonists that includes Soweto Kinch and Shabaka Hutchings. The critically acclaimed young saxophonist, flautist and composer is an embodiment of the

success of numerous community outreach arts programmes in Birmingham.

In 2018 he was the recipient of the BBC Young Jazz Musician of the Year Award and has since performed alongside artists including Monty Alexander and Courtney Pine and as a soloist for the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. He has performed at prestigious venues and events including the BBC Proms, Birmingham's Symphony Hall and Ronnie Scott's. In 2020 he received the Parliamentary Jazz Award for Best Newcomer, and he has been nominated for the Jazz FM Breakthrough act.

Xhosa has composed original music for the Flatpack Film Festival, recorded saxophone for Mahalia's debut album 'Love and Compromise', and in 2021 released his critically acclaimed debut album 'K(no)w Them, K(no)w Us' alongside Soweto Kinch, Reuben James and Jay Phelps. In November 2022 he released his second album 'Ibeji', a collaborative project of duos featuring seven eminent percussionists of African descent, also headlining alongside legendary US drummer Hamid Drake (Herbie Hancock, Don Cherry, Pharaoh Sanders) at Cafe OTO as part of the EFG London Jazz Festival. Ever searching, his muse leads from deep research into the jazz canon but also inspirations as diverse as geometric maths, biology, classical western harmony and elements of traditional Yoruba culture.

Xhosa's deep and authentic connection to the lineage of jazz music has helped to establish him amongst the most exciting young talents in the country.

Tonight's Players:

Xhosa Cole – Sax
Josh Vadeloo – Double Bass
Steve Saunders – Guitar
Nathan England-Jones – Drums



JAZZ FOR YOUNG ONES PERCUSSION WORKSHOP

20 May 2023, from 9.30am to 12pm, at the Watford Pump House Theatre

A very special interactive percussion session led by education experts from The Music Workshop Company for everyone aged 4–12.

The Jazz for Young Ones Percussion Workshop introduces participants to the infectious and adaptable nature of West Indian rhythm and groove.

No experience is required – whether you already play an instrument or want to explore music for the first time, come along and explore the sounds of the West Indies. All instruments will be supplied.

The workshop is fully interactive, leading to a performance at the end of the session. The workshop will adapt to the participants – giving the chance to solo for those feeling confident, and the opportunity to not take centre stage for those who prefer to be part of the group.

Please let us know if participants have learning or language needs so we can prepare suitable activities and support them to get the most out of the workshop.

The workshop will run from 9.30–12.00 including a break and a final performance. Arrive from 9.30am for a 10am start. Soft drinks and biscuits included.

Parents are welcome to stay in the Theatre or in the foyer where coffee/tea will be available. Everyone is welcome to attend the final performance at 11.45am, which may also feature a very special jazz guest star!

EMMA RAWICZ QUINTET AND OSCAR LYONS QUARTET

20 May 2023, from 2.15 to 4.30pm, at the Watford Pump House Colne River Room

We have something very special for our Saturday matinee concert with two ensembles of remarkable skill and verve that shine a light on the next generation of UK jazz players.

Emma Rawicz is already a multi-award-winning young saxophonist and composer, making huge waves on the UK music scene right now. We are delighted to have Emma and her amazingly talented quartet joining us as part of her Spring-Summer tour featuring music from her debut album *'Incantation'* plus new tracks from her upcoming album to be released later this year.

Our show commences with a 30-minute set from the prodigious talents of 17-year old Suffolk-based pianist Oscar Lyons and his band playing a selection of his original compositions. This promises to be an afternoon to be remembered.

More about Emma

"An astonishing new talent." Jamie Cullum, BBC Radio 2

"A name on everyone's lips right now." Julian Joseph, J to Z BBC Radio 3

At the age of 20, Emma Rawicz has already recorded and released a fantastic and well-received debut album of her original compositions, *'Incantation'* featuring Ant Law. Emma's second album, featuring her all-star band of Ivo Neame, Ant Law, Conor Chaplin and Asaf Sirkis, will be released later in 2023.





A startling new arrival on the scene, she is already regularly playing at Ronnie Scotts, The Jazz Café and Pizza Express both as a band leader and as a side player. In November 2022, Emma performed as a featured soloist with the BBC Concert Orchestra and the Marcin Wasilewski Trio in their tribute to Tomasz Stańko. 2022 also saw Emma and her band invited to perform at some high-profile international jazz festivals.

Emma is a recipient of the 2021 Drake Yolanda Award, winner of Best Newcomer at the 2022 Parliamentary Jazz Awards, and was nominee for the 2022 Jazz FM Instrumentalist of the Year and finalist in BBC Young Jazz Musician 2022.

Perhaps most surprisingly, Emma didn't discover jazz until the age of 15, and didn't pick up a tenor saxophone until a year later! Growing up in rural North Devon, she had spent her childhood mainly immersed in folk and classical music so her rocketing profile in jazz says much about her innate musical abilities and drive.

Emma is a natural performer. Her music has a unique sound, fusing all her many influences, and her compositions range from lilting Afro Cuban inspired

grooves to hard hitting modern jazz and funk numbers.

This Afternoon's Players:

Emma Rawicz – Saxophones
Ivo Neame – Piano
Conor Chaplin – Bass
Ant Law – Guitar
Asaf Sirkis – Drums

More about Oscar

Only 17 years old and living in Suffolk, Oscar is a two-time National Youth Jazz Collective alumnus, and is currently a member of the Royal Academy of Music's Junior Jazz Programme. He was a member of the Aldeburgh Young Musicians programme, based at the prestigious Snape Maltings concert hall. Oscar is joined by three other very talented young musicians for our matinee performance playing a set of his original compositions, which span a wide range of genres, including jazz, salsa, bossa nova, R&B and soul.

This Afternoon's Players:

Oscar Lyons – Piano
George Johnson – Tenor Sax
Chris Diamand – Bass
Luke McCarthy – Drums

CLEVELAND WATKISS PRESENTS THE GREAT JAMAICAN SONGBOOK

*20 May 2023, from 8pm, at the
Watford Pump House Theatre*

We are pleased to have one of the most versatile voices in the UK joining us as he leads his remarkable band through The Great Jamaican Songbook.

A multi-award-winning singer and collaborator, Cleveland Watkiss traverses musical genres with exceptional skill and innovation. He is our finest male jazz vocalist and continues to confound expectations, working with everyone from Stevie Wonder to international symphony orchestras.

For our Saturday evening headline show, Cleveland will be exploring the pioneering music of his Jamaican heritage alongside his illustrious ensemble of musicians. The band are a who's who of celebrated UK jazz, pop, reggae and funk legends, each with their own strong reputation both within these scenes and way beyond. It includes Orphy Robinson, revered trumpeter Byron Wallen, Delroy Murray, Alan Weekes, Carl Robinson, Phil Ramacon and James Wade Sired.

From '40s and '50s mento to ska, reggae, dub and lovers-rock, the show will be a history lesson as much as an evening of great musical entertainment. A musical guide through the origins and development of Jamaican music and culture, beginning with the legacy of The Alpha Boys school and under tutelage of 'The Nun' Sister Mary Ignatius Davis and expanding outward in a poignant tale of the life and times of many of the island's most inspirational figures.

Both the stories behind the work and the music itself enhance each other, culminating in a compelling experience destined to stimulate all senses. The Great Jamaican Songbook features iconic songs from the greats such as Gregory Isaacs, Dennis Brown and Burning Spear, but also shines a light on rare hidden gems from labels such as Studio One, Coxsone Dodd and Tuff Gong, producers like King Tubby and Lee 'Scratch' Perry, music from singers such as Delroy Wilson and Prince Lincoln, and many more artists who receive less international recognition than they deserve. This ideal balance means that audiences can enjoy familiar music while discovering many other songs and stories for the first time.

More about Cleveland

Cleveland Watkiss was born in Hackney to Jamaican parents in 1959; his father was an amateur DJ and the music of Jamaica was the glorious soundtrack to his formative years. By the early '70s, reggae sound system culture was taking hold and was the spark that ignited Cleveland as a singer and musician. Grabbing the microphone at the legendary East London 'sound clashes', he began to win vocal talent competitions with his favoured Fatman Hi Sound System, this uniquely Jamaican form of improvised vocalising over instrumental records would give him a rare education and confidence that would underpin much of his incredible career.



It is very tricky to pin down Cleveland musically, his journey the tale of a true artist's instincts, exploring and changing direction as his muse demands. By the early 1980s he was both recording and touring with reggae legends whilst also studying voice and music at the Guildhall School of Music alongside fellow aspiring young black jazz musician Steve Williamson, becoming a founding member of the game-changing Black British big band the Jazz Warriors. Constantly innovating, Cleveland became Goldie's main MC at the drum and bass genre-defining Metalheadz Sunday Sessions at the Blue Note in the mid to late '90s. His inimitable style of combining sound system 'toasting' with his mastery of jazz vocalising has never been repeated and led to him touring the world and fronting the world's first live drum and bass band, Project 23.

Since then his versatile talents has seen him singing Bach Doubles on tours with classical violinist Nigel Kennedy and jazz standards with Wynton and Branford Marsalis. He has worked with a remarkable array of musicians, including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Dusseldorf Symphony Orchestra, Bob Dylan, Jackie Mittoo, Keith Richards, the James Taylor Quartet, Art Blakey, Sly & Robbie, Abdullah Ibrahim, Stevie

Wonder, Patife, the Liepaja Symphony Orchestra, Carlinhos Brown, Robbie Williams, Joe Cocker, George Martin, Julian Joseph, Bocato Big Band, Lisa Stansfield, Courtney Pine, Janet Kay, Maxi Priest, Soul II Soul, the London Chamber Orchestra, Kassa Mady, the BBC Orchestra, Goldie, Cassandra Wilson, the Kenny Wheeler Big Band, Sugar Minot, Talvin Singh, Bjork, Pete Townshend, the London Community Gospel Choir, and many more!

Cleveland was awarded an MBE in the 2018 Honours list. Other honours include the Boisdale Music Award 2022, the Ivor Novello Award for Innovation 2021, Jazz Vocalist of the Year at the Parliamentary Jazz Awards 2017, Best Jazz Act at the MOBO Awards 2017 (nominee), Best Vocalist at the London Jazz Awards 2010, and Best Vocalist at the Guardian Jazz Awards for three consecutive years.

Tonight's Players:

Cleveland Watkiss – Vocals
 Byron Wallen – Trumpet
 James Wade-Sired – Trombone
 Orphy Robinson – Keys
 Phil Ramocon – Keys
 Alan Weekes – Guitars
 Delroy Murray – Bass
 Carl Robinson – Drums

JAZZ STEPS AROUND OXHEY VILLAGE

21 May 2023, from 12.30pm to 5pm,
across Oxhey Village

After last year's roaringly successful Jazz Steps, we have decided to up our game and bring you even more entertainment and all for FREE!

What is Jazz Steps you ask? Well, it's an all day, family-friendly musical (r) amble around Oxhey Village, reached immediately from Bushey mainline train station. We have more than a dozen free gigs running across the Village at The Rifle Volunteer, The Villiers Arms, The Load of Hay, The Royal Oak, and The Railway Arms. You, your family and friends can stroll from pub to pub, try different drinks and food, and hear music flowing through the air!

As an extra special addition this year, we will also have a special Festival Stage set-up on Watford Heath (directly in front of the Royal Oak and nearby the Load of Hay). And we are over the moon that this year's festival will close with a FREE performance by the world class steel pan drum talents of the award-winning jazz musician Leon Foster Thomas and his sextet! The stage will also host British jazz legend Art Themen with Pete Whittaker and George Double and the Herts Big Band. Also at the Royal Oak we have jazz

DJs from Watford's LP Cafe spinning vinyl, plus a very special guest DJ – Alan McKinnon from Duvet Rustling Jazz and Totally Wired Radio. And did we mention it's all FREE?!

Wherever you choose to spend the afternoon, be sure to try different food and drinks in all of our fabulous pubs. And, fair-weather prevailing, on Watford Heath we'll have a fantastic classic car exhibition thanks to Classic Motor Events and Watford & District Classic Vehicle Club, wood-fired pizza and of course ice-cream!

This Afternoon's Acts: *please see listings on the inside back cover for exact location and timings*

Esther Bennett, The John Watson Trio, Ali Barut Quintet, Skylark Trio, The Ten Bells Rag Band, Brass Bound, The Hoe Daddy Swingers, The Bucks Jazz Collective, Art Themen Trio, Herts Big Band, Shireen Francis, Irena Serra, The Fabulous Red Diesel, Alexander Williams, and the Neil C Young Trio.

More about Art Themen

"In any other country he'd be regarded as a national treasure." Leonard Weinrich, London Jazz News



A fantastically exciting, playful and inventive saxophonist, Art Themen has been a beloved character of the British jazz scene for over 60 years, famously combining his role as a consultant orthopaedic surgeon with saxophone duties in the bands of Alexis Korner and Stan Tracey among many others. Described by The Observer as *"One of the tiny handful of undeniably perfect jazz musicians"*, he remains as brilliant and inimitable as ever.

Themen's trio 'Thane & The Villeins' features organist Pete Whittaker, formerly of The Nigel Price Organ Trio, and drummer George Double who has worked as a side player to Shirley Bassey and Jack Jones. (George also performed with us last year bringing John Etheridge to The Rifle for a memorable late-night festival closing show.) The band's groove-led re-imaginings of quirky curiosities from the jazz canon act as a perfect vehicle for the twinkly mischief of this genuine grandee of British jazz and have delighted crowds at Ronnie Scotts, Royal Albert Hall's Elgar Room, Pizza Express and across the UK.

Art Themen's 'Thane & The Villeins' open the Festival Stage on Watford Heath at 12.30pm

First Aid, Lost Children, and staying safe

St John's Ambulance will be present on Watford Heath alongside the Watford Jazz Junction Information Point, which is also our Lost Children Point. If you do get separated from any loved ones, please speak with a member of pub staff or any of our stewards and marshals and we'll look to reconnect you as soon as possible.

We've got some lovely marshals and stewards helping us today – please listen to any guidance or advice they might share. And if you see anything out of place or suspicious do let one of them know.

Merchandise

If you're on the lookout for a Watford Jazz Junction T-shirt, hoodie, baseball cap or pen, then look no further than our Information Point on Watford Heath, selling a range of our branded jazz goods. Every item sold helps to us keep going and support future performances!



LEON FOSTER THOMAS

21 May, from 5pm, on Watford Heath

Closing this year's festival, we are thrilled to be joined by the global steel pan star Leon Foster Thomas as he plays a free show on Watford Heath on our Festival Stage sponsored by London Square.

"The next big thing on his instrument... an enthralling improviser." All About Jazz

Leon, a multiple past winner of the World Steelband Music Festival, will be joined by his sextet to play a hugely accessible and suitably Caribbean infused set for all. Expect jazz, blues and Caribbean vibes like never before.

More about Leon

Born in Trinidad and currently London-based, Leon Foster Thomas has proven through his albums and performances that the steel pan has the musical sophistication to be taken as seriously in the jazz universe as the more well-known vibraphone.

Leon has collaborated with legendary artists in the jazz scene and beyond including Hugh Masekela, Randy Brecker, Sammy Figueroa, Vince Mandoza, Igor Butman, Dolly Parton, John Beasley, Mino Cinelu, Orphy Robinson, Cyril Neville, Ky-Mani Marley and many more. He has performed at internationally renowned venues such as New York's Jazz At Lincoln Centre, The Adrienne Arsht Center of the Performing Arts in Miami, and Moscow's International House Of Music. He also played a significant part in Her Late Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in 2022.

Inspired as much by the melodic poetry of the great Keith Jarrett's piano sound as Trinidad's celebrated steel pan heritage, Leon has taken the instrument to new heights, giving it a seriously fresh makeover in how it is now viewed across the music world. More than just a Carnival instrument, the chromatically scaled steel pan drum has seen, in Leon's hands, a significant step forward in its perception as an instrument of improvisational artistry and expression.

March 2023 marked the release of his latest album 'Calasanitus'. Described as a book of songs dedicated to his dear late mother, Hillouise Calasanitus Foster, the album showcases a unique blend of Caribbean influence and spirit evolving from Foster's Trinidadian heritage, combined with dexterous and innovative jazz complexity. The compositions generate an unmistakable vibe born out of the traditions of the West Indies and seamlessly incorporate the discipline and sensibilities of modern jazz music alongside this. The result is a sound that is beautifully calming and vitally energetic in equal measure.

Leon Foster Thomas exemplifies everything that we have sought to showcase at this year's Watford Jazz Junction. We are delighted that we can all share in this rare performance from a musician at the very top of his field.

This Afternoon's Players:

Leon Foster Thomas – Steel Pan
Sam Leak – Piano
Mirko Scarcia – Bass
Ebou "LOX" Mensah – Drums
Plus special guest

FULL FESTIVAL LISTINGS

PRE-FESTIVAL SHOWS

Saturday 22 April **Festival Launch with the John Watson Trio and London Square**
2pm: London Square, St Albans Rd, WD24 6PR

Saturday 13 May **Ruth Fisher's Prosecco Jazz Brunch featuring the John Altman Trio** | 10am: Halsey Hall, Rickmansworth Rd, WD18 0JE

FESTIVAL SHOWS

Thursday 18 May **Opening Night Gala Concert featuring Zara McFarlane and Omar**
7.30pm: Watford Palace Theatre, 20 Clarendon Road, WD17 1JZ

Friday 19 May **Xhosa Cole Quartet** | 8pm: Watford Pump House Theatre, 5 Local Board Road, WD17 2JP

Saturday 20 May **Jazz for Young Ones Percussion Workshop** | 9.30am: Watford Pump House Theatre, 5 Local Board Road, WD17 2JP

Emma Rawicz Quintet and the Oscar Lyons Quartet
2.15pm: Pump House Colne River Room, 5 Local Board Road, WD17 2JP

Cleveland Watkiss presents The Great Jamaican Songbook
8pm: Watford Pump House Theatre, 5 Local Board Road, WD17 2JP

Sunday 21 May **Jazz Steps Around Oxhey Village** | 12.30pm: Railway, Rifle Volunteer, Villiers Arms, Load of Hay & Royal Oak

Leon Foster Thomas Quintet | 5pm: Watford Jazz Junction Festival Stage, Watford Heath, WD19 4EU

THANK YOU

Watford Jazz Junction Advisory Committee: Alex Brooks, Alex Murray, Chris Philips, Jill Farnsworth, Junior Nyeko, Laura Jay, Lewis Butler, Orphy Robinson MBE, and Ruth Fisher.

To our production team: Justin Turford and Senem Pearson

To: all our venue partners, Pelin Opcin, and to everyone who has provided advice and support.

To: all our sound technicians (including Miles Ashton & Jason Brameld) and our volunteers.

And, above all, a huge thank you to all our wonderful musicians.

See you in 2024 and remember to stay in touch by following us www.watfordjazzjunction.com

JAZZ STEPS – VENUE AND GIG GUIDE

(correct at time of going to print – exact times might vary slightly)

	12.30pm	2pm	3.30pm	5pm
Railway Arms 'Alternative Party'	Fabulous Red Diesel	Ten Bells Rag Band	Brass Bound	n/a
Rifle Volunteer 'Instrumental Stage' hosted by John Watson	Skylark Trio	John Watson Trio	Ali Barut Quintet	n/a
Villiers Arms 'Vocal Stage' hosted by Esther Bennett	Featuring The Esther Bennett Trio, Shireen Francis, Alexander Williams, and Irene Serra with Terrance Collie (piano) & Richard Sadler (bass)			n/a
Load of Hay 'Unplugged'	Hoe Daddy Swingers	Bucks Jazz Collective	Neil C Young Trio	n/a
Royal Oak 'Festival Stage' sponsored by London Square	Art Theman: Thane and the Villeins	Herts Big Band	Alan McKinnon (DJ)	Leon Foster Thomas Quintet

FUNDERS

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- Breamore House – 13 August
- Knebworth House – 27/28 August
- Himley Hall – 3 September
- Trentham Gardens – 17 September
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