

# WATFORD JAZZ JUNCTION

FESTIVAL PROGRAMME | 12–19 MAY 2024



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*"Most of my career has been based on collaborative work. For me, it's a great way of staying open, learning different approaches and techniques that help to solidify and inform your own singular original ideas."*

– Cleveland Watkiss MBE,  
2023 WJJ performer

*"Collaboration is that sense of oneness. A pot of gumbo, or callaloo, with varied ingredients blended together providing you with a taste so exceptional that it lingers long after it is swallowed. African diasporic music is the coming together of minds, and each individual's vibe to create one beautiful sound, telling a story of a shared resistance born out of the harshest of conditions, which we call Jazz."*

– Leon Foster Thomas,  
2023 WJJ performer

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# FOREWORD



Greetings and a warm welcome to the 2024 Watford Jazz Junction Festival! As we embark on our third year, we're eagerly anticipating another exhilarating musical journey filled with yet more unforgettable moments.

Our aim is to exceed the successes of our first two years and continue towards building and establishing our festival as a permanent fixture on the exciting and innovative UK scene. This year we continue to showcase a diverse lineup of both emerging talents and established artists who are all making their debuts in Watford.

None of this would be possible without the dedicated efforts of our behind-the-scenes team, including local volunteers, backstage crews, drivers, photographers, and venue staff, whose tireless work infuses the festival with a wonderful team spirit. We've made tremendous progress

over the past three years, and it's thanks to each person playing their vital role.

I extend heartfelt appreciation to our Board, Programming Committee and logistics team, whose resilience, tenacity, and dedication are truly commendable. Warmest thanks also to our funders, sponsors, advertisers and supporters whose contributions make a significant impact on the festival's success, with special gratitude to the Arts Council England and Watford Council for their enthusiastic support year after year.

Lastly, but not least, my sincerest appreciation to everyone attending this year's festival. Let's put our hands together to make the 2024 Watford Jazz Junction Festival another resounding success!

**Orphy Robinson MBE**  
**Chair, Watford Jazz Junction**



# WELCOME TO THE WATFORD JAZZ JUNCTION 2024



They say it takes a village to raise a child. Well, it's certainly taken a whole community to raise the funds for Jazz Steps Around Oxhey Village this year. We ran a Crowd Funder campaign back in the autumn, and we ended up raising £14,075 towards the costs of the event. Our enormous thanks to everyone who contributed and who are all listed later in the programme. We're proud that Jazz Steps remains free to attend, and we hope lots more people will be able to connect with some outstanding live music.

At a time when money is of pressing concern for so many individuals, including those of us programming in the arts, external support is critical. Our enormous thanks to the Arts Council England who've supported us across the last three years, as well as to new funders Sovereign Network Group, civic funders Hertfordshire County Council and Watford Borough Council, and other organisations including Magic Little Grants, Watford Community Fund, Watford Community Housing Trust & The Worshipful Company of Musicians. We are delighted that Lit

Fibre are our Principal 2024 Sponsors, and that Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club have been able to provide us so much extra support this year.

You'll see throughout this year's festival programme, that we celebrate a natural diversity found throughout jazz, as well as collaboration between musicians. The past has seen Joni Mitchell meet Charles Mingus in the 1970s and Kishon Khan of LoKkhi TeRra meet Dele Sosimi in the 2010s. In 2024, Ray Gelato will meet Xantoné Blacq for the first time at our Gala Concert, and 155 further musicians meet during Jazz Steps Around Oxhey Village. Fascinating collaborations may follow!

On the previous page are two quotations from two of last year's artists that show how music brings people together, not in competition, but in union and creativity. We hope you enjoy the quality and commitment of all our musicians and team. Jazz remains a joy.

**Chris Newstead**  
**Festival Director**





# WHEN MITCHELL MET MINGUS

## **Ruth Fisher's Jazz Brunch: Imogen Ryall presents the Charles Mingus / Joni Mitchell Songbook**

*12 May 2024, from 10.30am, at Halsey Hall*

Jazz FM presenter Ruth Fisher hosts a very special jazz brunch in the beautiful Halsey Hall, just opposite Watford Town Hall. Pastries, prosecco (and non-alcoholic drinks!) and an intimate audience with top-class jazz musicians have proven to be a compelling ticket at the festival, and this year promises to be better than ever!

As part of this special brunch show, Ruth will be joined by Imogen Ryall and her band to explore and perform songs from her new album, "Imogen Ryall Sings the Charles Mingus/Joni Mitchell Songbook" released on Rubicon.

### **Background to the show**

The 1975 album 'Mingus' by Joni Mitchell was the result of a brief 45-minute meeting with Charles Mingus. At the time, Mingus was suffering the late stages of motor neurone disease, and his wife was keen to get him interested in something creative. She arranged a meeting between her husband and Joni to build on melodies he'd sung into a tape recorder. Subsequently, Sy Johnson scored the tunes and Joni added her own original lyrics. Mingus sadly died before the project was complete with the final recordings being made by Joni and members of Weather Report.

One of the best examples of a posthumous musical collaboration, the album was initially regarded with

confusion and little bit of disdain, but it now holds a cult status amongst musicians. Among them is British singer Imogen Ryall who considers 'Mingus' the foundation stone and springboard of her career, describing it as, "a door opener". Imogen says "I love the direction Joni's album took with some of my favourite musicians of all time: Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock et al...our album is more of a nod to the acoustic setting of these songs that Mingus originally imagined."

### **More about Imogen**

*"I love Imogen's voice. She sings with heart and intelligence, sensuality and style; a natural musician."*  
– Claire Martin OBE.

Born in London into a theatrical family, both of Imogen's parents were actors – so creativity was all around her from an early age. Bitten by the jazz bug while studying at Chichester College, she made her singing debut at the age of 17 at the Chichester Jazz Festival supporting Kathy Stobart, going on to study jazz at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. At Guildhall, Imogen was lucky enough to study and work with one of her musical heroes, Norma Winstone, as well as talents such as John Taylor and Kenny Wheeler.

She soon became a regular performer on the London jazz scene and over the years has worked extensively both nationally and internationally. She has had residencies at the Dorchester Hotel, London and for the Crown Plaza group in Seoul, Dubai and Oman, and has performed at venues closer to home such as the 606 Club, Jazz Café, Ronnie Scott's and The Barbican Hall.

*"The addition of the honey-toned but incisive voice of Imogen Ryall was the icing on the cake. Her pitching flawless, she somehow manages to combine an apparently effortless precision with a warm, inviting sound, drawing the listener into her beguiling world"* – London Jazz News

More than just a fine singer, Imogen is also an in-demand lyricist and has been involved with a number of excellent releases alongside her own albums. Since 2014, she has written, recorded and performed with the eccentric cabaret jazz outfit 'The Cloggz' led by Mark Edwards; their 2016 'Stardust & Spangles' album was named as her album of the year by the acclaimed singer and broadcaster Clare Teal.

Before her Mingus / Mitchell Songbook record, Imogen has recorded a number of

excellent albums, including her first three self-produced CDs: 'Alone Together' with guitarist Andy Williams; 'Waltz for Ruth' with Rod Hart and Dave Green (for which she wrote new lyrics for the Charlie Haden title track); and 'There Will Be Time' with the Jack Kendon Quintet featuring Julian Nicholas. Her 'One January Morning' recording with her Anöna Trio received 4 stars in JazzWise magazine, and was included in Peter Quinn's Top 10 jazz albums of 2019.

Recently she contributed lyrics to US vibes maestro Joe Locke's composition 'This Is Just To Say' for the John Aram United Underground Orchestra's 2022 release, 'Rhapsody In Red'. She adds her sublime vocals and lyrics to David Beebee's album 'Beyond The Clouds', and also developed a book of lyrics for and sang on the outstanding 2023 album 'Songs' by Czech jazz superstar Emil Viklický. Imogen's words and voice added poetry and harmony to Emil's instrumentals and jazz re-setting of Moravian folk songs.

This is just some of what Imogen has been up to (she also somehow still finds time to teach in Chichester and Brighton!), so we are delighted that, alongside some of her regular and equally talented collaborators such as Julian Nicholas and David Beebee, she will be joining us for what is guaranteed to be a pleasurable and entertaining Jazz Brunch!

### Band Line-up

Imogen Ryall – voice  
Julian Nicholas – tenor, soprano saxophones  
David Beebee – piano  
Nigel Aubrey Thomas – double bass  
Eric Ford – drums



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# WHEN SWING MEETS SOUL

## **Ray Gelato & The Giants and Xantoné Blacq**

*16 May 2024, from 7.30pm, at Watford  
Palace Theatre*

We are impossibly excited to present the lineup for this year's opening Gala Show of the 2024 edition of the Watford Jazz Junction. We are always looking to serve up every kind of flavour from the wide world of jazz and, this year, we kick off four non-stop days of jazz from now to Sunday with a feel-good jazz party, as the world famous Ray Gelato & The Giants bring their high energy big band jive juggernaut to the Palace Theatre. We are equally thrilled to have a special solo performance from Xantoné Blacq, his soulful voice and superb keyboard skills the perfect opening act for an evening to remember.

*"Gelato's dapper mixture of swing and Louis Prima jumpin' jive remains as invigorating as ever" – The Times*

A true showman, Mr. Ray Gelato – 'The Godfather of Swing' – has been taking his special brand of swing, jazz and R&B music all over the world for more than three decades. This multi-talented singer, saxman, songwriter and band leader has appeared at festivals, clubs and concert stages from Brazil to New York City. Ray and his world class band The Giants deliver a dynamite show steeped in the great traditions of the old-school legends of all-round entertainment such as Louis Prima and Cab Calloway. Never failing to get a crowd on its feet, the band perform with the highest level of musicianship with The Giants horn section widely recognised as one of the finest in the business.

With a glittering career so far spanning a quarter of a century, singer and pianist Xantoné Blacq has worked with Amy Winehouse, Emeli Sandé, Earth Wind & Fire, Mark Ronson, and Nigel Kennedy. His original music has received praise from acclaimed artists, broadcasters, press and music lovers alike. This solo performance sees Xan performing a special 30-minute set, featuring his originals as well as songs by others who have inspired him. This is a rare and intimate opportunity to enjoy an artist who you might previously only have seen at Glastonbury, The Grammys, Lollapalooza or on the BBC.

### **More about Ray**

*"He plays what he means, and means what he plays" – Jools Holland*

They don't make them like Ray anymore. Possibly the last in a long and illustrious line of big band swing, jump, jive and jazz entertainers, Ray Gelato and his extravagantly talented band have had a deservedly successful career, playing many of the top jazz festivals including Montreal, San Sebastián, The Lincoln Centre in New York and repeated appearances at Umbria Jazz in Italy. His long-established Christmas residency at London's world famous Ronnie Scott's is always a guaranteed sell-out event, and he's played some of the most prestigious clubs in the world including Birdland in New York and The Blue Note in Milan. He has performed for the late Queen Elizabeth II, opened for Robbie Williams at the Albert Hall, and was chosen to play at Sir Paul McCartney's wedding!

Born in London to a British mother and an American soldier stationed here, it



Ray Gelato & The Giants. Ray Gelato (vocals/saxophone)  
 Manuel Álvarez (bass); Ed Richardson (drums)  
 Gunther Kurmayr (piano); Olly Wilby (saxophones)  
 Danny Marsden (trumpet) and Andy Rogers (trombone)



Xantoné Blacq



was digging through his father's record collection that ignited Ray's love for 1940s swing and the next decade's rock'n'roll and R&B sounds. Once the 1980s came around, the young Gelato was playing across Europe as part of the Chevalier Brothers, a cornerstone in the revival of swing music. Blessed with old-fashioned charm, humour and talent, Ray took his vision to the next level in 1988 forming his new big band The Giants, bringing their own distinct take on the 1940s–50s era when the hottest tickets in town were for Louis Jordan, Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington or everyone's favourite "Just a Gigolo" – Louis Prima. Ray & The Giants' repertoire includes their own high-kicking versions of compositions from some of these artists, plus a number of his own original songs – Ray's composition "Ding Ding" is featured in the movie 'Lamborghini' and the TV series 'The Godfather of Harlem'.

Expect high-energy rhythms that will make you rise and dance, blistering horn solos and plenty of audience interaction. An experience not to be missed! For full info visit [www.raygelato.com](http://www.raygelato.com)

### More about Xantoné

*"Xan captures the tradition of great groove. He's soulful, musical, and skilful. Bravo!" – Patrice Rushen*

Describing his own sound as 'free-range sunshine music', Xantoné Blacq is an exuberant London-based vocalist, multi-instrumentalist and songwriter/producer who artfully blends jazz, funk and soul with music from around the world. Born in Lagos, Nigeria, Xan's first adventures in music were playing percussion in his church in Lagos – mainly because the percussionists were the 'coolest' musicians at church! After moving to the UK at nine

years old, music took a backseat until he hit his late teens when he decided that music might just be the place for him. Initially, the idea of being in a Boyz II Men type vocal group was attractive to the young man, but it didn't take long before the more complex ideas and grooves of jazz–funk and the sophisticated feel good soul of Stevie Wonder became something to aspire to.

His first singles, 'Search For The Sun' and 'The Dance', were superb showcases of his funky, positivity-drenched sound, picking up wide critical acclaim from international tastemakers and producers such as Masters At Work, Gilles Peterson, Kyoto Jazz Massive and Jazzanova. He may wear some of the golden influences of Stevie, Quincy Jones and Herbie Hancock, but Xantoné's refined soul–jazz sound is his own. Open-hearted and a great collaborator, he toured the world several times with Amy Winehouse and Nigel Kennedy, performing everywhere from Wembley Arena to the Grammy Award ceremonies. Many leading artists have also benefited from Xan's special touch, including Jason Rebello, Randy Brecker, Emeli Sandé, Lionel Loueke, Mark Ronson, Earth Wind & Fire, Laura Mvula and Jessie J.

His 2006 album 'To The Heavens And Beyond' saw Xan bringing together some outstanding pan-global musicians, with guest performances by the legendary funk saxophonist Alfred "Pee Wee" Ellis, Brazilian vocalist Patricia Marx, classical Indian vocalists Preeti and Unnati Dasgupta, and Italian songstress Manuela Panizzo.

Xan has since remixed and recorded for groundbreaking international labels including Warner Music/Dro (Spain), Compost Records (Germany), Trama Records (Brazil) and Loop (New Zealand). He is also a highly sought after feature artist performing on the latest albums.





LoKkhi TeRra  
featuring Dele Sosimi



# WHEN KISHON MET DELE

## LoKkhi TeRra featuring Dele Sosimi

*17 May 2024, from 8.00pm, at Watford Pump House Theatre*

There really isn't a band quite like LoKkhi TeRra anywhere. Described by Songlines as "probably the world's best Afrobeat-Cuban-Bangladeshi group", this apex example of a true global fusion band encapsulates modern London with their skilful merging of cultures and musical language. Led by Kishon Khan, the band have six critically acclaimed albums under their belts, and are a sensational live experience. After exploring classical and folkloric Bangladeshi music, jazz-funk, reggae and Cuban sounds (included amongst the band members are London's finest Cuban musicians!), they teamed up with the legendary Dele Sosimi in 2018. The stunning 'CUBAFROBEAT' album was the outstanding result, the sounds and rhythms of Nigerian Afrobeat becoming another essential piece in the band's extraordinary puzzle. Expect to witness world class musicianship and an irresistible urge to move!

*"This coming together feels particularly inspired" – Evening Standard*

### More about LoKkhi TeRra

From the onset, LoKkhi TeRra have stood out. Their first album, 'No Visa Required', may have been finalised in London but separate instrumental tracks were recorded in Havana, Dhaka and Rio de Janeiro – Kishon Khan's vision of a pan-global musical family in play. Their second album, 'Che Guava's Rickshaw

Diaries', saw them stretch even further out, motivating The Sunday Times to announce "The multicultural settings effortlessly encapsulate 21st-century London. Traditional songs from Bangladesh collide with Latin rhythms, township jazz, funk and ambient shades, all seasoned with a lilting pop sensibility...Gold medals all round".

The next few years saw them embark on a series of live show collaborations with a group of legendary folk musicians from Bangladesh. The resulting Bangladeshi TV presentation, 'The Bengal Tigers Revenge', took the audience from pure mystical folk to modern day roots fusion. It also culminated in the forming of a new super band – The Shikor Bangladesh AllStars, representing the living traditions found all over Bangladesh today. From this came their brilliant 'Bangla Raga' E.P., an amazingly successful collision of heavyweight dub rhythms and Bengali vocalists and solo musicians. This beautiful relationship also created the broader roots fusion of 'Introducing Baby Akhtar' which showcased the outstanding vocals of Dewen Baby Akhtar.

Ever restless, their journey into Afrobeat came the next year with Dele, following up that success with the sublime 'CUBANGLA' album which saw the band return to their Bangla-Afro-Jazz-Latin roots, the band at their musical best.

*"Stunning Headliners... A majestic multi-cultural blend of sounds... effortlessly builds bridges between rolling Indian raga rhythms, Afro-Cuban grooves, Acid Jazz/funk and free flowing improvisation" – Timeout London*



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## More about Dele

One of the great ambassadors and innovators of the Afrobeat genre, Dele Sosimi is a Nigerian–British musician who has been at the forefront of Afrobeat since his teens when he joined the pioneering legend Fela Kuti’s Egypt 80 band as rhythm keyboardist. After seven years of recording and touring across the globe, Dele left Egypt 80 to form Femi Anikulapo-Kuti and the Positive Force with his childhood friend and eldest son of Fela, Femi. Having learned the ropes of arrangement during his time with Egypt 80, Dele became the de facto musical director and bandleader of the Positive Force, releasing three excellent albums and performing at some of the world’s greatest jazz festivals including Montreux, North Sea Jazz and Montreal.

Born in Hackney but raised in Nigeria, Dele returned to the UK in 1995 and immediately began forming a new band – Gbedu Resurrection – and working with a succession of artists, honing his already exceptional skills as a songwriter, singer and pianist. He explored jazz with The African Jazz Explosion All Stars (which also included this year’s Saturday night headliner Jean Toussaint!), and played with Lucky Ranku and the African All Stars, both bands containing a remarkable who’s who of the London jazz and African scenes.

After his first solo album ‘Turbulent Times’ was released, the ever energetic Dele threw himself into a multitude of projects. He set up the Afrobeat Vibrations club night, the still successful and premier Afrobeat event of London’s nightlife, and

his role as an educator grew via the Dele Sosimi Afrobeat Foundation and as a lecturer at Trinity Laban Conservatoire, just one of the many positions he has held. His second album, 2007’s ‘Identity’, cemented his reputation as a forward-thinking innovator in Afrobeat as he harnessed some of the modal jazz experiments of Miles Davis into his hard-hitting take on the genre. Fast forward a few years and, with his now established Dele Sosimi Afrobeat Orchestra blowing away audiences everywhere, Dele joined up with the eclectic London record label Wah Wah 45s. A hugely rewarding partnership that has seen him release his crossover hit album ‘You No Fit Am’ (produced with Nostalgia 77) and collaborate with a host of different artists, Dele has become a recognisable name across several genres, his passion, authenticity and artistry much in demand. In April 2024, his brilliant collaborative album with Sam Duckworth (Get Cape. Wear Cape. Fly) was released to great critical acclaim. Under the name Dele Sosimi & The Estuary 21, ‘The Confluence’ sees an even wider vision of where his beloved Afrobeat can go – like LoKkhi TeRra, his roots remain strong but his imagination has no chains.

## Band Line-up

Kishon Khan – keys  
Dele Sosimi – keys  
Tansay Omar – drum kit  
Frank Portuonda – bass  
Javier Camilo –  
vocals/percussion Tahmina  
Sharmeen – vocals  
Oreste Noda – conga  
Justin Thurgur – trombone  
Nick Walters – trumpet  
Ludys Hernandes – flute

# WHEN ORPHY MEETS DONALD, AGAIN



## **Jazz for Young Ones Workshop**

*18 May 2024, from 10am, at Watford Pump House Theatre*

Young people aged 4–12 can discover the infectious and adaptable nature of jazz by exploring rhythm and groove in a session designed especially for us by education experts from The Music Workshop Company. Jazz tutor Donald Gamble will lead this interactive percussion session, with guest participation from our own Orphy Robinson.

Last year, Orphy had a surprise meeting on stage with Donald, not least because they are cousins but also, realising they'd never had the opportunity to perform together. We love chance musical meetings!

Our young students won't need any experience to participate fully in the workshop, including those who play an instrument already and others who may be exploring music for the first time. Together we hope they will all discover their inner jazz musicians!

The workshop is fully interactive and leads to a performance towards the end, giving participants the chance to solo (for those feeling confident) and space away from centre stage (for those who prefer to be part of the group).

Everyone is welcome to attend the final performance at 11.45am.

**We are delighted that this morning's workshop is very kindly sponsored by Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club.**



# WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU!

Back in October 2023 we launched an ambitious Crowd Funder to help support Jazz Steps Around Oxhey Village this year. We were overwhelmed by donations – showing the love and support for our event and, of course, in all wanting to help promote amazing live music in our special community. **We thank you all, so much.**

---

## Jazz Tigers

Zoe Baines  
Andrea Bingham  
Natalie Bleicher  
Neil Coulson  
Susan Evans  
Victoria Isaacs  
Balasingham Ravi Kumar  
Jim & Esther Newstead  
Pelin Opcin  
Kin Pong Siu  
Ritula Shah  
Nini Thorpe

---

## Jazz Lions

Ian Brameld  
Karen Clarke-Taylor  
Michelle Cohen  
Silvia & Norbert Kröner  
Derek Marshall  
Nick & Susan Newstead

---

## Jazz Cats

Colin Aitchison  
John Bowtell  
Julie Bowtell  
Danton Briggs  
Charlotte Brooks  
Malcolm Bush  
Karen Campos  
McCormack  
Geraldine Crean  
Kevin Richard Cullen  
Stephen Davis  
John Downs  
Yvonne Andrea Dyer  
Elaine Edwards  
Jon Gamble  
Richard Garlick  
Aaron Goldstein  
Mark Hewetson  
Jane Hopkins, Sameer  
Kassam & Vishal Jain  
Arlette Hovinga  
Scott Huntley

---

## Jazz Cats

Peter Hutchinson  
Simon Jacques  
Stephen Jordan  
Will Kelly  
Adrian Korsner  
Viv Lavis  
Robert McKay  
Alex Murray  
Nicholas Newling  
Charlotte Newstead  
Jill Newstead  
Gillian Nunn  
Mrs H Petch  
Denis Plum  
Paul Staples  
Paul Telford  
Glenda Wood  
Graeme Wood  
Refillabell (Haydon Road,  
Oxhey Village)

**We would also like to extend our enormous thanks to match-funding provided both from Sovereign Network Group and Hertfordshire County Council's Community Innovation Fund in supporting our Jazz Steps 2024 Crowdfunder.**

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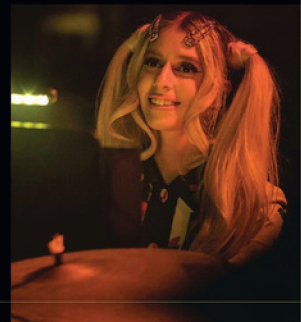
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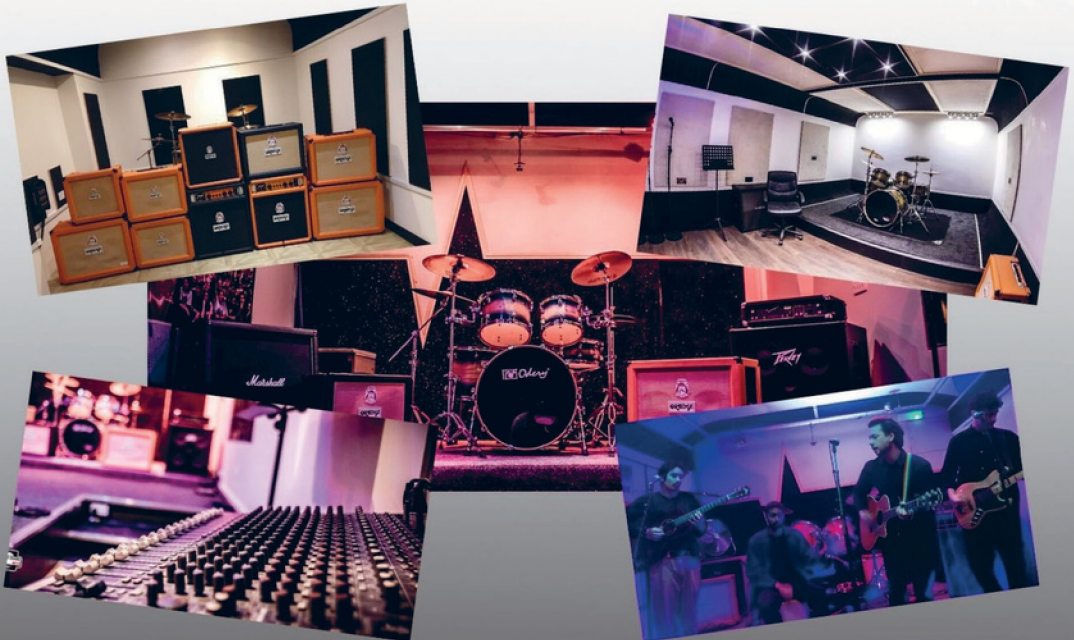
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## A VISUAL LOOK BACK AT PREVIOUS YEARS



The Hertfordshire Big Band at WJJ 2023



Byron Wallen at WJJ 2023



Jelly Cleaver at WJJ 2022



Tony Kofi plays a show at WJJ 2023



John Etheridge at WJJ 2022



Xhosa Cole at WJJ 2023





Omar at WJJ 2023



Cleveland Watkiss at WJJ 2023



Zara McFarlane at WJJ 2023



The Ten Bells Rag Band at WJJ 2022

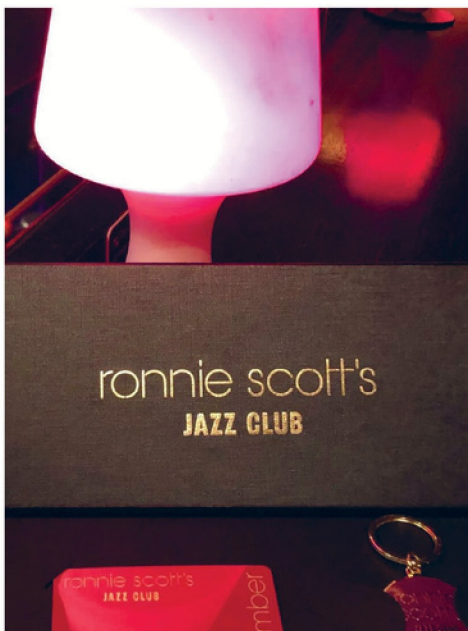


Emma Rawicz at WJJ 2023



Shri Sriram at WJJ 2022

# COMPETITION



## WIN Ronnie Scott's Deluxe Membership, a special edition Lego Jazz Quartet, and WJJ Autumn Tickets

We have 3 brilliant prizes to give away!

Ronnie Scott's have donated a Deluxe Annual Membership worth £425 that includes 2 tickets to a show in the coming year, a bottle of champagne and a special membership box of goodies, as well as all sorts of other membership benefits.

Our other two prizes are your very own jazz quartet (OK, it's a Lego jazz quartet but unlike a real one it will be yours to keep!) and 2 tickets to attend any of our autumn shows.

To enter this prize draw competition, simply visit: **[www.watfordjazzjunction.com/competition](http://www.watfordjazzjunction.com/competition)** and answer our question correctly: **Ray Gelato performed at the wedding of which member of the Beatles?** You'll also be asked to submit your name, your email, and to consider making a donation. All proceeds will go towards helping fund and run next year's festival.

*Entry to the competition is free and no donation is required (although one is most welcomed!).*

Enter competition here:



# E X H I B I T I O N

## **75 Years of Jazz Photography: Herman Leonard, Adrian Korsner & Robert Crowley**

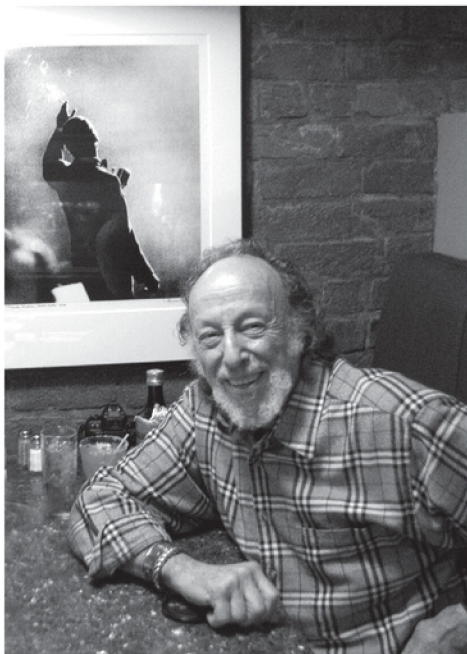
*17–18 May 2024, Watford Pump House  
Charles Room, Free entry*

This year we're delighted to present a unique and very special exhibition of jazz photography featuring selected works from Herman Leonard, Adrian Korsner and Robert Crowley.

Herman Leonard (1923-2010) is probably the world's most recognisable jazz photographer, with a lifetime of iconic shots taken of many legends including Billie Holiday, Duke Ellington, Chet Baker, and Dexter Gordon. Adrian Korsner studied and worked directly with Herman from the 1980s onwards and captured many of his own fine photos of musicians including Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, Esperanza Spalding, and The Marsalis Brothers. Robert Crowley is an official photographer at Ronnie Scott's, and has covered every show the Watford Jazz Junction has delivered, capturing many memorable shots of our artists including Cleveland Watkiss, Zara McFarlane, Tony Kofi and Jelly Cleaver.

Seeing the photographs together tells a compelling and intimate story of those performing the music we love, across 75 years, and shows the great skill brought to bear in capturing the intangible magic of single moments from musical history. The centre pages of this year's programme feature a selection of Robert's shots from our 2022 and 2023 festivals.

**This exhibition is presented with  
enormous thanks to Adrian Korsner**



Portrait of Herman Leonard by © Adrian Korsner



Tony Bennett by © Adrian Korsner



British singer IMOGEN RYALL has created a wonderful tribute to an album that was such an inspiration for her - 'Mingus', the much celebrated collaboration between legendary bassist Charlie Mingus and folk icon Joni Mitchell.

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The background of the advertisement is a photograph of a bright, modern conservatory. It has a white frame and a glass roof. Inside, there is a grey sofa with green and orange cushions, a patterned ottoman, and a small table. Large windows offer a view of a green lawn and trees. Overlaid on the image is a blue text box with white text and a white text box with blue and red text.

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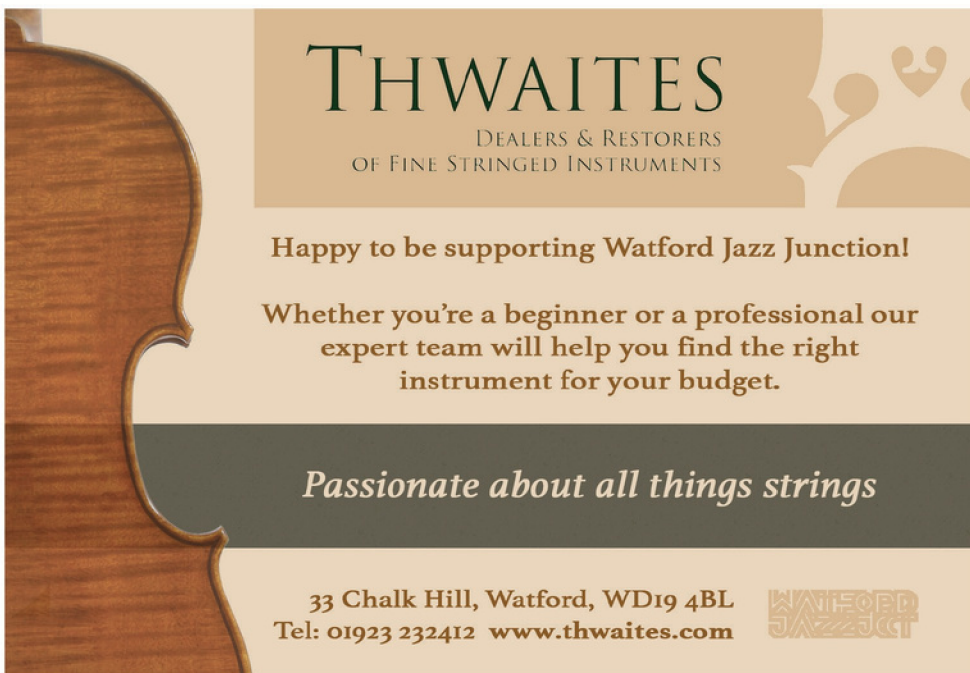
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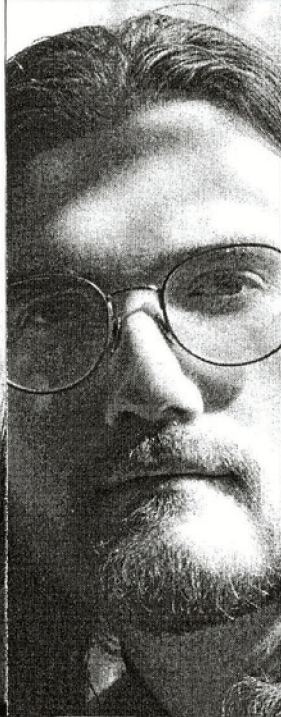
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The Fergus Quill Trio



Maddy Coombs Quartet



# WHEN FERGUS MEETS MADDY

## **The Fergus Quill Trio & Maddy Coombs Quartet**

*18 May 2024, from 3pm, at the Watford Pump House, Colne River Room*

For our Saturday Matinee this year we present two sensational young talents who, alongside their respective bands and other lineups, are already receiving deservedly wide acclaim across the UK.

Fergus Quill is a composer, arranger and bassist from Leeds, with a reputation as an explosive performer and bandleader within the city's fantastic live music scene. His original compositions reflect an eclectic spectrum of influences ranging from Sidney Bechet and Jelly Roll Morton to the avant-garde edges of Sun Ra and Derek Bailey and the Boredoms. For our matinee show, The Fergus Quill Trio will be playing music from their latest album '¡Blamo!', paying homage to the Spaghetti Westerns of the 1960s and 1970s and, in particular, the soundtracks of Italian composer Ennio Morricone. The tracks merge film theme/soundtrack style music with jazz improvisation, and they will also play extracts from their first album '¡Zoop Zoop!'.

Part of the Tomorrow's Warriors Emerging Artist Programme, Maddy Coombs is a young up-and-coming tenor saxophonist who has played alongside Judi Jackson, Soweto Kinch and Mark Kavuma, as well as leading her own line-up of music at Brighton Jazz Festival, We Out Here Festival, Pizza Express Jazz Club, Spice of Life, and a host of other venues.

Maddy is also building a reputation as a composer and arranger with her own music, drawing inspiration from many artists including Joe Henderson, John Coltrane and Carlos Niño amongst many.

## **More about Fergus**

The 2022 winner of the Musicians' Company 2022 Tina May Jazz Award, Fergus is one of the brightest and most daring new talents in the UK right now. A graduate of the Leeds Conservatoire, he is a prolific composer and performer. His first release on the Leeds-based label Tight Lines that he co-founded with members of the Conservatoire was the chaotic jazz-punk of Fergus Quill's Electric Noise Ensemble, a fearless experiment in big band cacophony for any musician, never mind one so young. Almost simultaneously, he then created the avant-garde jazz ensemble, Ferg's Imaginary Big Band, and the much smaller but equally dynamic The Fergus Quill Trio.

It was his Alice Coltrane tribute, 'Sun Dream', which he composed for the trio that led to his Tina May Award. Inspired partly by the classic piano trios of Bill Evans and Oscar Peterson, he is also influenced by the wilder imaginings of free jazz improvisation, creating a potent blend of glorious melody and danger. A first full album, 'Zoop Zoop', arrived in April 2021, swiftly followed by the live '¡Clangers!' release – a different trio this time around, with a much more humorous angle to the collaboration; tracks range from eight seconds to nearly thirty five minutes long!



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Lockdown provided Fergus with the chance to re-engage with his childhood love of Spaghetti Westerns, the sun-baked and groundbreaking soundtracks of Ennio Morricone becoming the inspiration for a new trio album alongside his core members Theo Goss and Nico Widdowson. The resulting ‘¡Blamo!’ album is clearly more than a trio recording. With vocals from ‘The Imaginettes’ and a host of guests, the album moves from expansive vocal jazz to beautiful vignettes and interludes that really showcase another side to Fergus’ (ahem) quill, gaining mentions in Jazzwise and even GQ Magazine! Ferg’s Imaginary Band finally got their many limbed bodies into the studio and released their self-titled debut album in 2023, again quickly followed by a full album homage to alto saxophonist Xero Slingsby, the 1980s Leeds alt-jazz pioneer, and a vinyl only release ‘Cadillac To Book Club’ in December of 2023. Quite a year!

Fiercely independent he may be, but Fergus also arranges and performs with the National Youth Jazz Orchestra (NYJO) and the NYJO Jazz Exchange. Through NYJO, Fergus has performed a number of his compositions at the Barbican and Ronnie Scott’s, getting the opportunity to play with the legendary Brazilian composer and multi-instrumentalist genius Hermeto Pascoal at the Barbican.

### **Fergus Quill Trio**

Fergus Quill – double bass  
Nico Widdowson – piano  
Theo Goss – drums

### **More about Maddy**

Originally from Northampton but now based in London, Maddy is a sparkling

tenor saxophonist on the rise. An alumnus of the groundbreaking Tomorrow’s Warriors and a recent graduate of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, she picked up the saxophone in her early teens, beginning a journey through some of the country’s finest academies of music.

Time spent at the National Youth Jazz Collective (NYJC) and the Royal Academy of Music at a young age led her obviously well-nurtured talent and work ethic to the doors of the Tomorrow’s Warriors organisation. Formed in 1991 by Janine Irons OBE and Gary Crosby OBE, Tomorrow’s Warriors is probably the most important developmental and educational establishment in UK jazz in the last two decades, the global success of many of their alumni an awe-inspiring testament to their dedication. At only 16, Maddy was being taught and mentored by the likes of Binker Golding, Gary Crosby and Alex Davis.

Planning to record her own material very soon, Maddy has already added her lyrical magic to recordings by previous Watford Jazz Junction performers Jelly Cleaver and Sultan Stevenson. She has been a regular attendant of different genres of improvised jam sessions since moving to London, and this experience of playing so many styles has heavily influenced her music, giving her a unique sound. With forthcoming gigs including the Love Supreme and We Out Here festivals this summer, Maddy has a bright future ahead.

### **Maddy Coombs Quartet**

Maddy Coombs – tenor saxophone  
Menelik Claffey – double bass  
Finn Carter – piano  
Zoe Pascal – drums





Jean Toussaint Quintet



# WHEN JEAN MET EMILE

## **Jean Toussaint Quintet supported by The Emile Hinton Trio**

*18 May 2024, from 7.30pm, at the Watford  
Pump House Theatre*

For lovers of superbly performed modern jazz, this will be an absolutely cracking Saturday evening show at the Pump House Theatre. With two fantastic ensembles led by musicians of very different generations but who are connected via the educational powerhouse that is Trinity Laban Conservatoire, we are expecting a stellar gig brimming with blistering solos and electrifying group dynamics.

Jean Toussaint, Grammy-winning saxophonist and Jazz Messenger, brings his quintet to Watford with his repertoire of swinging, surging straight-ahead contemporary jazz with a strong emphasis on melody. Joining him on piano will be the charismatic young composer Emile Hinton who will also open the evening's show with his Trio. In his last year at Trinity, he has already won the 2023 Musicians' Company Tina May Young Jazz Artist Award. In such an intimate venue, this promises to be a special show.

### **More about Jean**

Born in Aruba, Dutch Antilles, Jean was raised in St. Thomas in the US Virgin Islands, and then New York City. After leaving the prestigious Berklee College of Music where he was tutored by Bill Pierce, he formed a group with the trumpeter Wallace Roney before joining the legendary Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers in 1982. Straight out of college and now a Jazz Messenger! Under the guidance

of the great drummer and innovator, Jean spent four and half years performing and recording alongside inspirational musicians including Terence Blanchard, Mulgrew Miller, Donald Harrison and others. Recording three albums with Blakey, he received his Grammy for the 'New York Scene' album, still finding time to work with jazz giants such as Gil Evans, McCoy Tyner and Wynton Marsalis. His time in New York was certainly fruitful, but after Jean left Blakey in 1987 to come to England for a few months, he decided to stay in London.

A bona fide Jazz Messenger in the UK, Jean was promptly invited to be artist-in-residence at the Guildhall School of Music by Lionel Grigson, at the time the school's Professor of Jazz. In the late 1980s, Jean also held down a regular Sunday afternoon slot at the fabled Dingwalls club in Camden Town. Jean has often been invited to join tours with US musicians visiting Europe, including the late Max Roach, David Murray, pianist Cedar Walton and Donald Brown trumpeter Eddie Henderson, as well as an extensive tour of Europe, the Middle East and New York with the great Jeff Watts.

Since moving to London, Jean has nurtured his career as a bandleader and collaborator, releasing fourteen albums as a bandleader and guesting on many more. His many collaborations with musicians based in the UK have included Courtney Pine, Bheki Mseleku, Julian Joseph, Jason Rebello, Cleveland Watkiss and a host of the best players in the land, several of whom came through under the tutelage of Lionel at the Guildhall School, and latterly the pioneering The Jazz Warriors.



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Our Autumn 2024 shows

**Friday 4 October**

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Marvin Muoneke & Alex Webb

**Saturday 7 December**

A Swinging Christmas with Joanna Eden

[watfordjazzjunction.com](http://watfordjazzjunction.com)



Jean is currently on the professorial staff at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance and continues to tour and collaborate with impressive regularity. We are honoured to have him.

*“Art Blakey used to say ‘it doesn’t matter how complex you want to play, as long as you swing and play from the heart’ then he’d cite the great John Coltrane as an example. I owe it all to the great Art Blakey and I’ll be a Jazz Messenger for life.” – Jean Toussaint*

### More about Emile

Emile Hinton is one of the hottest young jazz pianists and composers coming out of the London jazz scene. An exceptional student coming to the end of his final year at the Trinity Laban Conservatoire, he was named the 2023 winner of the Musicians’

Company Jazz Musician Tina May Award after a finalist concert at Pizza Express Jazz Club in Soho, London.

Studying under the guidance of artists as acclaimed as Tony Kofi, Steve Williamson, Byron Wallen, Elliot Galvin and Bruno Heinen, and other important mentors including Julian Joseph and our own Orphy Robinson, Emile has the talent and the education to really make his mark in jazz. He has played extensively in venues in London and around the UK, notably at Ronnie Scott’s with The National Youth Jazz Orchestra. He is also currently a member of Jean Toussaint’s Quartet, playing at The Vortex and other clubs around the country. He’s enjoyed playing at festivals in and out of London with Brazilian singer Aleh Ferreira, and is a keyboardist for upcoming soul singer Natanya.

His influences as a pianist go from Nat King Cole to Bill Evans and Andrew Hill, and his love for classical, avant-garde and music from around the world shines through his own compositions, as can be heard in his recent suite for strings and piano trio: ‘Solmet’.

*“Emile is a joy to witness, he’s a thoughtful, conscientious, and well balanced young man and his talent certainly speaks for itself. I predict that he will rise rapidly through the ranks and be a musical force to be marvelled at.” – Jean Toussaint*

**We are delighted that tonight’s performance from The Emile Hinton Trio is very kindly sponsored by The Worshipful Company of Musicians**

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# WHEN 2500 OF US MEET

## Jazz Steps Around Oxhey Village

19 May 2024, from 12pm, across Oxhey Village

Join us for an all-day, family-friendly musical amble around Oxhey Village, reached immediately from Bushey mainline train station. We have more than 20 free gigs running across the village, at The Railway Arms, The Rifle Volunteer, The Villiers Arms, The Load of Hay, The Royal Oak and Oxhey Bowls Club. Stroll from pub to pub, try different drinks and food, and hear music flowing through the air like never before!

Assuming we have fair weather, up on Watford Heath (in front of the Royal Oak) we'll have enticing food and drink stalls, as well as ice cream, and 30 classic cars. You'll also find food at our other venues including a special menu at the Rifle (including children's options), yummy pizza at the Villiers, and all sorts of delicious pub food at the Royal Oak and Load of Hay.

**Venues, bands & timings** (correct at time of going to print, exact timings may vary slightly)

### The Railway: 'Mix Party'

3 live bands covering blues, fusion, neo-soul, ska and more performing outside from 12.30pm.

12.30pm **Neil C Young Trio**

2.00pm **Mama Funk**

3.00pm **Harry T Pope** with the

3.30pm **The Usual Players**

4.00pm **Mr Jazzville**

(aka **Mr Hammond**)

**Chris Phillips**

**Lil' Koko.**

**The Rifle Volunteer:** 'Straight Ahead'  
3 live modern bands performing inside from 12.30pm.

12.30pm **The Tony Oliver Quartet**

2.00pm **The Charlie Pyne Quartet**

**The Out of Handers**

**The Villiers Arms:** 'Vocal Focus' hosted by Esther Bennett

3 wonderful national jazz singers performing outside, accompanied by piano & double-bass performing from 12.30pm-5pm, with a pop-up band later in the afternoon.

12.30-5.00pm **Esther Bennett**

**Georgia Mancio**

**Roy Forbes**

5.00pm

**Alexander Williams'**

**Tiger Jazz**

**The Load of Hay:** 'Unplugged' hosted by the Gypsy Jazz Festival of London

Multiple musicians from the capital performing gypsy jazz from 12.30pm-5.00pm led by the acclaimed violinist **Tobie Medland**, founder of the Gypsy Jazz Festival of London

**The Oxhey Bowls Club:** 'A Cuppa & Jazz'

3 fabulous local jazz combos performing outside the Club, with a bar in operation across the afternoon as well as delicious cakes, tea and coffee.

12.30pm **Marginalia**

2.00pm **Watling Street Jazz Band**

3.30pm **The Hoe Daddy Swingers**

**Festival Stage:** on Watford Heath  
in front of the Royal Oak

12.00pm **Grimsdyke Brass Band**  
(acoustic in front of main stage)

1.30pm **Bucks Youth Jazz Collective**  
(modern jazz)

3.30pm **Tom Ridout Quintet**  
(original modern jazz)

5.30pm **Ronnie Scott's All Stars**  
featuring the sensational  
**Emma Smith** (jazz, swing, soul)

Plus, **Orphy Robinson's WJJ Festival Walkestra** – our very own pop-up band playing at spaces & places across the Village during the afternoon. Look out – especially if you like a bit of Elton and George Michael in a New Orleans style!

## Wristbands

Pick up a free green wristband from any of our venue stewards including special yellow 'Future Jazzer' bands for children. You can scan the code on your green band to donate towards next year's Jazz Steps Around Oxhey Village and keep the music free to all and alive & kicking.

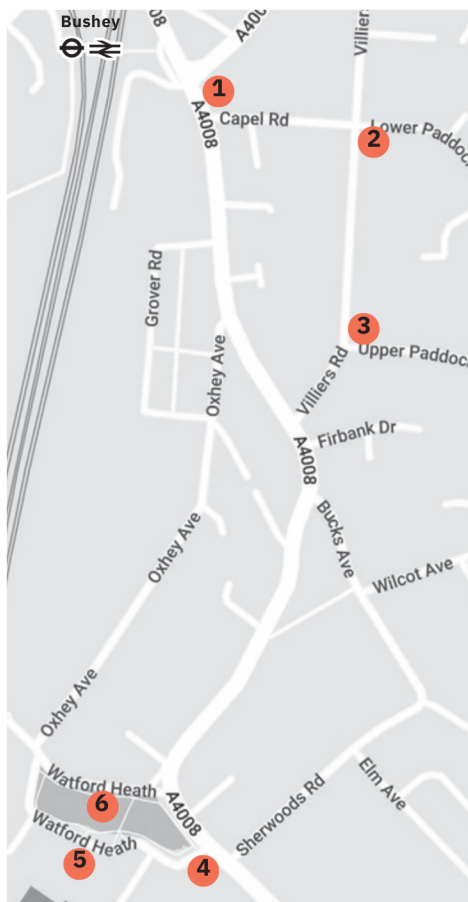
## First Aid, Lost Children, and staying safe

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. We've got a great selection of merch, with sizes to fit all.



**1** The Railway

**2** The Rifle  
Volunteer

**3** The Villiers Arms

**4** The Load of Hay

**5** The Oxhey  
Bowls Club

**6** The Royal Oak  
& Waford Heath  
Main Stage



## MORE ABOUT SOME OF OUR SENSATIONAL ACTS

### **The Ronnie Scott's All Stars featuring Emma Smith**

5.30pm, Main Stage, Watford Heath

You don't become a member of the house band of the world-famous Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club unless you can really play, so we are utterly delighted to have this exceptional outfit closing this year's festival. Led by Musical Director and pianist James Pearson, the band regularly supports the visiting international stars and frequently shares the bandstand with them at Ronnie's. Joining the All Stars will be another festival friend and one of the best jazz singers in the UK, the brilliant award winning jazz vocalist Emma Smith.

Born into a deep lineage of musical talent (her grandfather played with Sinatra for 20 years!), Emma has performed everywhere from the O2 Arena to the leading jazz clubs of New York City, collaborating and recording with the likes of Michael Bublé, Robbie Williams, Georgie Fame and Bobby McFerrin as well as releasing highly impressive albums of her own. She was a member of the vocal harmony group The Puppini Sisters, as well as enjoying a stint as a broadcaster on BBC Radio 3 and has won a cupboard full of awards including the prestigious Worshipful Company of Musicians Medal and London Music Awards' Rising Star. A formidable and versatile singer, Emma will, alongside The Ronnie Scott's All Stars, deliver extraordinary interpretations of jazz and swing classics that will get the festival jumping.

*"If you want a name for the future, then agents should not wait too long to beat a path to the door of Emma Smith."*

– The Telegraph

### **Tom Ridout Quintet**

3.30pm, Main Stage, Watford Heath

*"If you get a chance just go and see this band: their repertoire is rich in textures, complexity and virtuoso performances -you won't be disappointed"*

– John Morrow (Riff Magazine)

Tom Ridout is an award-winning saxophonist and recorder player who has quickly risen to prominence on the London jazz scene. A graduate of the Royal Academy of Music, Tom was hailed by Jazzwise Magazine as an upcoming musician to watch back in 2012 and has more than lived up to that promise in the years since. A finalist in the 2016 BBC Young Musician Jazz Award, he has since gone on to perform with some of the biggest names in jazz including Gregory Porter, Nikki Iles, Gwilym Simcock, Dave Holland and The James Taylor Quartet. He has played at many of the iconic venues such as Ronnie Scott's, The 606, the Barbican Centre as well as Buckingham Palace. A truly creative talent, Tom is a prolific composer who released his debut album "No Excuses" to great critical acclaim and we are delighted to have him and his quintet on our Festival Stage!

### **Charlie Pyne Quartet**

*2pm, The Rifle Volunteer*

You may have seen the super-talented songwriter, bassist and vocalist Charlie Pyne at WJJ before, when she performed alongside the Quartet's excellent drummer Katie Patterson with Ilario Ferrari at our first ever Gala Show back in 2022! A Guildhall graduate, Charlie's solid groove, melodic sensitivity and vivacious personality have seen her perform everywhere from the Royal Festival Hall to Ronnie Scott's and work with Yazz Ahmed amongst many of the most exciting artists in the UK and beyond.

We are honoured to have her back with her exceptional band as they play a selection of standards plus music from her stunning new album 'Nature Is A Mother', a collection of original compositions that chart a contemplative course through magnetic contemporary jazz with bold lyrics and sultry vocals, they take in elements of both Latin American and classical influences with folk undertones.

"I really feel like I've found my voice with this album, and can't wait to share the music!"

### **Neil C. Young Trio**

*12.30pm, The Railway*

*"Touches your heart and sets your hair on fire!" – Critical Jazz.com*

Part of the WJJ family now, Neil C. Young and his trio have been performing their guitar led jazz from the onset of the festival. Bluesy, funky and with a jazz-rock edge, this gifted guitarist performs all across the country and abroad but calls the North his home. His acclaimed skills have seen Neil working with Soweto Kinch, Nick Blacka from GoGo Penguin and Dan Nicholls amongst many. The Trio's 'ReWorks' series of releases sees them exploring well known rock and pop numbers, their gripping interpretations revealing a harmonic sophistication allied with a raw energy.

### **Big Mama Funk & Harry T Pope Band**

*2pm, The Railway*

Local soul and funk diva Pritee Almeida hits the stage as Big Mama Funk and with over 15 years leading her band The Funkstars (and others), she has clearly got what it takes. A star turn on Britain's Got Talent in 2011 showcased her ability to rock a James Brown classic and this is what to expect when she performs with the up-and-coming Harry T Pope Band at Jazz Steps. From jazz classics to Aretha to Amy Winehouse, Big Mama Funk is going to create some irresistible party energy! Harry T Pope will also be performing a couple of his own soulful originals alongside the classic songbook of Big Mama Funk.

# THANK YOU

## **Watford Jazz Junction Advisory Board**

Orphy Robinson MBE (chair), Ruth Fisher (head of programming), Zoe Baines, Alex Brooks, Anke Kroner, Alex Murray, Chris Newstead (festival director), and Chris Philips for his invaluable programming support.

## **Watford Jazz Junction Residents & Business Representation Group**

Ben Atkins (Oxhey Village Environment Group), Julie Bart, Shaun Blake, Holly Dronsfield, Sam Swetal, Zak Hawkins, Ravi Kumar, Sameer Munjal, and Paul Rowbottom.

## **Watford Jazz Junction Festival Team**

Our sound technicians (including Jason Brameld, Miles Ashton, Albert Chinn, Maurice Sylvester, Josh Ellis and Bertie Spencer); our stage manager Justin Turford; our artist liaison and production manager Judy Rollinson; our logistics whizz Gareth Majors; and our amazing volunteers including Rod Andrews, Marion McCrindle, Junior Nyeko, Shaun Blake, Viv Lavis, Berangere Botto, Kate West, Joanne Conway, Kevin Hobbs, Will Kelly, Kiron Jones, Ava, Freya & Yaz, and many, many more.

## **With special thanks**

Louise Tipping and Lee Farman (Pump House Theatre & Arts Centre), Sam Ford (Watford Palace Theatre), Gill Worgan and Matt Bown (West Herts College), Simon Allen (Purcell School), Danny & Chris (Sanctuary Studios), Peter Taylor, Helen Smith and Lewis Butler (Watford Borough Council), Adrian Korsner and Martin Goldsmith, Cerys Matthews, Stephen Andrews (Lit Fibre), Fred and the team (Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club), Chris Gilvear

(Jazz FM), Ilario Ferrari, Bill and Jack Pamplin (Thwaites), Philippa Steel (Yamaha Music UK), Marta Rios and Amy Houghton (Sovereign Network Group), Ben Costello (Worshipful Company of Musicians), and for everyone else who's provided so much support again this year. With an extra special thank you, as always, to Pelin Opcin (Serious). And, above all, a huge thank you to all our wonderful musicians including every member of our inaugural Watford Jazz Junction Walkestra.

## **Funders**

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## **Programme Credits**

Artist notes writer: Justin Turford  
for Truth and Lies  
Programme editor: Dr Giles Newton  
Programme & festival design: Bret Syfert  
See you in 2025!



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