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Notes from editor (not for publication):

Hi, Eugene — A few of the misspellings/corrections I fixed after checking info that I figured you might want to know about for your website, programs, archives, etc.

- Jacksonville Music Heritage Park Walk of Fame
- *Modern Drummer* magazine
- Dick Oatts
- Justin DiCioccio
- Theo Croker

I also looked at transcripts of the podcasts referenced. Anything between quotes should be what people have said. Paraphrase to your heart's content outside of the quotes or within brackets. I'm never going to be a stickler about filler words, though. (I completely understand the challenge of the first podcast you quote — he was all over the place there.)

As always, for me, music is not an area of expertise — far from it. I do my best to have your back, but if I misunderstood or screwed anything up, please let me know. —All the best, Jeff

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

- 1 'One of the things that makes jazz really special is
- 2 connectivity'

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

Ulysses Owens Jr., a three-time Grammy winner, joins
VJC for its annual Emerging Artist Festival

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TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

THE EMERGING ARTIST FESTIVAL (EAF) is one of the
cornerstones of the Vermont Jazz Center's programming. Now in
its eighth year, the EAF takes place during the first weekend of
November.

Headlining this year's festival will be three-time Grammy
Award-winning drummer, Ulysses Owens, who will be joined by
a group of rising stars he calls the Generation Y Band, featuring
Anthony Hervey (trumpet), Langston Hughes II (saxophones and
flute), Liya Grigoryan (piano), and Guillermo Lopez on bass.

Fundamental to EAF's mission is participation by local
student groups, who will perform during Gallery Walk at 118
Elliot Street on Friday, Nov. 7, and at the Vermont Jazz Center
during the day on Saturday, Nov. 8.

Confirmed ensembles so far include groups from
Vermont Academy, Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter
School, Brattleboro Union High School, Northfield Mount
Hermon, the VJC Youth Jazz Ensemble, the University of
Massachusetts Amherst, the Samadhi Mathes Quartet, and Emily
Margaret's exciting new band.

Other features of the festival include a clinic for all ages
and an evening concert for the public with Ulysses Owens and
Generation Y.

All Friday and Saturday daytime activities for the EAF are
open to the public and free (donations are appreciated). Owens
and Generation Y's concert at the VJC's performance space is a
ticketed event.

* * *

33 OWENS IS A jazz educator at the highest level. He is the
34 Small Ensemble director at The Juilliard School and the artistic
35 director for Don't Miss a Beat, his family's Florida-based
36 nonprofit organization that provides free after-school resources in
37 the arts.

38 In [a conversation](#) with the *Bottom of the Bill* podcast,
39 Owens described the arts as “the bridge to a better life; we
40 believe that by introducing kids to the arts, [it helps them]
41 develop.”

42 “I always say it’s my life’s work and being an artistic
43 director changes how I do everything,” he said.

44 While Owens will be joined in his clinic at the Vermont
45 Jazz Center by the Generation Y Ensemble, he’s also likely to call
46 on area youth to join him on the stage. Owens’s workshops
47 emphasize the importance of rhythm for all musicians, not just
48 drummers and bassists. They also emphasize the significance of
49 deep listening and illustrate how each musician in an ensemble
50 contributes to a group’s energy and sound.

51 In a 2020 clinic for the Artist in Resonance program at
52 the Timucua Arts Foundation, Owens said: “To me one of the
53 things that makes jazz really special is connectivity. Once we are
54 all fulfilling our roles in this music then we connect with each
55 other, and that’s when the magic comes in.”

56 * * *

57 OWENS WAS SELECTED as Jazz Drummer of 2024 by
58 *Modern Drummer* readers’ poll and is among those pictured on
59 the cover of the magazine’s December issue that year. He also
60 won Drumeo’s 2024 Jazz Drummer of the Year award.

61 He was recently inducted into the Jacksonville Music
62 Heritage Park Walk of Fame and selected as Rising Star Jazz
63 Drummer of the Year by the 2025 *DownBeat* Readers’ Poll. He
64 has released seven albums as a bandleader, including two as a
65 big band leader.

66 He is a frequent performer at Jazz at Lincoln Center and
67 appears on dozens of recordings. He has published three books:

68 *Jazz Brushes for the Modern Drummer*, *Jazz Big Band for the*
69 *Modern Drummer*, and *The Musician's Career Guide*. He has
70 presented clinics throughout the world.

71 Owens is a member of the Abyssinian Baptist Church,
72 where he first learned how to play the drums. In an [interview](#)
73 with *Jazz Talk* from 2021, he described growing up in an
74 environment of preachers and evangelists in the church where his
75 mother was choir director.

76 "By the time I was eight or nine I was the drummer for
77 the whole church. I had the youth choir, I was playing for three
78 adult choirs, I played for all the revivals. [...] When I told my
79 mother that I didn't feel like going to church she said to me 'you
80 want to let down the choir and so-and-so and so-and-so?' So, I
81 understood that my role as a drummer was important, but
82 furthermore the responsibility and the blessing behind being a
83 drummer at such a young age for such a large ministry was great,
84 and it helped me to really take things very seriously early on."

85 Owens frequently acknowledges his faith and
86 collaborated with Wynton Marsalis in a forum, "Exploring the
87 Intersection of Jazz and Spirituality." In reviewing Owens's
88 recording *Soul Conversations*, Bobby E. Davis Jr. of Black
89 Grooves [states](#) that Owens' music "is full of exhilarating and
90 breathtaking tunes that will have you on your feet dancing at
91 some moments and thinking critically about the state of the world
92 in others."

93 The Generation Y Band is a concept that Owens brought
94 to fruition in 2019. Using this group as his primary performance
95 vehicle, he has achieved his goal of promoting the next
96 generation of talent. To form his bands, Owens gleans the best
97 musicians from the top music conservatories in New York City.

98 This model was proven numerous times in the history of
99 our music. Owens' Generation Y is an updated model of Art
100 Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, and Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead
101 Program at the Kennedy Center. Both artists were renowned for

102 their own bands that launched the careers of many paradigm-
103 shifting musicians.

104 In a podcast with Bite Size Jazz, Owens reflected: “I
105 think that the biggest thing that we can do in jazz right now is to
106 have an intergenerational focus.

107 “I think that what we’ve lacked, unlike other industries, is
108 that in our effort [...] to keep the tradition of our heroes alive, the
109 spirit of the greats before us, we sometimes don’t fully affirm and
110 involve the younger generation. [...] I think the best of everything
111 and anything is when you have all voices represented.”

112 * * *

113 THIS SEASON’S iteration of Owens’s Generation Y Band is
114 made up primarily of musicians from Generation Z (born
115 between 1997 and 2012). Performing on trumpet will be Anthony
116 Hervey, who has been called “a beautiful trumpet player of the
117 first magnitude” by Wynton Marsalis.

118 Hervey has performed and recorded with the Lincoln
119 Center Big Band, the Mingus Big Band, Christian McBride, Jon
120 Batiste, and Michael Bublé. Hervey appeared at the VJC last May
121 with Endea Owens.

122 Saxophonist Langston Hughes II has toured with Wynton
123 Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and performed
124 with Rufus Reid, Jazzmeia Horn, Orrin Evans, and Nat Adderley
125 Jr.

126 Armenian-born pianist Liya Grigoryan was a 2018 finalist
127 in the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition. She was
128 a featured artist on *Live from Emmet’s Place* and has performed
129 and toured with Dick Oatts, Gary Smulyan, John Clayton, Justin
130 DiCioccio, Theo Croker, and others.

131 Bassist Guillermo Lopez won first prize (the Scott LaFaro
132 Prize) in the International Society of Bassists Double Bass
133 Competition in 2025. He has performed with Willie Jones III,
134 Carlos Averhoff Jr., Alexa Torres, Ed Soph, and many others.

135 * * *

136 Admission to the in-person event is offered on a sliding
137 fee scale beginning at \$25. Tickets can be purchased at vtjazz.org
138 or by calling 802-254-9088, ext. 1. The online streaming of this
139 concert is offered by donation and are just a click away. Please
140 give generously and support live music. For more information or
141 to access the livestream, visit vtjazz.org.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

142 **EUGENE UMAN** is director of the Vermont Jazz Center.
143 *The Commons'* Deeper Dive column gives artists, arts
144 organizations, and other nonprofits elbow room to write in first
145 person and be unabashedly opinionated, passionate, and
146 analytical about their own creative work and events.

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

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