

—Slug:..... COMM-0864.arts.VJC_Jones
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Notes from editor (not for publication):



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Educator, innovator, and ‘defining voice’ will perform

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2 Trumpeter Sean Jones will demonstrate his virtuosity and
3 brilliance at the Vermont Jazz Center on May 16

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4 TEXT BODY:

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5 THE VERMONT JAZZ CENTER is honored to welcome
6 trumpeter Sean Jones and his touring quartet — including Seth
7 Finch (piano), Aiden Taylor (acoustic bass), and Koleby Royston
8 (drums) — to the VJC’s Cotton Mill Hill venue on Saturday, May
9 16.

10 Trumpeter Sean Jones has been described on Newark
11 NPR affiliate WGBO's program *The Art of the Story* as "one of the
12 predominant voices of his generation."

13 His resume resonates with awards and accolades from
14 the jazz media, including Trumpeter of the Year (Jazz Journalists
15 Association), Best New Artist, (*JazzTimes*), and Rising Star Winner
16 (four times in *DownBeat* magazine). He has garnered three
17 Grammys for his sideman work with Dianne Reeves, Nancy
18 Wilson, and Gerald Wilson, and was chosen by Wynton Marsalis
19 to be the lead trumpeter of the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra
20 from 2004 to 2010.

21 Jones has been the head of the Jazz Studies Department
22 at Peabody Conservatory since 2018. He and his wife, Brinae Ali,
23 are co-founding directors of the Baltimore Jazz Collective. He has
24 devoted his life to the pursuit of personal development through
25 educating himself and others.

26 He grew up in what he has referred to as "the cultural
27 desert of Warren, Ohio in an abusive household." As a youth,
28 Jones found participating and singing with his local Pentecostal
29 church meaningful, specifically through the study of scripture and
30 in the wisdom discovered through extensive reading.

31 A steady presence on jazz podcasts, Jones cites lessons
32 learned in books like *The War of Art* by Steven Pressfield, *Post*
33 *Traumatic Slave Syndrome* by Dr. Joy DeGruy, and *The Power of*
34 *Now* by Eckhart Tolle.

35 Jones often alludes to the concept of "one mind." He
36 stresses the importance of patience and practice, and he is quick
37 to draw from an extensive repertoire of memorized quotes to
38 prove his points.

39 For example, in a podcast with John Daversa (who calls
40 Jones "one of the defining voices of modern jazz"), he
41 paraphrased Jimi Hendrix, saying "I used to live in a world full of
42 mirrors and all I could see was me, then I took my soul and I
43 crashed all those mirrors and now the whole world is there for
44 me to see."

45 Along with his constant search for the meaning of life,
46 Jones creates projects that convey his knowledge and transmit the
47 essences of his passions. For the last several years he has been
48 touring *Dizzy Spellz*, a tribute to Dizzy Gillespie that Jones
49 organized with Ali, a brilliant choreographer, singer, storyteller,
50 poet and tap dancer.

51 According to the work's promo, *Dizzy Spellz* offers "a
52 deeper look at the intersecting cultural and spiritual dilemmas
53 within the African Diaspora through the music of Dizzy
54 Gillespie."

55 *Dizzy Spellz* wraps in "the racial and social dynamics in
56 the Deep South, creating and curating the bebop movement in
57 New York, to his spiritual journey to Africa and his delve into
58 Afro-Cuban music and the Bahá'í faith."

59 In *Dizzy Spellz*, Jones and Ali illustrate the collective
60 principles upon which they live their lives.

61 In a 2024 article published in *By the Way Berkshires*,
62 Jones states: "I believe that Dizzy Gillespie inherently understood
63 jazz's genius outside of its sonic genius, its ability to allow people
64 to have individual freedom but with respect to the group.

65 "That is arguably the greatest version of the democratic
66 process sonically that we could get, and Dizzy Gillespie
67 understood that. He worked out with the United Nations, right?
68 He brought people together. They [the jazz musicians] were
69 ambassadors for the country, the best of what the country could
70 be."

71 * * *

72 JONES CONTINUES to move forward — to search and
73 create. Along with his work at Peabody, he is the artistic director
74 of both the Cleveland and Pittsburgh Jazz orchestras, artist-in-
75 residence at San Francisco Performances, and a member of The
76 SFJAZZ Collective.

77 In addition, he serves as a member of the Jazz Education
78 Network's board of directors and was recently appointed as
79 artistic director of Carnegie Hall's NYO Jazz (National Youth

80 Orchestra). He taught at the Berklee College of Music as the chair
81 of the Brass Department, and he formerly held teaching positions
82 at Duquesne University and at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music
83 — all while regularly offering concerts, master classes and clinics
84 around the world.

85 Jones has released eight highly regarded recordings as a
86 leader, mostly with his steady band, which includes Orrin Evans
87 on piano, Luques Curtis on bass, and Obed Calvaire on drums.

88 For live touring, he prefers to work in the mold of the late
89 drummer, Art Blakey, using the opportunity to feature up-and-
90 coming musicians in his groups.

91 Jones has recorded with many jazz luminaries, including
92 Joe Lovano, Chico O’Farrill, Jimmy Heath, Charles Fambrough,
93 Gerald Wilson, Steve Turre, Tia Fuller, Emmet Cohen, Nancy
94 Wilson, and Dianne Reeves. In 2011, he toured with Marcus
95 Miller, Herbie Hancock, and Wayne Shorter in an all-star
96 ensemble that performed as “A Tribute to Miles.”

97 * * *

98 FOR THE May 16 concert at the Vermont Jazz Center,
99 Jones will be in the company of three young performers he has
100 personally trained.

101 The group’s pianist, Seth Finch, is from Baton Rouge,
102 Louisiana. He recently graduated from the Juilliard School and
103 has toured internationally and shared the stage with Dianne
104 Reeves, Kurt Elling, Quiana Lynell, Troy Davis, Wycliffe Gordon,
105 and Jeremy Davenport.

106 Bassist Aiden Taylor recently graduated from Peabody
107 Conservatory with degrees in jazz bass performance and
108 recording arts and sound engineering. He has been a five-time
109 *DownBeat* Magazine Student Music Award winner, a YoungArts
110 Winner, the 2020 Young Artist of the Year for the Society for the
111 Preservation of the Great American Songbook, and the bassist for
112 the 2020 Jazz Band of America.

113 Drummer Koleby Royston, also a recent graduate of
114 Peabody Conservatory, is the son of two high-level jazz artists:

115 pianist Shamie Royston (Fuller) and drummer Rudy Royston. He
116 has performed at the Kennedy Center, and worked alongside Joel
117 Ross, Allison Miller, Mark Whitfield Jr., Tia Fuller, Mimi Jones,
118 Josh Evans, and others.

119 Come listen to the Sean Jones Quartet at the Vermont
120 Jazz Center on May 16 and find out why the Trumpet Summit
121 podcast calls him “one of the greatest trumpet players in the
122 world.”

123 * * *

124 *Thanks to sponsorship engagement, VJC operates using a*
125 *subsidized ticket system, which lowers the cost per ticket to \$25*
126 *even though the value per seat is more than double that amount.*
127 *Make reservations early; it is anticipated that this concert will sell*
128 *out.*

129 General admission is \$25(sliding scale; additional
130 donation encouraged). Tickets can be reserved at vtjazz.org, or
131 by phone 802-254-9088, Ext. 1. Those with accessibility needs
132 should email or call to schedule a time for one of our staff to
133 meet your party.

134 For those unable to attend in person, check out the VJC’s
135 livestream at vtjazz.org.

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BIO/COATTAIL:

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136 **EUGENE UMAN** is director of the Vermont Jazz Center.
137 *The Commons’ Deeper Dive* column gives artists, arts
138 organizations, and other nonprofits elbow room to write in first
139 person and be unabashedly opinionated, passionate, and
140 analytical about their own creative work and events.

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