

PRESS RELEASE

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Westport
Arts
Center

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Riverside
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Images attached:

1. New Duke. Photo by Jack Beggs.
2. Brian Torff; composer, vocalist and harmonica/bass for New Duke. Contributed photo.

Jazz Ensemble New Duke To Perform Unique Duke Ellington Mash Ups *A Concert for the Whole Family on April 2*

Gather the whole family for a lively concert by jazz ensemble New Duke on Saturday, April 2 at 3 p.m. **The Westport Arts Center jazz concert will be held at the Pequot Library in Southport, CT.**

This concert was previously scheduled for January 24 and was postponed to April 2 due to inclement weather.

New Duke is an exciting eight-piece jazz ensemble that combines the past music of Duke Ellington's Cotton Club period through the 1960s with the modern grooves of hip-hop, rock and reggae. Their music experimentation with Ellington classics such as "Don't Get Around Much Anymore" and "Rockin' in Rhythm" parallels Ellington's approach of constant experimentation within his own music.

As an example of New Duke's "mash-up style," the band will take a song by The Doors, combine it with a Duke Ellington piece, and play it in a Jamaican ska style -- Jim Morrison meets Duke Ellington meets Bob Marley.

Jazz aficionados and novices will also enjoy a special talk from Brian Torff, New Duke bassist and composer, as part of the event. He will discuss the influence of Duke Ellington and New Duke's mash-up style.

"New Duke's blend of melodies, rhythms, and sonic movements give audiences a new experience -- complex yet accessible jazz that makes the heart swing," said Torff, who also serves as both the director of jazz and popular music at Fairfield University and as the curator of the Westport Arts Center's jazz series.

"You can't replicate Ellington's music, but you can build on it in new ways, and that's what we try to do. We play Duke Ellington's music but we mash it up with Jimi Hendrix, The Doors, James Brown, Pharrell Williams, and whatever else I

throw in. This is a great opportunity to expose the whole family to the rich culture of American music,” Torff added.

The audience is also welcomed to be part of the New Duke experience. In their “Mandela Freedom Suite,” an original tribute to the South African leader, the audience can join in with chanting and hand clapping.

In addition to Torff on bass, harmonica and vocals, New Duke consists of Darryl Tookes on vocals, Jamie Finegan, trumpet; Rick Sadlon, saxophone and flute; Steve Moran, tenor and baritone sax; John Fumasoli, trombone; Dave Childs, keyboards; and Greg Burrows on drums.

Tickets for the concert are \$25 for Westport Arts Center members, \$30 for non-members and \$10 for students. Concert tickets can be purchased through www.westportartscenter.org or by calling 203/222-7070. A limited number of discounted Senior concert tickets will be available for presale at the Westport Center for Senior Activities, 21 Imperial Avenue, Westport.

Tickets previously purchased for the January concert are valid for the April 2 date.

The Westport Arts Center thanks WPKN for their support and sponsorship.

About the Westport Arts Center

The Westport Arts Center, a nonprofit organization dedicated to connecting community through the arts, reaches more than 11,000 people annually through outstanding programs in visual arts, arts education, and the performance arts of Chamber music and jazz.

The Westport Arts Center also receives philanthropic support from 4th Row Films, the Aibel Foundation, the Arnhold Foundation, Artur and Heida Hermanns Holde Foundation, Inc., Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Bernstein Global Wealth Management, Borrowed - A Vintage Inspired Company, the Brant Foundation, CBP, Cannupa Foundation, the Carl Marks Foundation, Cohen and Wolf, P.C., the Connecticut Office of the Arts, EC Infosystems, Finn Dixon & Herling LLP, Fairfield County Bank, Fairfield County Community Foundation, Festivities, Gault, Energy, Geiger's, GWAY Marketing Gymnasium, the Hall Art Foundation, KD & J Botanica, Land Rover Milford, Landtech, Lillian August, LLBH Private Wealth Management LLC, Madison/Mott, Main Street Resources/Green Village Initiative, Meadow Ridge, the Mitchell's Family of Stores, Moffly Media, Newman's Own Foundation, Riverside Management Group, Saugatuck Sweets, the Shack Sackler Foundation, the Sheffer Family Foundation, Sontag Advisory LLC, Stamford Tent, Steel Shed, Sun Hill Foundation, Thomas C. Hofstetter and Daniel Baron of The Saugatuck Group,

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For more information, contact the Westport Arts Center at [\(203\) 222-7070](tel:2032227070) or www.westportartscenter.org. The Westport Arts Center gallery is open Monday - Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 51 Riverside Avenue, Westport, CT.

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