Jazz Journalists Association Announces "Jazz Heroes"

Organization honors 24 who've supported the music

By Jeff Tamarkin

The Jazz Journalists Association has announced its 2014 "Jazz Heroes," two dozen individuals who, according to a press release, are "activists, advocates, altruists, aids and abetters of jazz." The honorees were chosen by the JJA in collaboration with grass roots supporters in 21 U.S. cities and Toronto. The announcement coincides with the launch of JazzApril, a media campaign celebrating local scenes during Jazz Appreciation Month, which culminates in International Jazz Day.

According to the press release, "The 2014 Jazz Heroes include music educators, festival producers, venue operators and presenters, broadcasters and journalists, a municipal cultural administrator, an instrument repair angel, and musicians who have been mentors to up and coming musicians as well as audiences."

Alphabetically, the heroes are:

Herold Battiste, New Orleans-based saxophonist, composer-arranger and producer;

John Blelloch, co-producer of the Wall Street Jazz Festival, Kingston NY

Gephie Bowles, president and CEO of WBGO, Newark NJ

Raymond Brown, trumpeter and head of jazz studies at Cabrillo College near Santa Cruz, CA

Faye Carol, vocalist and educator in the SF Bay Area

Bill Foster, founder of Detroit's Jazz Network Foundation

Bobby Hill, writer and broadcaster at WPFW, Washington DC

Joseph Jennings, saxophonist and retired educator in Atlanta

Jennifer Johnston Washington, director of programming for Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events

Dr. John Lennihan, cross-genre trumpeter and educator in Maryland

Emilio Lyons, the Sax Doctor of Boston

Thara Memory, composer, trumpeter and educator in Portland OR

Vita West Muir, founder and producer of the Litchfield Jazz Festival and Jazz Camp

Thomas Pierce, a Schenectady-based Swingtime Jazz Society and A Place for Jazz

Jon Potts, founder and executive director of the "We Always Swing"® Jazz Series in Columbia MO

Geraldine "Gerry" Seay, owner/operator of B Sharps Jazz Café, Tallahassee

Meghan Stabile, founder of Revive Music Group

Peggy Stern, pianist and co-founder/producer of the Wall Street Jazz Festival, Kingston NY

Janis Stinson, trumpet and director of bands at Bloomington High School North, Bloomington IN

Bill Strickland, founder of Manchester Craftsmen's Guild

Patrick Taylor, founder and producer of the Toronto Jazz Festival

Larry Reni Thomas, journalist and radio broadcaster working with Art of the Cool, Durham NC

Wayne Thompson, writer and festival board member, Portland OR

Jim Wilke, Jazz After Hours radio show producer, Seattle

Sponsors of the JJA's JazzApril, Jazz Heroes and Jazz Awards include the Jazz Cruises, North Coast Brewing Company, the Ella Fitzgerald Foundation, Berklee College of Music, Century Media Partners LLC, the Jazz Institute of Chicago, JazzBoston and the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild.