The Jazz Journalists Association Announces "Jazz Heroes"

Two dozen "Jazz Heroes" - activists, advocates, altruists, aiders and abettors of jazz - have been announced today by the Jazz Journalists Association in collaboration with grass roots supporters in 21 U.S. cities and Toronto, Canada to kick off a JazzApril media campaign celebrating local scenes during Jazz Appreciation Month, which culminates in International Jazz Day.

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 'n' coming musicians as well as audiences. Jazz Heroes will be presented with engraved statuettes during April public events in Atlanta, Baltimore, Bloomington IN, Boston, Chicago, Columbus MO, Detroit, Durham NC, Kingston NY, the Litchfield CT region, New Orleans, New York, Newark, Pittsburgh, Portland OR, Santa Cruz, the SF Bay Area, Seattle, Schenectady, Tallahassee, Toronto and Washington D.C.

Alphabetically, the heroes are:

Harold Battiste, New Orleans-based saxophonist, composer, arranger and producer;
John Bilotti, co-producer of the Wall Street Jazz Festival, Kingston NY
Cephas 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 WPPM, Washington DC
Joseph Jennings, saxophonist and retired educator in Atlanta
Jennifer Johnson Washington, director of programming for Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events
Dr. John Lamkin II, 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, activist for the Schenectady-based Swingtime Jazz Society and A Place for Jazz
Jon Posey, founder and executive director of the "We Always Swing" Jazz Series in Columbia MO
Geraldine "Gerry" Seay, owner/operator of B Sharps Jazz Cafe, Tallahassee
Meghan Stabile, founder of Revive Music Group
Peggy Stern, pianist and co-founder/producer of the Wall Street Jazz Festival, Kingston NY
Janis Stockhouse, trumpeter 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

Jazz Heroes were first name in 2010 as an honored conferred by the Jazz Journalists Association in consultation with its members and informally affiliated jazz supporters and organizations. The Jazz Heroes initiative is an outgrowth of the JJA's "A Team" of "activists, advocates, altruists, aiders and abettors of jazz," first designated as such in 2001.

Jazz Heroes celebrations are part of the JJA's larger JazzApril media campaign, now in its third year, and the JJA's annual Jazz Awards, recognizing excellence in jazz and jazz journalism, begun in 1997. Winners of JJA Jazz Awards for musical excellence will be announced online at JJAJazzAwards on April 15; winners of JJA Jazz Awards for excellence in music journalism will be announced at the New York City Jazz Awards party at the Blue Note Jazz Club on June 11.

Sponsors of the JJA's JazzApril, Jazz Heroes and Jazz Awards include The Jazz Cruise, 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.