



### **Nicholas Payton—Guest Artist**

Since 1994, when Nicholas Payton made his recording debut as a leader with his album *From This Moment*, the trumpeter has been lauded as a significant, top-tier voice in jazz. Heralded as one of the new-generation guardians of the hard bop flame, Payton consistently committed himself to discovering his voice outside of the strict confines of a “rearview mirror approach” to the music. A true leader in the genre, Nicholas continues to push the envelope and move the music forward by meshing contemporary influences into his unique and distinctive sound.

Born into a musical family and mentored by two Crescent City jazz masters, Clyde Kerr Jr. at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts and Ellis Marsalis at the University of New Orleans, Patyon was well-prepared to leap into the jazz fray when he emerged on the New York jazz scene in the early 1990s.

While his jazz journey has taken him down many roads, including the red carpet for his Grammy winning recording with Doc Cheatham (1996)—the 35-year-old trumpeter has blossomed into his own musical maturity in a relatively short period of time. A testament to his prolific abilities, Nicholas Payton is also an accomplished musician on a multitude of instruments including piano, bass, saxophone, trombones, tuba, clarinet and drums.

Nicholas will be releasing his latest recording for Concord Records expected in the Spring of 2010.

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### **Kenni Holmen—Guest Artist**

One of the most active touring and recording musicians from the Twin Cities Area, Kenni Holmen has performed with a multitude of local, national and international acts over his 20-year career and was named “Best Tenor Sax Player of the Year” by the *Twin Citites Reader*. In addition to recording album projects and jingles, he also writes, co-produces and has performed with New Age artist Lori Line since 1993, including a performance at the White House in the fall of 2000.

Kenni has performed with Michael Bolton, Celine Dion, Prince, Johnny Mathis, Tony Bennett, T.C. Monk, Dizzy Gillespie, The Glenn Miller Orchestra, Doc Severinson, Garrison Keilor and many others. He has recorded with Janet Jackson, Rod Stewart, Gladys Knight and Chaka Khan to name a few.

Kenni is also a member of Prince’s horn section, *The Hornheads* and has been touring with them since 1992.

## **Connie Evingson—Guest Artist**

Connie Evingson, a Minneapolis based jazz vocalist, has appeared in clubs and concert halls across the U.S., in Europe and Japan. She has been a guest soloist with the Minnesota Orchestra and the Toronto Symphony conducted by Doc Severinsen and the Vocalessence Music Series with Bobby McFerrin. She is the creator of the original stage production, *Fever, A Tribute to Peggy Lee*, which she has performed at theatres across the country and excerpted at New York's Town Hall. She has been featured on the Smithsonian's "Jazz Singers" radio series, and on numerous compilation discs including *Jazziz Magazine's Vocals on Fire* CD and Sharper Image's *New Sirens of Song* along with Diana Krall, Norah Jones, Stacy Kent and others. Connie has released eight CDs, all of which charted in the Top 50 Jazz Releases in the U.S. and Canada.

Evingson has been a member of the vocal jazz ensemble *Moore By Four* since 1986, with whom she has toured the U.S., Europe and Japan, appeared on Garrison Keillor's *Prairie Home Companion*, and opened for Harry Connick, Jr., Joe Williams, Sarah Vaughan, Carmen McRae and Dizzy Gillespie. She was among the top 15 contestants in the 1998 Thelonius Monk Vocal Competition and is the winner of the 2000-2001 and 2005-2006 McKnight Artist Fellowship Award for Performing Musicians administered by MacPhail Center for Music.

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## **Randy Sabien—Guest Artist**

NPR's *Jazz Profiles* dubbed Randy "The past, present and future of jazz violin." His eclectic style started with classical violin lessons. From there he learned how to play along with records by the Grateful Dead, Papa John Creach, James Taylor and others. His most pivotal musical influence came when he first heard the music of the great jazz violinist, Stephane Grappelli. With a new musical focus, he began learning and playing the jazz of the 30s, 40s, and 50s on his violin.

In 1977 Randy enrolled at The Berklee College of Music in Boston. One year later, at the age of 21, he returned to found and chair their new jazz string department. He stayed there another three years. After Berklee, Randy performed with and produced three albums for Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee, Jim Post. This led to violin, mandolin, guitar and piano accompaniment for a host of singer/songwriter. In between folk gigs, he worked on material for an album with his newly formed jazz quintet.

The album that emerged from all of these influences was a colorful, melodic, energetic album of blues based jazz. *In a Fog* was released and sent out for review in 1981 by Flying Fish Records. *Billboard*, *Jazz Times*, *The Christian Science Monitor* and *USA Today* gave it glowing reviews. Sabien was voted "Artist Deserving Wider Recognition" in *Downbeat Magazine's* annual critics' poll. Randy currently owns his own record label, Fiddlehead Music and plays regularly as a jazz violin guest soloist with symphonies across the country.

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## **Matt Turner—Guest Artist**

Matt Turner is regarded as one of the world's leading improvising cellists. Also a highly accomplished pianist, Turner performs everything from jazz standards and twentieth century new music to alternative rock and improvised avant-garde. Turner completed his undergraduate studies at Lawrence University and his Master of Music degree in Third Stream Studies at the New England Conservatory of Music, where he studied with Dave Holland, Geri Allen and Joe Maneri.

Turner has performed at several music festivals including the JVC Jazz Festival, Nancy Jazz Pulsations, Avignon Jazz Festival, International Cell Festival in Montreal and many others.

Turner taught jazz piano, jazz strings, composition and improvisation for many years at the Lawrence Conservatory of Music. He is featured on more than 50 recordings with several record labels and multiple artists.

His compositions and arrangements are published by Latharn Music and Alliance Music. He presents numerous improvisation workshops to string students and string teachers each year. Turner is a Yamaha Performing Artist.

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