

The third annual Monty Alexander Jazz Festival will take place in Easton on August 31 through September 2, 2012. The Festival is presented by Jazz on the Chesapeake, a program of Chesapeake Chamber Music, and will be held at Easton's historic Avalon Theatre. Trumpet player Dominick Farinacci, who kicked off last year's Festival in a duet with Aaron Diehl, will return this year to open the Festival on Friday evening, August 31 at 8 p.m. Chuck Redd, a Shore favorite, will lead a Salute to Duke Ellington with the University of Maryland Jazz Ensemble on Saturday, September 1 at 4:00 p.m. The Festival headlines legendary jazz pianist Monty Alexander, the Festival's artistic director and namesake, leading the Monty Alexander Quartet on Saturday night, September 1 at 8 p.m. Alexander recently received a Grammy nomination for best reggae album for his recording "Monty Alexander HARLEM-KINGSTON EXPRESS: LIVE!"

Daniels, who will close out the musical weekend, is thrilled to be joined during her Sunday performance by Easton's own Asbury United Methodist Church Celebration Choir. Dee states, "This tribute is an opportunity to get back to my roots. I listened to Mahalia Jackson as a young child through church and even got to hear her perform live in Oakland, CA. I was mesmerized."

Dee predicts that one of her favorite Mahalia Jackson songs, "Take My Hand, Precious Lord," will probably be on the repertoire for the Jazz Festival. She is thrilled that she will have Easton's Asbury Celebration Choir joining her for the performance.

Ricky Caldwell, music director of the Asbury Celebration Choir, comments, "It is thrilling to be considered to be apart of the Jazz Festival program. We feel blessed and honored to be singing with Dee."

Daniels concludes, "I am there to absorb and to give back to my audiences. I tell folks I have a zipper from the top of my head to my toes. When I unzip, there is a cavern of bright light, love light, that swirls out of me. During my performances, it is my hope that everyone listening will unzip too, and share their light of love."

Weekend packages for the Monty Alexander Jazz Festival are available at Easton's Tidewater Inn and the Tidewater Inn will once again join in the festivities by offering a Jazz Brunch on Saturday, September 1 at 11 a.m. (<http://www.tidewaterinn.com/>). Local restaurants will also have special offers for Festival participants. This year, a Festival Pass will be available for \$140 for premium seats, \$110 for orchestra seats, and \$65 for balcony seats. All Festival Passes include entrance to the Sunday concert. For a direct link to tickets, go to <http://www.instantseats.com/events/MAJF>. For further information about Jazz on the Chesapeake, www.chesapeakejazz.org or call the CCM office at 410-819-0380.



Pictured is jazz vocalist Dee Daniels, who will perform a tribute to Mahalia Jackson on Sunday, September 2, 2012 at 2 p.m. at the Historic Avalon Theatre as part of this year's Monty Alexander Jazz Festival in Easton.