by Becca Newell  Jazz enthusiasts rejoice! The energetic, ever-swingin’ Monty Alexander returns to Easton this Labor Day weekend for his eponymous festival, featuring an exciting lineup that boasts some—if not the—best jazz musicians in the country.

The Ninth Annual Monty Alexander Jazz Festival will be held Friday, August 31st to Sunday, September 2nd, at the Avalon Theatre.

The festival kicks off Friday evening at 8 p.m. with a favorite, trumpeter Dominick Farinacci, who the NY Times calls a “trumpeter of abundant poise.” His most recent Avalon appearance was last November in the theatrical music experience, Modern Warrior Live. This masterpiece wonderfully demonstrated Farinacci’s versatile horn stylings and mix of international rhythms, as well as his mastery of composition and knack for re-imagining familiar songs.

Joining Farinacci is his Modern Warrior Live co-star Shenel Johns. With powerful, yet graceful vocals, Johns is known for her distinctive, eclectic style that sways effortlessly from jazz to R&B to gospel. The duo’s performance, aptly named “Lady Sings the Blues,” will celebrate the music of Dinah Washington, Nina Simone and Billie Holiday.

Saturday’s packed program begins with a community concert—a free performance that was originally established to provide an introduction to jazz, familiarizing concert-goers with the incredibly diverse and somewhat misunderstood genre.

This year, the stage will welcome a young musician rapidly making a name for himself in the jazz world, pianist Matthew Whitaker. Blind since birth, the 17-year-old was recently named one of seven rising stars for 2018 by USA Today network’s 201 Magazine. Adding to the long list of accolades, Whitaker’s debut album Outta the Box, which was released last year, was named “one of the best debut albums of 2017” by New York City Jazz Record. This show starts at 11 a.m. Saturday’s matinee show at 2 p.m. highlights an extraordinary range of American and Brazilian musicians, featuring tenor/alto saxophonist Harry Allen, renowned for his inventive tone that’s rooted in tradition. Allen will lead a salute to Stan Getz and the Getz/Gilberto collaboration with Antonino Carlos Jobim, which resulted in an award-winning album by the same name.

Later that evening, at 8 p.m., Monty Alexander takes the stage. Considered one of the top five jazz pianists ever, Alexander’s musical expression combines elements of the blues, gospel, calypso, and reggae. Known for his vibrant personality, charisma, and breathtaking talent, Alexander’s performance is not to be missed.

Unsurprisingly, tickets for this show continue to sell out faster each year, so heed this warning if you want to see this dynamo in action—and believe us, you do.

Wrapping up the festival weekend at 2 p.m. on Sunday is Brianna Thomas, whose soulful voice is often likened to Mahalia Jackson—a comparison only accomplished by the most gifted singers. The performance will blend two genres, jazz and gospel—a rather fitting theme for a Sunday afternoon.
Shenel Johns - “Lady Sings the Blues

by Susan Koh  Vocalist Shenel Johns, performing since she was 14 years old, receives rave reviews as a shining star among a generation of top young talent. Local audiences will recall her role in Modern Warrior Live as she animated the struggles many returning veterans face.

Her eclectic style brings together jazz, blues and gospel in a unique way. She is a featured vocalist in many New York City venues, including Jazz at Lincoln Center. In 2015-16, she toured throughout Russia and in Doha, Qatar with Dominick Farinacci. Johns has shared the stage with music royalty including Curtis Fuller, Hank James, Dionne Warwick and Sheila Jordan.

In addition to her busy career as a performer, she honored Billie Holiday as part of Jazz at Lincoln Center’s production of “Billie and the Boys.” She performed a tribute to another one of her idols, Lena Horne at New York’s famed Appel Theater. In July 2017, she was featured in the Hartford Jazz Festival with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra as part of an Ella Fitzgerald tribute.

Ms. Johns was the winner of the Riga Jazz Stage Competition in Riga, Latvia in April 2017.

Pianist Matthew Whitaker - A Rising Star

by Susan Clifford  A New Jersey native born in 2001, Matthew Whitaker was surrounded by music, and performing began at the age of three, when his grandfather gave him a small Yamaha keyboard. At nine, Matthew began teaching himself how to play the Hammond B3 organ. He was named a Yamaha Artist at age fifteen, becoming the youngest musician to join this stellar group of jazz pianists. Ensuing years of music instruction, including classical piano and drums, provide the solid foundation clearly evident in his performance.

Touring here and abroad, he has performed before The Youth Assembly at the United Nations, and on other world-renowned stages, including Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and the Apollo Theater, to name but a few in New York.

In 2010, nine-year old Matthew was a winning participant in the “Child Stars of Tomorrow” competition, as part of Amateur Night at the Apollo. A year later he was invited to perform at Stevie Wonder’s induction into the Apollo Theater’s Hall of Fame.

Harry Allen Leads Salute to Getz Gilberto Collaboration

by Hugh Panero  Saxophonist Harry Allen and an international ensemble take the stage on Saturday afternoon to honor the historic collaboration between the late legendary American saxophonist Stan Getz, Brazilian guitarist João Gilberto, and pianist/composer Antonino Carlos Jobim.

With more than 30 recordings to his name, Allen has been called the “Frank Sinatra of the tenor sax.” Joining Harry on stage will be Chuck Redd, who has frequently graced the Chesapeake Jazz stage, as well as three Brazilians: drummer Duduka Da Fonseca, pianist Helio Alves, and the sultry Latin jazz singer Maucha Adnet. As one music writer commented on Adnet, “How often do you get to hear the mellifluous tunes sung by a Brazilian who grew up with them.”
According to Chesapeake Jazz’s founder Al Sikes, “Harry is the perfect guide to take us on this musical Brazilian bossa nova journey that blends the new with old and honors this musical collaboration of giants that produced one of the most popular albums and songs of all time.”

The 1964 album that emerged from this collaboration is credited with popularizing the Brazilian jazz bossa nova sound worldwide, and became one of the best-selling jazz albums of all time with more than 2 million copies sold. It received the Grammy Award for Record of the Year in 1965. The album featured the vocals of Astrud Gilberto on two tracks, including The Girl from Ipanema, a song later popularized by Frank Sinatra and covered by many others artists.

Brianna Thomas is Scat Awesome!

by Barbara Parker I heard Brianna Thomas for the first time recently and am simply in awe. The range and earthshaking power of her voice is simply transportive. Then she opens up to scat and a whole new universe emerges.

Her background, growing up with her father, drummer Charles “CJ” Thomas has prepared her for a wide range of jazz vocal styles and she covers all of them seamlessly, yet in her own style, incorporating the whole of the history of jazz. She says that she likes to draw from all decades, but she draws from jazz and a whole lot more (funk, bluegrass, rock, and soul) creating a captivating tapestry that is clearly of her own making. In an interview with John Serrof at Greenwich House Music School (@John Serrof), she explained how she could incorporate all of these disparate styles into jazz by saying, “Jazz is like a sponge; it has a way of picking up influences and traveling. Jazz is current and meaningful because it adapts more than any other music in our country’s history. Just like Sonny Rollins said, jazz absorbs the modern culture and it’s still jazz.”

Hailing from Peoria, Illinois, she made her singing debut at the age of six and was inducted into that city’s African American Hall of Fame at 13. Now living in New York City, she has continued to build her reputation as a strong and versatile vocalist with an impressive repertoire. She imbues all she sings with a power that gives both the familiar and the obscure a whole new life.

December Concert Features the Anderson Twins

Chesapeake Music and the Oxford Community Center are proud to present a special concert on Saturday, December 1st, entitled “Benny Meets Artie with Strings” celebrating the music of two legendary kings of swing clarinet. Peter and Will Anderson, Maryland natives and Juilliard grads, hailed as “virtuosos on clarinet and saxophone” by the New York Times, will present a 20-piece string orchestra debuting mesmerizing arrangements of Goodman and Shaw hits including Stardust, Begin the Beguine, Moonglow, and Artie Shaw’s Concerto for Clarinet.

Goodman and Shaw’s legacy reaches beyond jazz; both recorded classical and third-stream works, constantly pushing the boundaries of pop music while exemplifying perfection on the clarinet. Since their days in elementary school, the Anderson twins have been studying jazz clarinet and are now honing their own artistic voices performing in New York City and beyond. The brothers performed at the 2016 Monty Alexander Jazz Festival and the Academy Art Museum in 2017, and are excited to return to the Eastern Shore with a bigger, more dynamic presentation. You don’t want to miss it.
Chesapeake Chamber Music Festival 33 - Truly Extraordinary!
President’s Remarks

This was my year as Festival Chair to see exactly what it takes to create our most “delicious” Chamber Music Festival; something between cooking gumbo and jambalaya. It all starts with a slow cooked roux, years of our Artistic Directors’ knowing what music, musicians, themes and venues set the flavor. Add the shrimp and crab, the ham and tomato. Every musician shows a distinctive voice and the talent to blend the sounds. Season with a year of volunteers; brighten the flavor with donors, supporters, and a touch of young Competition medalists. Serve hot with rice and Tabasco…and tune up the Stradgrass. On to Festival 2019!

For tickets or info about Chesapeake Music, please call 410-819-0380 or visit our website, www.chesapeakemusic.org.
On November 13, 2018, the Board of Chesapeake Music again will thank our Circle of Friends by a return invitation to the Chesapeake Bay Yacht Club for cocktails and hors d’oeuvres. This special event features “AN EVENING WITH COKIE ROBERTS.” Please watch for this special invitation.

The Chesapeake Music Board is most appreciative of our Circle of Friends, those who contributed $1000 or more in the fiscal year to support our goal of enrichment by the gift of music. Through the year, the Board continues to thank our Circle of Friends by special announcements of concerts and performances by our artists in Washington, Baltimore, and Philadelphia and also provides early notice of our upcoming concerts and festivals.

**Circle of Friends - Special Events**

*by Betty Anderson*

**WHAT MAKES A STRADIVARIUS A STRADIVARIUS?** The Board of Chesapeake Music is thanking our Circle of Friends at this event, which features Danny Phillips, famed violinist and Stradivarius owner and Dalton Potter, expert luthier. What makes a Stradivarius so special? Is it the chemistry and composition of the wood that makes a difference? Are the different techniques of construction the reason for its prized acoustic quality? What comparisons are real versus perceived? Learn the answers to these questions on August 12, 2018 by invitation to our Circle of Friends.

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**Artist-in-Residence Program Poised for Another Successful Year**

*by Mariana Lesher*

This fall, students at Easton Middle School (EMS) will continue to enjoy the benefits of the Artist-in-Residence Program which began in 2017. The project was initiated by, and is a collaboration between, Chesapeake Music, the Talbot County Arts Council, the University of Maryland (UMD) School of Music, and Talbot County Public Schools. The goal is to provide students with the opportunity to interact with graduate-level musicians, to inspire a lifelong love of classical music through the skill and enthusiasm of these young professional musicians.

During the 2017-2018 school year, the Potomac Winds Ensemble made four visits to EMS, working closely with students and teachers to connect classroom knowledge of world history with world music. The ensemble conducted master classes with EMS band students as well as performed at assemblies. This past spring, several of the band students held a recital in Easton, demonstrating what they learned throughout the year, crediting Potomac Winds’ assistance with their improved sound. One parent noted the program “helped with creating discipline. My daughter is growing to love the flute.”

Robert DiLutis, Director of Community Engagement at the UMD School of Music, expressed his enthusiasm with the first year of the program, stating “this has been an incredible first year for our chamber music residency. It has also been an amazing experience watching the EMS students develop meaningful relationships with the Potomac Wind members as they have grown and developed.” Donna Ewing, EMS Band Director, is especially appreciative of how “the community has been so supportive of bridging the gap between student performers and professionals.”

For the 2018-2019 school year, the program will continue with the Mid-Atlantic Brass. This quintet will make four two-day visits during the school year and will be generously hosted at local homes, provided by Chesapeake Music, for these visits. The program will be funded by a grant from the Artistic Insights Fund of the Mid-Shore Community Foundation, an Arts-in-Education grant from the Talbot County Arts Council, using revenues provided by the Maryland State Arts Council, and Carpe Diem Arts.
Meet Four Board Members

by Susan Koh  Chesapeake Music welcomed four talented, experienced and committed people this year to the Board of Directors.

Barry Koh grew up in New York City, graduated from Columbia University and spent four years in the U.S. Navy as a member of Admiral Rickover’s staff designing nuclear reactor systems. This experience led him to a career in the nuclear energy field and finally to starting his own engineering firm. Since moving to Easton 13 years ago, Barry and his wife Susan have been active in the local community. Barry is on the board of Temple B’nai Israel, and served as its treasurer for seven years. He was a member of the Capital Campaign and New Building Committees. For several years, Barry taught graduate students in engineering and public policy at the University of Maryland, College Park. As Vice President of Chesapeake Music, he is also chair of the Development Committee.

Elizabeth Koprowski was born and raised in Washington, D.C. She received her B.A. and Ph.D. from George Washington University in Clinical Psychology and was a licensed psychologist with practices in Rhode Island, Florida and Easton until she retired ten years ago. Liz and her husband Claude attended Chesapeake Chamber Music Festival concerts after moving to Oxford in 1993. In 2006 they hosted their first group of musicians for the Competition and Liz, who serves on the Competition Committee, continues to host Competition finalists and festival musicians. Liz is a member of the Development Committee, the Major Donor Committee and the Festival Hospitality Committee. She is on the Board of the Oxford Museum, a member of the Wye Fellows, and a long time participant of the St. John’s College Executive Seminar.

Trish Malin, born and educated in England, moved to Los Angeles in 1991 with her husband John and became a U.S. citizen in 2000. Professionally, Trish put her Masters Business Degree to use serving as Marketing Director for a range of blue chip food and packaging companies before retiring to Oxford. Avid travelers, Trish and John have taken eight different cross-country road trips covering 47 states. Another passion for Trish is long-distance hiking. This May she hiked the Pacos de Europa in Northern Spain. In her quieter times Trish is an accomplished calligrapher and is active in a local bookbinding group. A member of the Tred Avon Yacht Club, Trish has a 14-foot Whitehall Spirit rigged sailing boat. She and John are subscribers to four DC theaters and the Washington Ballet. They love jazz and have been on the Monty Alexander Jazz Festival Committee for years.

Anne Moran comes from a distinguished 30 year career in higher education, organizational administration and fund raising. She served as founding president of the University of Cape Town Fund which supported the university in its efforts to increase the integration of the races on campus during the apartheid years. She held administrative positions at two colleges in California guiding one institution through an accreditation self-study and another revamping the fund raising program. In 2007, Anne retired to Sherwood and focused her energies on strengthening non-profit organizations in Talbot County. She helped Phillips Wharf Environmental Center raise the funds required to purchase their current campus and establish an annual support program to fund program and physical plant development. Anne serves as Chair of the Competition and is a member of the Chesapeake Music Development Committee.
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MARK YOUR CALENDAR
“Benny Meets Artie with Strings”
Saturday evening, December 1, 2018,
at the Oxford Community Center
Chesapeake Chamber Music Festival 2019
The first two weeks in June 2019

THE MONTY ALEXANDER JAZZ FESTIVAL

Labor Day weekend    Aug. 31 - Sept. 2
At the Avalon Theatre in Easton

Friday, August 31 at 8 p.m.
Farinacci/John’s: Lady Sings the Blues

Saturday, September 1 at 11 a.m.  Free Concert
Matthew Whitaker: A Rising Star

Saturday, September 1 at 2 p.m.
Vivid Collaboration: Getz/Jobim/Gilberto

Saturday, September 1 at 8 p.m.
The Irrepressible Monty Alexander

Sunday, September 2 at 2 p.m.
Brianna Thomas Live: Traces of Mahalia and Ella

Tickets are available at chesapeakejazz.org
410-819-0380
Jazz on the Chesapeake is a program of Chesapeake Music