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To contact the editor, email basse.db@gmail.com

"Jam" is a Registered Trademark of
The Kansas City Jazz Ambassadors, Inc.
Jam/Jazz Ambassadors Magazine (Online)
ISSN: 1533-0745

EDITORS

David Basse and Lynn Abrams

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

David Basse **Max Levy**
Joe Dimino **Kevin Rabas**

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Rodric McBride

COVER PHOTOGRAPHY

Ben McBee

PRINTING

Service Printing and Graphics, Inc.

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We send a special thanks to all that attended and/or performed at the JAM Awards. It was so gracious of AJM and Jill Johnson to allow us to have our event in the GEM. The new sound system, the piano, and the spaciousness of the hall really makes it fun.

Pat Jordan and Associates brought this room into focus a quarter of a century ago. It is more than fitting that Pat is sponsoring this event and that she is in attendance to see the community developing within our various jazz organizations.

AJM, Blues Society, Folly, Jazz ALIVE, KCJA, KCJO, and UMKC & others are consorting to bring attention to our city's wonderful music scene. Stay Hip, Dave

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What About the Butterfly

JACKIE MYERS

PIANIST, vocalist, and composer, Jackie Myers is an exacting presence in any musical aggregation. She has great ideas. She knows how to implement them.

continued

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JACKIE MYERS CONTINUED

Growing up in the nation's capital, Jackie made her way to Austin, Texas. After integrating into that vital music scene, she became very busy touring, doing local performance, and creating musical arrangements, some for a Buster Keaton film Festival. Jackie knows how to keep herself busy.

up the large work for silent movies (to be used in Austin) and had just become the Musical Director for the syndicated radio program, "12th Street Jump." (following Joe Cartwright & Paul Roberts)

Some six or seven years later, Jackie has added many new dimensions to her already busy routine.



The possibility of a steady gig at Green Lady Lounge brought Jackie to Kansas City. When we first met, Jackie had purchased a home in Kansas City, remodeling it mostly herself. She was finishing

With, "What About the Butterfly," her 2025 - 577 Records release, Jackie Myers is breaking new musical ground. Yes, it is a jazz recording . . . ground breaking new jazz.

A dozen seasoned musicians are featured on “Butterflies,” including compelling solos from Bobby Watson, Trent Austin, and bassist Seth Lee. Shining brightly on top of this mountain of sound is Jackie’s brilliant keyboard performance and her iconic vocals.

The more I listen, the more I love what I hear. Reminiscent of Esperanza Spaulding and Norah Jones, Jackie Myers adds her own soulful take on everything she decides to take on. I don’t believe that there is a musical style she wouldn’t give a go, if the opportunity presented itself.

Jackie Myers can be heard on almost 10 albums these days. Her live shows treat audiences to Myers’ innovative keyboard work and her bluesy vocals, and at other times Myers’ shows are purely instrumental.

Performing as part of a duo, trio, quartet, or quintet, she is typically joined by some of the best

musicians offered by any locale. In 2018 she added the Hammond B3 organ to her bag-of-talents.

The first time I encountered Jackie in a blues roadhouse I was taken back by her ‘chops’ on the organ, more than keeping up with one of Kansas City’s most decorated blues artists - Nick Schnebelen, however she assured me this was not a new direction. She is dedicated to jazz.

Jackie Myers’ is a versatile and competent musician. Her direction on “What About the Butterfly” is positive and satisfying to the listener, and the 2025 recording is an outstanding direction to take her talent as a featured performer.

—Editor

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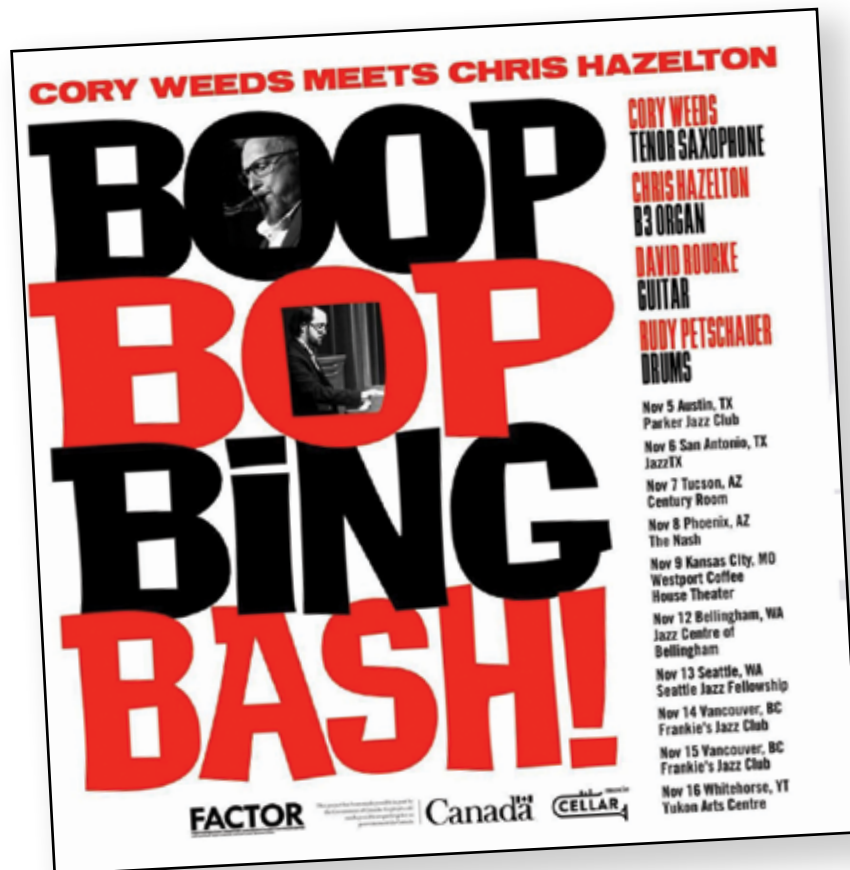
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"CANADIAN ROYALTY MEETS KANSAS CITY HISTORY



*Cory Weeds & Chris Hazelton Live as Good Sports in a Huey Lewis
Shine - 11.9.25 at Westport Theater in KCMO"*

It was by far the coldest Fall day of this late 2025 hour. A most perfect time for some of that Canadian energy front to come slipping in for an unforgettable afternoon of music aloft a strange pop twist.

Welcome to Boop Bop Bing Bash! at Westport Theater on November 9, 2025 as the jazz titan from Vancouver, Canada in Cory Weeds teamed up with the equally busy and talented KC B3 Master Chris Hazelton. Along for the wild ride was veteran

by Joe Dimino



Photo by Cory Weeds, Chairman Cellar Music Group

New York City Drummer Rudy Petschauer and a young Canadian guitar phenom in David Rourke rounding out the quartet. As a unit, they looked like cats doing this together for decades.

The group just arrived that AM full of jet lag from a show the day before in Phoenix, Arizona. They went from warmth outside to a warmth inside the KC listening room chalk with charm. In their travel weary bones, you wouldn't have noticed any hitch as the energy level remained at 11 throughout the show.

That packed gallery of folks hung on curiously with anticipation as one of the biggest names in the jazz world hit the sax with a deft presence and entertaining chops. Along with the allure and

comedic stage comfort of Hazelton, together they anchored a stage brimming with charm and swing.

The crux of the show was that they're working on refining their chemistry for a recording session that will take place in a few weeks at a Vancouver studio. It was also highlighting their touring prowess mastering Huey Lewis & The News tunes from the iconic 1983 album, *Sports*.

As Corey noted on stage during some memorable banter, he said around 2013 that he and Chris were on tour in an old van that had a CD of Huey Lewis ala *Sports* stuck in the chamber. They had joked around about how cool the tunes would be under a jazz gloss. Twelve years later, it's coming to

BOOP BOP BING BASH CONTINUED

full fruition as they tested it out to a very receptive crowd.

Hazelton is a magician on stage making everyone around him better and giving the crowd the goods in every possible way. Cory does the exact

they gelled and gave that crowd an unforgettable afternoon of music.

Cory noted that his 16-year-old Chiefs loving song said it would be hard to fill a place at 3 o'clock on a Sunday, but the Chiefs just happened to have a bye-week. All the while, the jazz stars shone with some truly major league jazz. I'm surprised that there wasn't a line for this show ala the 1980s to see Huey Lewis & The News wrapping around the block to get inside.

As that full room swayed over the course of an hour-and-a-half set, we all knew how lucky we were to be witnessing that eclectic assemblage of pop quirk and brilliant jazz execution.

Once the dust cleared after the closing tune, the ecstatic musicians mingled with the crowd clinging onto a high energy hoping for it to survive a lot longer. We were told that this new album will be coming out in around a year from now. The excitement dispensed in that room will be bottled up and crystallized forever into a recording that we will all get to live again and again.

Immortalizing is the jazz way. On that afternoon in all the abject improv, forever was in the works.

They proved on that small Sunday afternoon that jazz has always been alive.

Show Recap:

Cory Weeds meets Chris Hazelton in Boop Bop Bing Bash!! in KCMO at Westport Theater - 11.9.25
youtu.be/gjbmQ-OZdjk ¶



Photo by Cory Weeds, Chairman Cellar Music Group

same as the former owner of the iconic Cellar Live and current jazz magician. Two modern masters riffing off each other. As a quartet collective with wholly different jazz paths and little time together,

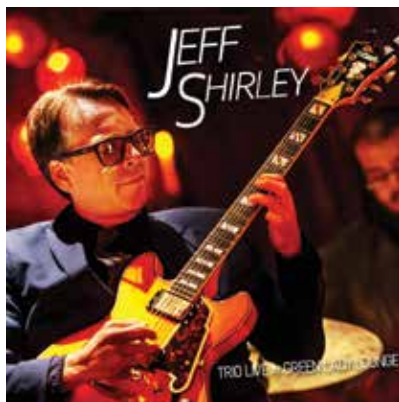
Jeff Shirley Trio **Live at Green Lady Lounge** (3 October 2025)

Jeff Shirley's new album is catchy and energetic. Recorded live at Green Lady Lounge (KC), the album captures the spirit of this hip venue. All originals, the album features the strong, seamless interplay of Shirley (electric guitar), Seth Lee (upright bass), and Antonio Reyes (drums).

Shirley's playing has a warm presence, like fine whiskey in a glass with just the right amount of ice. It's well-aged playing.

"I've always wanted to grow more," said Shirley about his process and this album in a Neon Jazz interview. "Some people come out amazing at a young age. Even after college, I didn't feel like I was the best guitarist...But I've always loved the growth process...If we're practicing the way we should be, (growth shows). ...I never leave the house without playing the guitar...Even in the last year, I've grown a lot...And I want to show people I wasn't the person I was ten years ago."

Shirley is backed well by Reyes on drums. It's duet-like. Reyes comps softly, but with perfect accent and attack. Some may feel, but not hear, the subtlety, but it's there, much like an understated



upright bass. Reyes provides perfect transitions between seams in the tunes, such as his occasional buttery press rolls between the solo and the head. On "Above the Weather," Reyes's rolls on the hi-hat and cymbals are perfect tasty embellishments, like frosting on a wedding cake. Reyes's solo on "Zebu," the last track, hat-tips Clyde Stubblefield, James Brown's

drummer, in this "funky drummer" solo, which is understated, but oh so tasty. Additionally, Seth Lee is an anchor on bass. He grooves hard and is confident and flawless. The three in this trio work perfectly together.

Shirley's tunes not only groove hard, but are also often clever. The head of "Gerkins Sister Temple" appears to reference the iconic Underworld Theme in Super Mario Brothers. But it's not just in jest, it's in groove—catchy, infectious, and fun.

Shirley talked about his wish for this album, to create something memorable and an escape for his listener, a way to leave behind the cares and tedium. "Wanting to create something magical, like I felt as a listener years ago, finding a few moments that are

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HOLDING THE HORN IN A HISTORIC TOWN

MAX LEVY

HEAVY ON THE SCENE

If you've been out to hear live music in Kansas City over the past eight years—or attended an event with a live band—there's a decent chance you've caught a glimpse of me holding a tenor saxophone. Maybe you were at a wedding where the sax solo somehow upstaged the cake. Yeah, that was me. Perhaps you went salsa dancing on Mass Street in Lawrence and saw some white guy blowing wild lines over those hip-thrusting grooves...guilty again. Or maybe you caught a classic rock cover band at Knuckleheads, Lenexa City Center, or The Aztec and wondered who nailed those sax features. Yours truly. And if you've seen AmeriFloyd lately, that's Max on sax hitting those solos like it's 1973.

Every Thursday night, you can find me at PS Speakeasy, playing alongside vocalist Baby J and a rotation of top-notch KC musicians like Brian Ruskin, Parker Woolworth, and Rich Hill. It's got a fantastic vibe, a great bar staff, and a crowd that tends to listen. They let me roam free on the tenor, and

I'm grateful. That gig's been going strong for three years now.

Outside of that steady spot, I've been known to pop up at The Phoenix, Black Dolphin, Chaz on the Plaza, and Riverwood Winery, among others.

I've shared the stage with local heavyweights like Chris Hazelton, Joe Cartwright, Millie Edwards, and Stan Kessler. One of the joys of being on the Kansas City scene is how my weekly lineup changes a little every week. Each gig brings a new mix of energy and chemistry. That's part of the magic here. KC's deep musical roots enrich every-



thing we do, and I think it's important we keep celebrating and evangelizing that history.

Beyond performing, you might catch me on your radio dial. I recently started as a substitute jazz DJ at 90.1 FM KKFI. I also co-host The Jazz Jam Podcast with my longtime friend and keyboardist, Dwain Gunnels, where we review albums and talk shop. And at The Jazz Academy inside the Gem Theater, I've been teaching, helping young musicians find their sound.

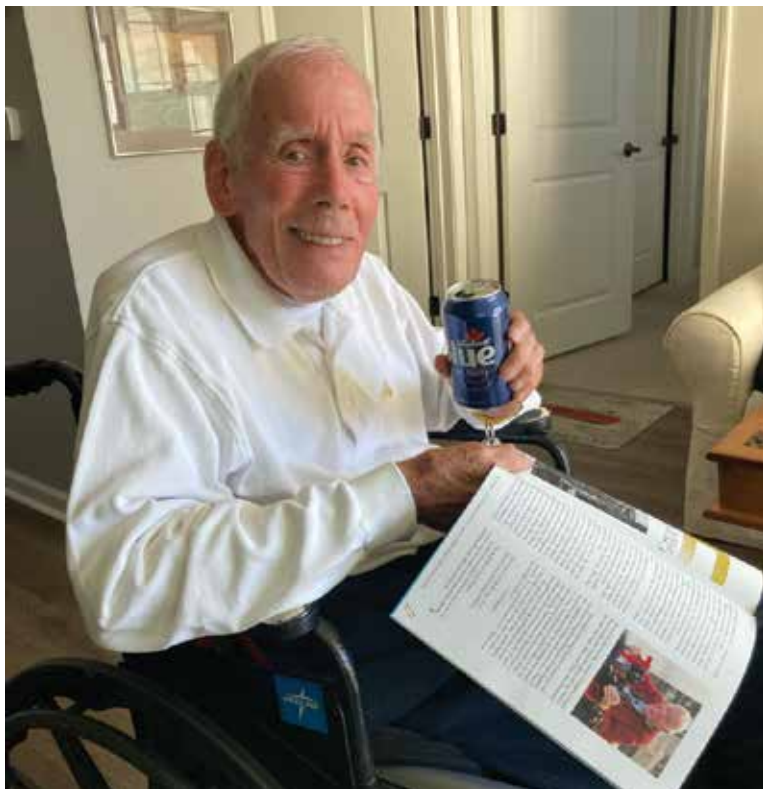
I believe in having a big tone on the horn and saying something when you solo. The same goes for teaching, writing, and radio hosting. So next time you see a man with a sax in Kansas City, it just might be Max Levy holding the horn.

Max Levy

JAM Award winner 2024

Cheers!

Pictured here is John McKergow with his favorite beer Labatt's Blue to christen the moment that his daughter Tracey Ostebo hand delivered him a copy of JAM magazine commemorating their April dream trip to KC to catch the Count Basie Orchestra in person. He was over the moon to get the issue and as Tracey noted.. "Dad toasting his new-found celebrity with a beer."



FOR THE RECORD CONTINUED

really special," said Shirley, "that is something to hope for. Creating something that leaves the daily stressors behind is something to strive for, so the listener can escape the day to day." Shirley captures that magic with this album.

This is an album you can play over and over, and it will give you energy, a boost. It already does for me. As Shirley said, "If someone's at the Green Lady, they can ask for it (the album)...or even at Green Lady dot com." You can also get the album on prevalent streaming services. (Get it.) :||

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From Costa Rica to KC

The Journey of
an Emerging Bassist

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by Joe Dimino

DECEMBER 2025 + JANUARY 2026 • JAZZ AMBASSADORS MAGAZINE



The true rhythm all began for up and coming KC bassist Sebastian Arias in the beautiful land of Costa Rica. His dream of eventually coming to America began early on and bounded through unexpected events to his current spot on the scene.

"I started playing music when I was nine. I didn't start with bass. It was with the guitar," Sebastian said. "Then I switched to electric bass when I was 11 and picked up the acoustic bass when I was about 13."

He was more or less trained on classical music, but salsa and native sounds were always a part of his tapestry. His broad music palette started very early and he saw how all of those tributaries of music led to the jazz waterfall.

"I feel like getting that kind of background gave me some kind of advantage because at the end of the day, jazz and salsa come from the same sources," Sebastian said.

His first foray into the United States was in Summer of 2014 when he attended the Benny Golson Jazz Festival and spent a life altering week soaking in the jazz craft with the likes of Carl Allen, Rodney Whitaker, Rodney Jones and Reggie Thomas. That was when the proverbial jazz light clicked on.

"The workshop kind of turned out to be a huge point for me. Seeing all these like super experienced players at that age was my first encounter in seeing real jazz life," Sebastian recalled. "It just left a crazy impression on me. By the end of the week, I felt like I might just have to commit to jazz."

From there, at 18 he moved to Utah to pursue his dream of studying music in America, and got his Bachelor's Degree in Commercial Music from Snow College after being recruited by Philip Kuehn. Under the sage instruction of teacher Philip, he would really get his jazz chops hustling. As such, he would

FROM COSTA RICA TO KC CONTINUED

become an active player in the Salt Lake City jazz and pop scene during that time.

“Carl Allen was a part of that camp and I began

In 2023, he made the move to study under Carl and other acclaimed instructors like Eric Hitt, Jeff Harshbarger, Peter Schlamb, among others. Along

with the classroom, he is hitting two years on the KC jazz circuit becoming a vital part of the local scene.

Many of his early influences were via camp, yet he felt the urge to explore on his own. That’s when he ran into some seminal gems that would form his own voice.

“I didn’t really have anybody kind of tell me what records to listen to. I stumbled across some classics and also got into the trilogy records by Chick Corea,” Sebastian said. “The amount of times that I listened to that record with Chick Corea, Christian McBride and Brian Blade was insane. It was hard to not see Christian McBride as one of my main heroes and influences.”

In 2024, he was selected to attend the prestigious JAS Academy in Aspen and would work under the artistic direction of Christian McBride. He also got to perform with Grammy-winning singer Lisa Fischer and receive some top-notch instruction from the likes of Shelly Berg, Chuck Bergeron

and Brian Lynch.

“I felt like moving to Kansas City was a great next step to get thrown into a more established and bigger jazz community,” Sebastian noted. “For the past two years, I have focused on developing an

developing a relationship with him for the past 10 or 11 years, as he would regularly visit my school in Utah every year” Sebastian said. “Shortly after finishing my undergrad, he gave me a call and asked me if I was interested in getting my Masters at UMKC. I felt like it was a good idea, as I always wanted to further my studies with him”

identity as a jazz bass player. I have gotten so many chances to play in Kansas City.”

When he sums up the feeling of being firmly in the scene in KC, he feels very lucky.

“You know, with bass players there’s always a shortage almost everywhere. That was kind of an advantage for me. I would say that it was kind of easy for me to start playing when I moved here,” Sebastian said. “I felt super welcomed by the community and feel like I’m a part of the family now.”

He has made his way through a number of local clubs playing with veterans like Matt Villinger, Stephen Martin, Adam Larson, Stan Kessler and Joe Cartwright. Sebastian has always been very cognizant of the rich history Kansas City has as the place where jazz grew. Yet, the tradition deepens all the time. He knows he is a part of the deepening lineage of quality KC history.

“I definitely feel a responsibility to maintain the integrity of the town’s history. That means doing my best in every musical situation that I am a part of,” Sebastian said. “I feel like without the historical and cultural context, I would argue that Kansas City wouldn’t have the scene that it has now.”

Down the line, Sebastian feels an urge to expand in a town like New York or Los Angeles, but he always wants to maintain Kansas City as a special sort of home.

“I think about all these great artists that came through here or who were born here and I feel like it means for me that I kind of have to step it up a level to respect the integrity of the music,” Sebastian noted. “No matter where I end up, I always want to have that connection to KC and come back and continue to be a part of the community. I don’t think there is any way I could separate that from the future, you know.

At the end of the day, he feels like he is playing his part in the intricate wirings of the KC scene.

“I’m the dude that’s bringing it every time. Giving it all with no fear and no excuses. One of my biggest roles as a bass player is to make sure everybody else sounds good,” Sebastian said. “Trying

to be the ultimate team player that brings good energy to the bands that I play with.”

He loves being part of something greater than himself and that is the music. No matter what stage he slips into during his career, it’s going to come through the way he plays. His honesty is his gift.

“I feel like I’m a part of the family now. That’s where you want to get to. Where you kind of feel like you are some kind of piece that’s a part of the puzzle in the community,” Sebastian said. “I’m just really grateful to be doing this full time right now. Kansas City is home.”



Everything Sebastian:

sebastianariasmusic.com

Full Sebastian Arias Neon Jazz Interview Links:

youtu.be/9XXL8K1o9tc

open.spotify.com/episode/0FvA2X1hJf20G-7zXLZlqRI?si=8DUkl6VDSdqmWCyBFHwScQ



ANNUAL JAM AWARDS GALA

at the Historic Gem Theater
November 30, 2025
Live Music from Past Winners &
Current Nominees

*The following pages
include some of this
year's nominees.*

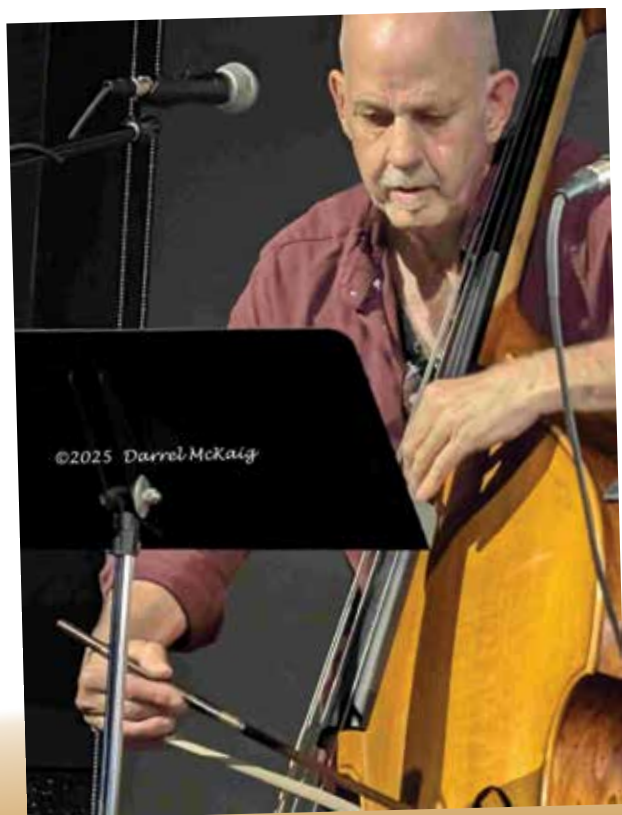




Nominee Brian Steever
Westport Theater (Oct 22, 2025)



Nominee Brett Jackson
KCKCC Performing Arts Center (Oct 16, 2025)



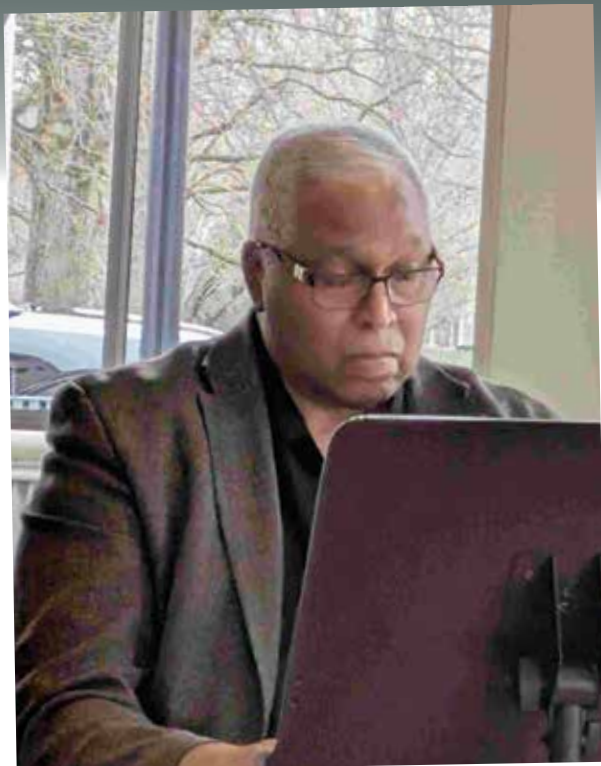
Nominee Bryan Hicks
Maceli's Lounge (Jun 27, 2025)



Nominee Brad Gregory
The Blue Room (Aug 29, 2025)



Nominee Chuck Haddix
Lonnie's Reno Club (May 16, 2024)



Nominee Charles Williams
The Market at Meadowbrook (Mar 22, 2025)



Nominee Deborah Brown
Folly Theater (May 17, 2024)



Chalis O'Neal
The Blue Room (Aug 31, 2024)

2025 JAM AWARD NOMINEES

FAVORITE KC VOCALIST

Deborah Brown
Emily Dix
Paula Saunders
Vanessa Thomas

FAVORITE KC TRUMPETER

Pete Carroll
Tommy Johnson Jr.
Nate Nall
Chalis O'Neal

FAVORITE KC SAXOPHONIST

Brett Jackson
Pete Fucinaro
Ernest Melton
Houston Smith

FAVORITE KC BASSIST

Carly Atwood
Blair Bryant
Jordan Faught
James Ward

FAVORITE KC PIANIST

Desmond Mason
Eddie Moore
Michael Pagan
Charles Williams

FAVORITE KC TROMBONIST

Earlie Braggs
Ryan Kadesh Flow Davis
Asa Martin
Brian Scarborough

FAVORITE KC GUITARIST

Jamie Anderson
Zach Arias
Danny Embry
Matt Hopper

FAVORITE KC KEYBOARD/ORGANIST

Ven Bergdall
Chris Hazelton
Ken Lovern
Paul Roberts

FAVORITE KC DRUMMER

John Kizilarmut
Brian Steever
Jaylen Ward
Kenny Watson Jr

FAVORITE KC JAZZ BAND

Eclipse
Marcus Lewis Big Band
The Reyes Brothers
The Waldo Jazz Collective

FAVORITE KC JAZZ CLUB

Chaz
Johnnie's Jazz Bar and Grill
The Blue Room
Upcycle Piano Craft

FAVORITE KC JAZZ CONCERT VENUE

Kauffman Center
Midwest Trust Center
The Folly Theater
Westport Coffee House

FAVORITE JAZZ ENTERTAINER

Alex Abramovitz
Amber Flutienastiness Underwood
Eboni Fondren
Lonnie McFadden

FAVORITE KC JAZZ RADIO PERSONALITY

Gerald Dunn
Brad Gregory
Chuck Haddix
Jeff Harshbarger

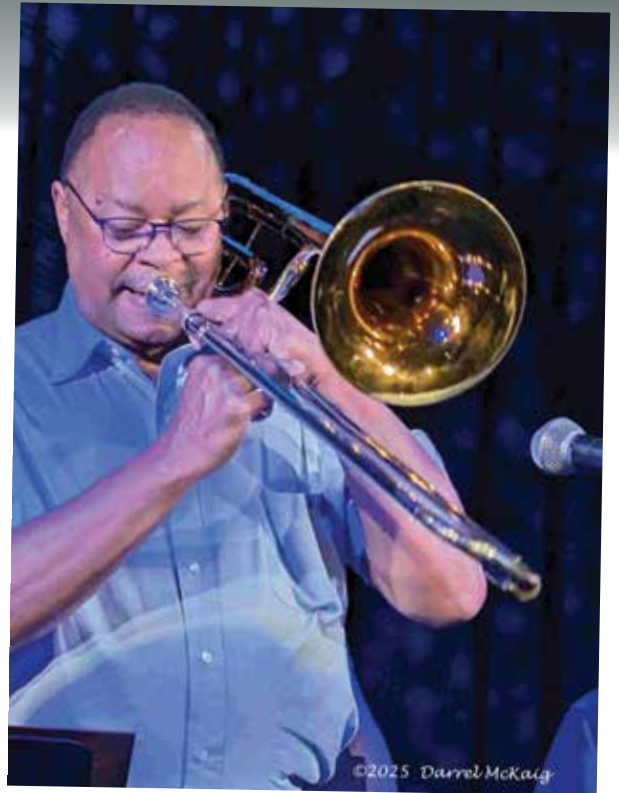
FAVORITE KC INSTRUMENTALIST/SINGER

Bryan Hicks
Everette Freeman
Jackie Myers
Jazzy Jazz Miyagi





Nominee Ven Bergdall
Maceli's (Jun 27, 2025)



Nominee Earlie Braggs
The Blue Room (Sept 14, 2025)



Nominee Nate Nall
Westport Theater (Jun 8, 2025)



Nominee Paul Roberts
The Blue Room (Sep 14, 2025)



Nominee Houston Smith
The Blue Room (24 Oct, 2025)

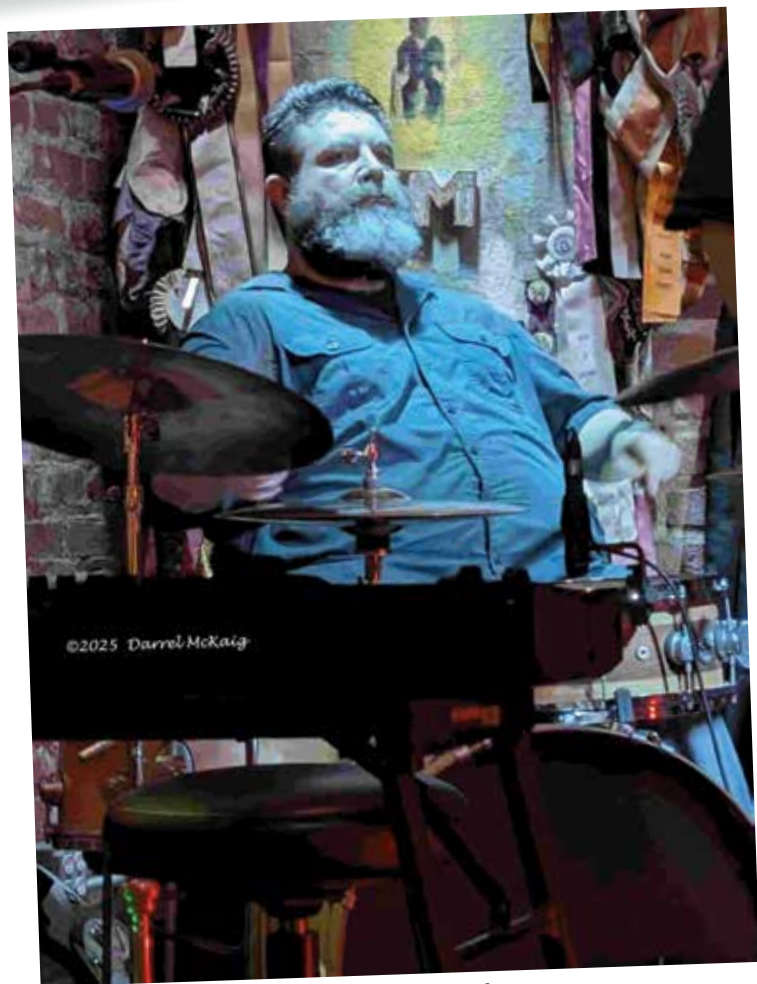


Nominee Jackie Myers
The Blue Room (Apr 18, 2025)



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Nominee John Kizilarmut
The Ship (Aug 15, 2025)



Nominee Tommy Johnson Jr
Maceli's (Jun 27, 2025)



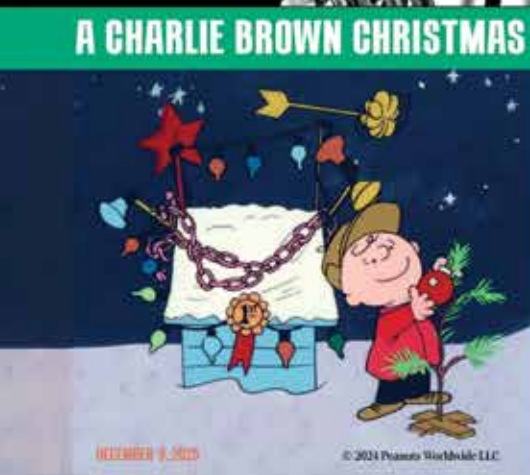
Nominee Jordan Faught
The Black Dolphin (Jul 30, 2025)



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