

19th Annual Healdsburg Jazz Festival, June 2-11, 2017 – Early Preview of Lineup

From traditional to modern, jazz takes root in a big way at this year's Healdsburg Jazz Festival.

Nineteen years is quite a long time for an underdog festival to exist, but with determination and ambition, the Healdsburg Jazz Festival has become a beloved cultural fixture of the Sonoma County area. With artistic director Jessica Felix at the helm, this yearly gathering of some of the very best jazz artists currently playing continues to draw international attention and respect.

2017 will see another imaginative and eclectic lineup, pulling together a wide variety of top tier mainstream, modern, traditional, Latin and blues performers. Highlights include the venerable **Heath Brothers** band, spotlighting two legends of the hard bop era and beyond: saxophonist-composer **Jimmy Heath** and drummer **Albert "Tootie" Heath**. Rebooted and revitalized with two new members, the Heath band has become a premier attraction on the current jazz scene. Sharing the bill will be a tribute to the late vibraphone master Bobby Hutcherson, featuring an all-star ensemble of Hutcherson-band veterans led by the pianist **Renee Rosnes**, with bassist **Ray Drummond**, drummer **Victor Lewis** and vibraphonist **Steve Nelson**.

Joe Lovano, one of the most gifted and celebrated saxophonists and bandleaders of the day, will bring the latest edition of his Classic Quartet to the festival. Concentrating here on the straight ahead jazz tradition, Lovano will once again prove why he's an avatar of modern jazz.

And speaking of avatars, long-time ECM label star guitarist **John Abercrombie**, a giant of contemporary jazz guitar, will be featuring his organ trio outfit with organist **Jared Gold** and drummer **Adam Nussbaum**. Blending cutting edge improvisation and hard swinging grooves, this unit dazzles as a matter of course.

The acclaimed guitarist **Dave Stryker** about whom Pat Metheny says..." he just gets better and better with one of the most joyous feels around." - holds down the stage opening night with a hard grooving unit featuring guest saxophonist **Bob Mintzer** (of Yellowjackets fame). Stryker will feature material from his popular "Eight Track" projects-recordings that put a jazzy spin on pop and rock material from the 60's to the 80's.

Guitar will also be the focus of an [afternoon concert](#) spotlighting the **Django Festival All-Stars**, making a special appearance direct from France. Celebrating the music of the perennial jazz guitar hero Django Reinhardt, the All-Stars take Gypsy jazz to new heights.

Legendary pianist and singer **Henry Butler** brings New Orleans virtuosity and charm to the festival as he conducts a personalized history of Traditional New Orleans jazz. This solo performance is guaranteed to be a festival highlight.

Latin jazz makes its festival appearance with the Grammy Award-winning 20-piece **Pacific Mambo Orchestra**, a horn and percussion-heavy San Francisco rhythm juggernaut sure to make you get up and dance. A highly-respected Bay Area fixture of the Latin music scene, the Grammy-nominated percussionist **John Santos** will also bring a hard-charging quartet up north to show us what we might be missing. He's joined by the socially-conscious poet and spoken word artist **Rico Pabón**.

The blues—and plenty of Songbook standards – will be represented by the dynamic singer **Lavay Smith**,

who with her **Red Hot Skillet Lickers** band, present “Lady Sings the Blues,” a special program saluting such female icons as Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald.

And this year’s fest will include many more musical acts to entrance and entertain including the **Ricardo Peixoto** Trio featuring Brazilian moods from the guitarist leader, and the **Carlitos Medrano and Sabor de mi Cuba** unit, offering us a spicy musical taste of the island. The gifted saxophonist **Harvey Wainapel** will conduct an after-hours jazz session with his quartet and any festival artists who want to drop by. And last but not least, the cherished local Traditional Jazz band, The **Russian River Ramblers** will remind us that everything old is indeed new again.

For further festival information log onto our website at www.healdsburgjazz.org