

For Immediate Release: Wednesday, December 20, 2023



SJZ Break Room Winter Series

**Featuring 14 Shows in the SJZ Break Room in downtown San Jose
and at the Oshman Family JCC, Palo Alto**

Artist Lineup:

James Francies, Oran Etkin Open Arms, Delgado Brothers, Blaque Dynamite, Mostly Kosher
Jazz Organ Fellowship Co-Presents Akiko Tsuruga Trio with Bruce Forman & Akira Tana
William Johnston, San Jose Jazz High School All Stars U19s

SJZ ***NEW
WORKS
FEST 2024***

2024 New Works Fest Performances:

Ayo Brame, Chika Di, Dahveed Behroozi
Hristo Vitchev, Marcus Shelby, Sundra Manning

San Jose, Calif. – San Jose Jazz (SJZ), one of Northern California’s leading nonprofit institutions, announced today its Winter Series, February 2–March 9. Featuring national touring artists and underscoring SJZ’s commitment to the development of SF Bay Area artists and the local live music scene, the series includes 13 shows in its popup SJZ Break Room venue. These include performances by the six of its 2024 Jazz Aid Fund commission grant awardees chosen to perform their works as part of the 2024 New Works Fest.

Kicking off the series on February 2 is 2021 Jazz Aid Fund awardee **William Johnston**, a genre-defying multi-instrumentalist whose candid delicate vocal stylings lay over a bed of his signature greasy rhythm guitar, drawing from influences of Steely Dan, traditional Latin music and Al Green. On Saturday, February 3, the series welcomes one of the most exciting pianists on the jazz scene today, **James Francies**, called by *The New York Times* “a pianist with liquid dynamism in his touch.” Since his debut album *Flight* entranced listeners in 2018, Francies has expanded personal explorations of sound bending and orchestral approaches to the music. Friday, February 9, Grammy Award winning multi-instrumentalist **Oran Etkin** brings his dynamic Open Arms project to the SJZ Break Room, just after the release of the album *Open Arms* on January 12, 2024. Oran has travelled the world, recording performances with international superstars in Africa, Europe and South America that he then interprets with his own ensemble.

Collaborations with other arts organizations have produced some of the most intriguing sets in the series. On Saturday, February 10, the SJZ Break Room hosts the LA-based **Delgado Brothers**, co-presented by the Fountain Blues Foundation, producer of the annual Fountain Blues & Brews Fest. Propelled by their 2016 International Blues Competition win, the Delgado Brothers deliver topical, anthem-worthy songs complemented by call-to-action lyrics, soul stirring blues rock guitar solos and Latin-flavored percussion. On Sunday, February 25, SJZ teams up with the Oshman Family JCC to present **Mostly Kosher** at the JCC in Palo Alto. An acclaimed klezmer/rock band that radically reconstructs Judaic and American music through ravenous klezmer beats and arresting Yiddish refrains, Mostly Kosher is a musical mashup of global influences including Latin, rock and folk. And on Friday, March 8, SJZ and longtime Summer Fest partner Jazz Organ Fellowship present Japanese Hammond B-3 master **Akiko Tsuruga**, who has been called “Queen of the Organ” by NEA Jazz Master Lou Donaldson. Her trio includes two of the most skilled players on the Bay Area Jazz scene, Bruce Forman on guitar and Akira Tana on drums. Opening this exciting evening of jazz organ music is the Dave Burns Trio with Dave Burns on the Hammond B-3, Bruce Forman on guitar and Steve Robertson on drums.

Rounding out the non-festival sets are **Blaque Dynamite** at the SJZ Break Room on March 9. Returning to the room following a packed Summer Fest 2023 performance, he is a versatile and gifted drummer whose performance credits include Grammy award-winning artists Christian McBride, Erykah Badu, Thundercat, Michael McDonald, Kamasi Washington and the legendary Stanley Clarke. His date is part of a tour that includes stops at NYC’s fabled Blue Note and the NYC Winter Jazzfest in January.

February 16–Mar 2, 2024: SJZ New Works Fest

Produced since 2021, the New Works Fest presents full sets by six Bay Area musicians including world premieres of works commissioned by the 2024 Jazz Aid Fund. The New Works Fest is a way for local live music fans to discover fast-rising musicians new to them, and provides artists with professional sound and video capture, and the opportunity to connect with new audiences at a key moment in their careers. The six artists chosen for this year's New Works Fest reflect a cross section of Bay Area artists:

An alum of the Summer Fest 2023's Latin Tropical Stage, **Chika Di** (February 16) is former lead singer of Latin Alternative band La Misa Negra and can often be heard fronting her own salsa band. Her Jazz Aid fund work reveals her as a composer and performer of lyrical nuance and beauty.

Dahveed Behroozi (February 17) is an active player both as a leader and sideman in the Bay Area, nationally and internationally. Working in jazz, classical and new music, Behroozi's musical frame of reference ranges from Bach, Brahms, Schoenberg and Alban Berg, as well as the rock and ambient worlds.

Hristo Vitchev (February 23) is one of the newest and most innovative voices in modern jazz guitar and has been voted a Rising Star by *DownBeat* Magazine. Originally from Bulgaria, the impressionistic guitarist combines elements of classical, modern jazz, folk, and avant-garde sonic hues in his music.

Sundra Manning (February 24) is a Grammy Award nominated keyboardist, Hammond B3 organist and producer who brings a funky, fresh and gritty approach to her music. She has worked with artists like Sheila E., Lalah Hathaway, Raphael Saadiq, Bobby Womack, Meshell Ndegeocello, Ledisi, Peebo Bryson, Maysa Leaks, Pete Escovedo and many more.

Bassist **Marcus Shelby** (March 1) is one of the leading jazz composers in the Bay Area, whose compositions have already achieved widespread critical acclaim. His work focuses on the history, present, and future of African American lives, social movements, and music education, and include *Harriet Tubman*, *Beyond the Blues: A Prison Oratorio* and *Soul of the Movement: Meditations on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

Ayo Brame (March 2) is a 16-year-old up and coming tenor saxophone jazz musician mentored by 2021 New Works Fest artist Kev Choice, Ayinde Webb, Stacy Dillard, Stabe Wilson, Marcus Shelby and Eric Wyatt. He has already played on prominent stages like SF's Black Cat and Dizzy's Club at Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York.

SJZ Break Room Winter Series Schedule & Pricing

All shows are at the SJZ Break Room, unless noted.

Ticket Prices: \$10–40

Tickets at <https://sanjosejazz.org/tickets>

SJZ U19s

Fri, Feb 2 at 7pm

Free Show, in conjunction with South First Friday Artwalk

William Johnston

Fri, Feb 2 at 9pm

\$10

James Francies

Sat, Feb 3 at 8pm

\$25

Oran Etkin Open Arms

Fri, Feb 9 at 8pm

\$25

Delgado Brothers

Sat, Feb 10 at 8pm

\$25

New Works Fest: Chika Di

Fri, Feb 16 at 8pm

\$10

New Works Fest: Dahveed Behroozi

Sat, Feb 17 at 8pm

\$10

New Works Fest: Hristo Vitchev

Fri, Feb 23 at 8pm

\$10

New Works Fest: Sundra Manning

Sat, Feb 24 at 8pm

\$10

Mostly Kosher

Sun, Feb 25 at 6:30pm

Special Venue! Oshman Family JCC, Palo Alto

\$35–40

Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mostly-kosher-live-music-concert-tickets-696266099647>

SJZ U19s

Fri, Mar 1 at 7pm

Free Show, in conjunction with South First Friday Artwalk

New Works Fest: Marcus Shelby

Fri, Mar 1 at 9pm

\$10

New Works Fest: Ayo Brame

Sat, Mar 2 at 8pm

\$10

Jazz Organ Fellowship Co-Presents Akiko Tsuruga Trio with Bruce Forman & Akira Tana

Fri, Mar 8 at 8pm

\$28

Blaque Dynamite

Thu, Mar 9 at 8pm

\$25

Venues**SJZ Break Room**

310 S. First Street, San Jose, CA 95113

Parking: We suggest patrons park one block away in the 2nd & San Carlos Garage. More parking options at parksj.org.

Oshman Family Jewish Community Center

3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto, CA 94303

Parking: Ample parking is available at this venue.

About the Jazz Aid Fund

Originally conceived as a direct response to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Jazz Aid Fund provides direct support to Bay Area musicians and stimulates one of their most important activities—the creation of new work. Building on a lead gift by Jan DeCarli, SJZ's Board of Directors established the Fund, providing a grant for each of the selected artists to create a new work. Artists are chosen through recommendations from a broad cross section of the Bay Area music community, including critics, presenters, artists and curators. Since 2021 we have provided 100 Bay Area musicians with \$130,000 in grants and performance fees.

About the SJZ Break Room

Created through a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation the project was born in 2020, on the eve of the Pandemic. As live music spaces closed, we created a state-of-the-art video and sound production studio allowing us to live stream concerts to the public in their homes. The live stream would also be projected via ultra-short throw projectors onto a 35' X 14' bank of windows to enrich street life. As society began to open up, we welcomed audiences into the space for the first time in April 2021 for our inaugural New Works Fest. Since then, more than 80 artists have appeared on the stage including Butcher Brown, James Francies, Joel Ross, Kassa Overall, Keyon Harrold, MAE.SUN, Mark Guiliana, Marquis Hill, Oran Etkin, Salami Rose Joe Louis, Sasha Berliner and Takuya Kuroda.

The room and crew are available for rental. In early 2024 we have a full complement of events from outside promoters including a series of master classes for drummers entitled "Give the Drummer Some."

About San Jose Jazz

Founded in 1986, San Jose Jazz is a public benefit organization celebrating jazz as a dynamic, evolving art form and is producer of the annual San Jose Jazz Summer Fest and Winter Fest. San Jose Jazz innovates trend-setting initiatives to foster artistic ingenuity and preserve the jazz tradition as a forward-thinking movement. Through diverse music and educational programming, San Jose Jazz offers singular content and events by investing in the SF Bay Area ecosystem of exceptional talent for local and national audiences to enjoy.

For more information, please visit sanjosejazz.org.

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Artist interviews and hi-res photos are available upon request.

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