

Friday, Jan. 22, 8pm & 10pm
Mark O'Connor's Hot Swing Quintet

Tickets from \$20.50 to \$35.50 (cabaret seating)



Gypsy jazz fans unite! **Mark O'Connor's Hot Swing Quintet** brings acoustic, progressive violin and gypsy style guitar together for one evening to pay homage to gypsy jazz pioneers Django Reinhardt and O'Connor's mentor, violinist Stephane Grappelli. This concert takes place the day before what would be the 100th birthday of Reinhardt.

This performance of *Hot Swing* features **Mark O'Connor** on violin with vocalist Heather Masse, guitarists Frank Vignola and Matthew Munisteri plus Gary Mazzaroppi on upright bass.

Mark O'Connor, violinist/fiddler extraordinaire, is a product of America's rich aural folk tradition as well as jazz, classical and flamenco music. O'Connor's creative journey began at the feet of a pair of musical giants. The first was the folk fiddler and innovator who created the modern era of American fiddling in the 1940's, Benny Thomasson; the second, French jazz violinist, considered one of the greatest improvisers in the history of the violin, Stephane Grappelli. Along the way, between these marvelous musical extremes, Mark O'Connor absorbed knowledge and influence from the multitude of musical styles and genres he studied. Now, at age 48, he has melded and shaped these influences into a new American Classical music, and a vision of an entirely American school of string playing. As *The Los Angeles Times* warmly noted, he has "crossed over so many boundaries, that his style is purely personal."

What makes O'Connor successful as a boundary-crosser at play in a particular genre is his interest in dirtying up that genre with the smart and real stuff he brings from elsewhere. If the "hot jazz" style of Reinhardt and Grappelli had a soft spot, it was the tendency of the music to seem baroquely ornamented, over-pretty. Not only does O'Connor play hard and swinging, but he incorporates the edgier harmonies of bop, some blues grittiness, and some chamber music austerity into his version of Gypsy Jazz.

O'Connor has received numerous commissioning grants, as well as contributed much of his time to various music organizations and schools. He founded the internationally recognized Mark O'Connor Fiddle Camp and Strings Conference.

New York-based singer song-maker **Heather Masse**, is a member of the acclaimed Juno-award winning Canadian band *The Wailin' Jennys*, and has performed at 100s of venues across Europe, Canada, and the states. She has appeared regularly on Garrison Keillor's *A Prairie Home Companion*, where she was privileged to share the stage with Wynton Marsalis, Elvis Costello, Sheryl Crow, Arlo Guthrie and Tom Rush. Her earliest influences came from singing hymns and folk songs with family, and then later becoming totally immersed in the singing of Sarah

Vaughn, Ella Fitzgerald, Ray Charles, and Bonnie Raitt, as well as the singing and songwriting of Joni Mitchell, Simon and Garfunkel, Neil Young and many more. Current influences include Lucinda Williams, Iris Dement, Nancy King, Emmylou Harris, Mississippi John Hurt, Mahalia Jackson, Hank Williams, Patsy Cline, Bob Dylan and Chet Baker.

Frank Vignola is one of the most accomplished, multi-dimensional players walking the planet today. Monster player, composer and improviser, Frank plays proficiently in every genre, from jazz to bluegrass, and works with everyone and their brother. Frank's pedigree is a mile long, but a quick Google will illustrate why he is considered one of the best on the planet. Whether he is featured on a Donald Fagen recording, a jam with David Grisman, as Les Paul's right hand man or leading his own groups throughout the years, he has proved himself to be in the elite creating his own unique sound.

Guitarist, singer, and songwriter **Matt Munisteri** is a Brooklyn native with a lifelong passion for early American music, from Country, Blues and Ragtime guitar, Tin Pan Alley and Jazz and Folk.

As one of New York's first-call vintage guitar stylists, he's regularly called upon to play on a wide range of CDs, television and radio commercials, and concert appearances, the latter including The Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis and the New York Pops Orchestra at Carnegie Hall.

In addition to performing and recording with singers such as Madeline Peyroux, "Little" Jimmy Scott, and Geoff Muldaur, Matt has established himself as a singer/songwriter whose wry, literate compositions have been compared to Randy Newman, Mose Allison and Bob Dorough.

Bassist **Gary Mazzaroppi** has toured and recorded with the Lionel Hampton Big Band, Les Paul, Red Norvo, Herb Ellis, Stan Getz, Joe Morello, Buddy Rich, Jim Hall, Warren Vache, Jr., Barney Kessel, Clark Terry, Charlie Byrd, Red Rodney, and Teddy Wilson. He is also a regular guest of Marian McPartland on her internationally syndicated public radio program "Piano Jazz". "Mr. Mazzaroppi has developed into a brilliantly virtuosic bass soloist." New York Times

Saturday, Feb. 6, 8pm & 10pm **Cyro Baptista's "Banquet of the Spirits"**

Tickets from \$15.50 to \$32.50 (cabaret seating)

Cyro Baptista - percussion, vocals
Brian Marsella - piano, keyboards, balafon
Tim Keiper - drums, percussion
Shanir Blumenkranz - acoustic/electric bass,
oud, gimbri



Perhaps it's his tremendous musical skills, his natural humor or his theatrical style with a wide range of worldly instruments that led Wynton Marsalis to call Cyro Baptista "truly one of the greatest musicians in the world". Master percussionist Cyro Baptista and friends will summon

ancient rhythms and melodies in “Banquet of the Spirits”, exploring the connections between free jazz and music from the Middle East, Africa and India.

"Banquet of the Spirits is world music in the most literal sense of the phrase—traveling from

continent to continent in a single song and creating intriguing new lands in the process. If you like mind-bogglingly precise rhythms and instrumental tightness interspersed with free jazz freakouts, then Banquet of the Spirits is for you." - Matt Brockett, jambase.com

"Delightful music from one of the world's greatest and most adventurous Brazilian musicians." - Djouls.com

"Banquet of the Spirits surrounds the listener with a feast for the auditory senses and a resounding hunger to drum into uncharted, reverberating landscapes." - Bill Whiting, Honest Tune

"Bottom line: this is music of substance, brilliantly conceived, consummately executed. Miss it at your peril." Jan Dennis, Longboard Jazzer

Saturday, Feb. 27, 8pm & 10pm

Hiromi Solo Piano Concert Tickets from \$15.50 to \$32.50 (cabaret seating)



A piano prodigy from a young age, keyboardist and composer Hiromi Uehara has grown to defy musical boundaries by effortlessly weaving R&B, rock, avant-garde and straight-ahead jazz into her compositions. Jazzreview.com calls Hiromi’s style “a melding of power; grace and passion that displays an astonishing range of mood and emotion.”

Hiromi Uehara first mesmerized the jazz community with her 2003 Telarc debut, *Another Mind*. The buzz started by her first album spread all the way back to her native Japan, where *Another Mind* shipped gold (100,000 units) and received the Recording Industry Association of Japan's (RIAJ) Jazz Album of the Year Award. The keyboardist/ composer's second release, *Brain*, won the Horizon Award at the 2004 Surround Music Awards, Swing Journal's New Star Award, Jazz Life's Gold Album, HMV Japan's Best Japanese Jazz Album, and the Japan Music Pen Club's Japanese Artist Award (the JMPC is a classical/jazz journalists club). *Brain* was also named Album of the Year in Swing Journal's 2005 Readers Poll. In 2006, Hiromi won Best Jazz Act at the Boston Music Awards and the Guinness Jazz Festival's Rising Star Award. She also claimed Jazzman of the Year, Pianist of the Year and Album of the Year in Swing Journal Japan's Readers Poll for her 2006 release, *Spiral*. Hiromi continues her winning streak with the 2007 release of *Time Control* and in 2008, *Beyond Standard*. Both releases feature Hiromi's super group, Sonic Bloom.

Born in Shizuoka, Japan, in 1979, Hiromi took her first piano lessons at age six. She learned from her earliest teacher to tap into the intuitive as well as the technical aspects of music. She took that intuitive approach a step further when she enrolled in the Yamaha School of Music less than a year after her first piano lessons. By age 12, she was performing in public, sometimes

with very high-profile orchestras. "When I was 14, I went to Czechoslovakia and played with the Czech Philharmonic," she says. "That was a great experience, to play with such a professional orchestra."

Further into her teens, her tastes expanded to include jazz as well as classical music. A chance meeting with Chick Corea when she was 17 led to a performance with the well-known jazz pianist the very next day.

Hiromi came to the United States in 1999 to study at the Berklee College of Music in Boston. For as open as her musical sensibilities had already been when she came to the U.S., the Berklee experience pushed her envelope even further. Among her mentors at Berklee was veteran jazz bassist Richard Evans, who teaches arranging and orchestration. Evans co-produced *Another Mind*, her Telarc debut, with longtime friend and collaborator Ahmad Jamal, who has also taken a personal interest in Hiromi's artistic development. "She is nothing short of amazing," says Jamal. "Her music, together with her overwhelming charm and spirit, causes her to soar to unimaginable musical heights."

At 26, Hiromi stands at the threshold of limitless possibility, constantly drawing inspiration from virtually everyone and everything around her. Her list of influences, like her music itself, is boundless. But she won't, as a matter of principle, put labels on her music. She'll continue to follow whatever moves her, and leave the definitions to others.