

Jersey City Jazz Festival returns weekend after Memorial Day

The 12th annual Jersey City Jazz Festival returns May 30-31 at Exchange Place. Both dates feature free music. Saturday will offer three waterfront stages.

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Winard Harper

Pictures available upon request.

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The Jersey City Jazz Festival is back. The 12th annual event, produced by the non-profit organization Riverview Jazz and

presented by Exchange Place Alliance, will host hundreds of musicians on Friday, May 30 beginning at 6pm and Saturday, May 31 at Exchange Place plaza on the Hudson River waterfront from noon to 9pm. The festival will also host events throughout Jersey City leading up to the



New Orleans-based The Rumble will perform funky soul, jazz and hip hop at the Jersey City Jazz Festival.

festival beginning Tuesday, May 27. The festival is a free event with one ticketed stage (Clubhouse by Fords Gin) and VIP options.

This year's lineup includes a number of eclectic and exciting ensembles across three waterfront stages. Performing at 3pm on Saturday will be [Artemis](#), the all-female supergroup helmed by pianist and musical director Renee Rosnes, and featuring trumpeter Ingrid Jensen, tenor saxophonist Nicole Glover, bassist Noriko Ueda, and drummer Allison Miller. The quintet is fresh off their 2nd consecutive win for "Jazz Group of the Year" in the Downbeat Readers Poll and recently performed to a sold-out audience at the Village Vanguard. Also featured this year will be the dynamic New Orleans ensemble, [The Rumble](#) (Friday 5/30 8pm RWJ Barnabas Stage). Fronted by Big Chief Joseph Boudreaux Jr. of the Young Eagles Black Masking Indian Tribe, the band blends Mardi Gras Indian funk, brass band traditions, jazz, and hip hop to create a modern take on the iconic traditions of New Orleans.

The outdoor festival will feature a Community Zone presented by the Jersey City Public Library that will have arts & crafts, a bucket drum class, dance classes, and kids programming. There will be two bars, a VIP experience, jam sessions, and plenty of food and local vendors.

"The whole goal of the Jersey City Jazz Festival is to bring the community together and collectively experience all this incredible music we are surrounded by," says festival organizer Bryan Beninghove. "We live in an unparalleled location that many of the greatest musicians in the world call home, it's just an honor to get a bunch of us together each year to celebrate the music



Come dance with the Astoria Salsa Company! They perform high-energy Latin-fusion with savory Colombian musical spices.



Winner of the Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition, Tyreek McDole will thrill you with his vocal stylings.

and have a great party.”

Winard Harper, the legendary drummer and pillar of the Jersey City community has been a mainstay of the festival for years. With a career spanning over 50 years, he reflects on the importance of the arts. “We are at a time where this music and this festival are very important and much needed. We are in need of things that bring us together and give us hope. This music is both medicine and love, ad infinitum.” Harper will be performing with his band Jeli Posse Friday, May 30 as well as leading the closing party jam session at his regular hit at Moore’s Place (Sunday, June 1).

Another accomplished Jersey City resident who will be featured at this year’s event is world-renown bassist John Hébert. He will be fronting his own trio Tuesday, May 27 at the Pet Shop and will perform as part of an all-star ensemble featuring pianist Fred Hersch, saxophonist Bennie Wallace, and drummer Billy Drummond (Saturday, May 3 at Fords Gin Clubhouse, 5pm). “As a longtime resident of Jersey City, witnessing the growth of the Jersey City Jazz Festival is nothing short of amazing,” says Hébert. “Being on both sides of the festival, from artist to attendee, I have experienced first hand the joy and fellowship that Riverview Jazz brings to our multicultural city. That said, I’m very excited to present this new quartet featuring such legends of jazz. Fred and Bennie have never shared the stage, so I can’t wait to see what happens when we get these heavyweights together.”

There will be 30 performances at this year’s festival. Some other notable performers include the LA-based keyboardist/producer and Kendrick Lamar collaborator [Sam Barsh](#) with freestyle rapper Harry Mack, the past two Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition winners April May Webb (with Sounds of April & Randall) and Tyreek McDole, saxophonist Tim Berne, trumpeter Kali Rogriguez Peña, Astoria Salsa Project, WBGO’s Next Gen Collective, Steven Bernstein’s MTO featuring Catherine Russell, pianist James Austin Jr., and many more. Emceeding the outdoor event and both performing at the Junto will be Champion Fulton (5/27) and Lezlie Harrison (5/28).

This year’s event is presented once again by Exchange Place Alliance. Other community and corporate partners include RWJ Barnabas Health, the Jersey City Free Public Library, WBGO, NJ PBS, the City of Jersey City, Fifteen, and many more. Funding is also made possible in part through the Jersey City Arts & Cultural Trust Fund, the Hudson County LAP grant, and the Princeton Foundation grant. Lodging partners include Hyatt House, Hyatt Regency, and the Canopy Hotel.

For more information and tickets, go to www.JerseyCityJazzFestival.com

JERSEY CITY JAZZ FESTIVAL

FRIDAY, May 30, 2025
Hyatt Regency

4:30pm-6:30pm - Happy Hour Opening Party featuring Orion Turre

RWJBarnabas Health Plaza Stage

6-7pm - Winard Harper & Jeli Posse

7-8pm - DJ Niko & Bad Habits

8-9:30pm - The Rumble featuring Big Chief Joseph Boudreaux Jr.

Hyatt House After Party

9pm-1am - Official JCJF Jam Session on the Terrace with Charlie

Stephen Gritzan

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