



Volume 37, Issue 3

September, 2026

Charlotte County Jazz Society 2026-2027 Concert Season Preview

October 12, 2026- Fred Johnson

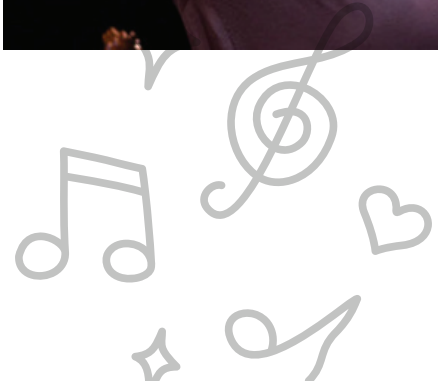
Singer Fred Johnson has traveled the world entertaining people in Japan, Europe, Palestine, Pakistan, Malaysia and around the U.S., but since 1977 he's called St. Petersburg home.

Johnson has worked as an artist in residence and community engagement specialist at the Straz Center and has gigged sporadically, often in a duo with bassist Michael Ross.

Johnson possesses a robust, elastic voice that can caress a standard ballad, pour liquid soul into an R&B classic like "What's Going On," and launch into daring flights of improvisational vocals.

He's performed at big festivals and toured overseas, including a stint as a featured vocalist with Chick Corea's band for a trek through Japan and has been a regular performer at the Clearwater Jazz Holiday.

Over the years, he's been and remains an educator, mentor, social justice activist, peace advocate, arts advocate, healer and community organizer.



November 9, 2026- MJR Latin Project

This Tampa Bay-based Latin jazz ensemble is one of the best Latin jazz bands in Florida. Mauricio J Rodriguez, a well-known Cuban bass player and composer, created this band to release his album *Luz* at the 2021 St Petersburg Latin Jazz Festival in July 2021.

This band revives the Latin jazz scene with original compositions pleasing the most demanding spectators with its intricate fusion of Latin rhythms and momentary flashbacks to the Latin greats of musical history. The richness of the Latin flavor and modern compositional elements create a complex Latin rhythmical approach.

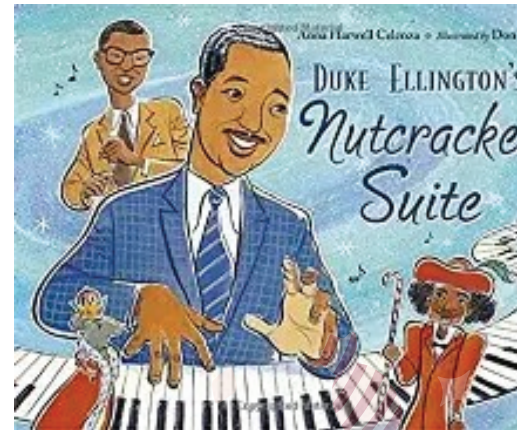


December 14, 2026- Ellington's Nutcracker (Big Band)

The Duke Ellington Nutcracker Suite is a remarkable jazz reinterpretation of Tchaikovsky's iconic ballet, *The Nutcracker*, showcasing the genius of Duke Ellington and his collaborator, Billy Strayhorn.

Released in 1960, this suite revitalizes the classical compositions with a unique jazz flair, blending rich harmonies, intricate rhythms, and bold improvisations that echo the vibrant spirit of mid-20th century jazz. Each movement, from the "Overture" to "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy," is transformed with swinging beats, brassy accents, and bluesy undertones, offering a fresh perspective on Tchaikovsky's melodies while maintaining their original charm.

This fusion not only highlights Ellington's innovative approach to music but also bridges the gap between classical and jazz genres, making the suite a timeless masterpiece that continues to captivate audiences with its inventive and lively reinterpretation.



January 11, 2027- Perseverance Brass Band

The Perseverance Brass Band plays Brass Roots Jazz – the music from which all other jazz forms arose. Over 100 years ago, brass bands playing in New Orleans started “ragging” and syncopating marches and popular songs.

Formed in 1987 by trombonist/vocalist Kid Dutch, The Perseverance Brass Band has been a featured act at Universal Studios’ Mardi Gras. The band has performed in commercials and art and jazz festivals throughout the Southeast. And upon request, they even play the famous New Orleans jazz funerals for those who wish to be laid to rest in style!

The Perseverance Brass Band continues the tradition with tunes ranging from marches to spirituals, from ragtime to rhythm & blues. It is roots jazz with a high energy and soulfulness that appeals to young and old!



February 15, 2027- Rossano & Metz

Rossano and Metz are back by popular demand. Award-winning jazz pianist Rossano Sportiello will be joined by Eddie Metz on drums. Rossano was born in Italy and studied classical piano. He began performing professionally at the age of 16 at jazz venues throughout Italy and Europe. Rossano established himself in New York City in 2007 and since then has performed with many of the world’s finest jazz luminaries. As an educator, Rossano has given lectures on jazz and masterclasses on piano. He has recorded six solo piano albums and collaborated on many more.



March 8, 2027- Benny Benack III

Benny Benack III is a fiery trumpet player and singer, recognized by the 2022 Downbeat Critics Poll, where he appeared not only as the #2 Rising Star Male Vocalist, but a top Rising Star Trumpeter as well.

Benny has performed internationally, and achieved viral success, amassing millions of views for his crooning alongside the Grammy-award winning "8-Bit Big Band."

Touring as a bandleader, Benny has appeared as a trumpet soloist alongside Josh Groban, Ben Folds, Isaac Mizrahi, Ann Hampton Callaway and more. He has been featured at many New York venues and has been a special guest with the Pittsburgh Symphony Pops Orchestra, the Columbus Jazz Orchestra, and the Minsk Philharmonic Orchestra. He also has many TV credits. His global recognition has been bolstered by recent live-streaming concerts at Smalls Jazz Club, where he maintains a weekly residency.

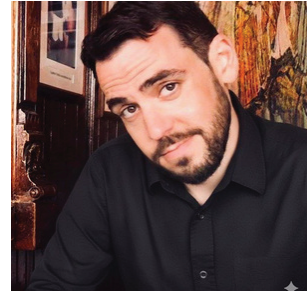


April 12, 2027 - Foot Note Jazz Band

The Foot Note Jazz Band, led by trombonist Greg Nielsen, features an eclectic mix of genres, including swing, be-bop, Latin, and bossa nova, showcasing sophisticated arrangements crafted by Nielsen.



Notes from the President's Desk – September 2026



A Busy Summer and a Big Season Ahead

It's been a busy and eventful summer! Back in May, we had Gerald Augustine play saxophone at the Animal Welfare League Gala and on June 13 we had multiple groups perform at Fishermen's Village for an event called Jazz on the Harbor. From noon to nine at night there were three performance areas across the property, and nonstop music the entire time. We had Judi Glover, Cameron Wade, James Suggs, The Paul Gavin Trio and Fred Johnson and his quintet closed the night.

People came for lunch and stayed until dark. Many of them had never been to one of our concerts. Fishermen's Village was very pleased and we're hoping to partner with them again next year! This is one more way we're able to showcase live jazz music in our area and we want to do more of it. If your organization is planning an event and wants live jazz, write me at president@cc-jazz.org.

The 2026-2027 Season

After opening our last season at the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center, we received nothing but great feedback about the room. I'm very happy to say that all seven concerts this season will be at the Event Center. It gives us space to grow and a better setting for the shows we have booked.

Here is the season lineup with all concerts still on Monday nights at 7pm:

October 12, 2026 — Fred Johnson. Some of you heard Fred sing a few songs with the Michael Ross Quartet in 2025, and he closed our day at Fishermen's Village in June. Now the whole night is his.

November 9, 2026 — MJR Latin Project. A Tampa group bringing Latin jazz to the room.

December 14, 2026 — Ellington's Nutcracker. Duke Ellington's take on the Tchaikovsky score, played by a big band. This is our holiday concert, and it is the one I would not miss.

January 11, 2027 — Perseverance Brass Band. A New Orleans style street band out of Orlando. Loud, joyful, and nothing like a sit still and listen concert.

February 15, 2027 — Rossano and Metz. They played for us last year and the feedback was so good that we are bringing them back by popular demand.

March 8, 2027 — Benny Benack. Benny is coming down from New York City and returns to our stage for the first time since April 2024. He is one of the finest young singers and trumpet players working today.

April 12, 2027 — Foot Note Jazz Band. Greg Nielsen's Sarasota group closes the season.

Join Us for the Season

To everyone who has already renewed, thank you. Your membership is what puts these musicians on stage, funds our scholarships, and gives us the confidence to book a season like this one. We are grateful for you, and we do not take it lightly.

If you have been coming to concerts without joining, take a look at the numbers. Seven concerts across the season. At the door it is \$30 a night. A membership covers all seven, and it works out to less than \$20 a concert. You come out ahead by your third show, and you never have to think about it again for the rest of the season.

Membership for the 2026-2027 season is \$125. Join or renew at cc-jazz.org/become-a-member.

Keep swinging and thank you for being a part of our Society!
Jordan Aquila

Community Partners



**Tom Osborne &
Matt and Emma
Osborne**



1951 Tamiami Trail, Port Charlotte
941-255-0994
Lunch - 11:30 - 3:00pm
Dinner - 4:00 - 8:30pm
Entertainment Nightly - 6pm - 8:30pm

Are you interested in
becoming a community
partner?
Please contact any CCJS
Board Member to find out
how!

In Tune is published **four** times a year. We welcome pertinent articles, letters and news items space permitting. Opinions expressed are those of the writers and not necessarily those of the CCJS.

Don't forget to take advantage of our CCJS email list. We send out reminders for events by email. Please send your name and email address to Emilie at: intunejazz@gmail.com

Membership questions: call the hotline-941-766-9422

CCJS onthe Web! **www.cc-jazz.org**

*Check the concert schedule

*Join the jazz society

*Preview upcoming concerts and events

*Check out the local Jazz scene

LIKE us on Facebook www.facebook.com

Charlotte County Jazz-CCJS

Mission Statement of CCJS

The Mission of the Charlotte County Jazz Society is to increase the availability of Jazz music in our county and to foster the study and appreciation of this original American art form, especially among the youth of our community.

We seek to continually develop and improve upon our monthly concert series which showcases some of the finest jazz performers from throughout the state of Florida. We strive to broaden exposure to jazz among the general public through live performances at community festivals and other local events which reach a wide audience.

CCJS works to serve as a source of information about jazz activities throughout our area by informing local news media, publishing a Society newsletter, and providing a telephone hotline.

We seek to provide continuing aid to middle school and high school students furthering their jazz education and awarding college scholarships on a competitive basis to promising students.

We strive to further expose our area youth to jazz music by admitting local students free of charge to our monthly concert series and jazz jams.

Charlotte County Jazz Society

Co-jazz.org

intunejazz@gmail.com

941.766.9422

PO Box 495321, Port Charlotte, FL 33949-5321

2026-2027 Concert Season:

October 12 - Fred Johnson

November 9 - MJR Latin Project

Dec 14 - Ellington's Nutcracker (Big Band)

Jan 11 - Perseverance Brass Band

Feb 15 - Rosanno & Metz

March 8 - Benny Benack III

April 12 - Foot Note Jazz Band

All concerts will be held at the Charlotte Harbor Event Center and begin at 7:00



CCJS 2025-26 Officers

Jordan Aquila, President
Aaron Lucas, Past President
Dan Cobb, Treasurer
Pam Koontz, Secretary

Directors

Chris (Brown) Fitzgerald
Shawn Marren
James Mashburn
Dawn Marx
Louise Raterman
Marcellus Stewart
Cameron Wade

Herb Bruce, Concert Coordinator
Emilie Deskins, Administrative Assistant

Messages for individual board members can be sent via our email address or through the CCJS hotline number.

CCJS HOTLINE: 941.766.9422

www.cc-jazz.org

www.facebook.com/ccjazzsociety

Email: intunejazz@gmail.com

YOU CAN BECOME A LEGACY SUPPORTER

Charlotte County Jazz Society is deeply grateful to former members Marjorie Jean Biermann, Helen Langdon, Donatella and Ken Neumann, and Roberta Gasparri. Their generous bequests now play a major role in helping fund the outstanding jazz artists brought to our community by CCJS. They have also been instrumental in supporting our commitment to pass on our love of jazz with the awarding of annual scholarships to graduating high school seniors. We invite you to join us in our mission to preserve, promote and present live jazz by including CCJS in your will, trust, retirement account or life insurance policy, or with a donation to CCJS in honor or memory of a fellow jazz lover. For more detailed information, please contact any CCJS officer or director as listed on the last page.

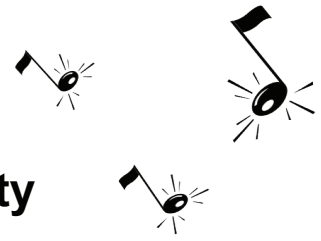
Charlotte County Jazz Society

A 501 (c) (3) Non-profit Organization

Membership

Don't forget to notify us if there are changes to your name, street address, phone number or email address!

Due to rising costs in printing and postage, we will no longer be mailing newsletters or special events notices. Your correct email address is critical in allowing us to stay in touch and keep you current on all our activities. The Charlotte County Jazz Society will never share your personal information with any other entity.



Charlotte County Jazz Society

Renewal/New Member Application Form

Membership is good for the concert season- October through May

PLEASE PRINT:

New Membership: _____ Renew: _____ \$125.00 (per person)

Name:(First, Middle, Last): _____

Additional Name at Same Address: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone:() _____ Email: _____

Make check payable to: **Charlotte County Jazz Society, Inc.** (a non-profit organization)

Mailing Address: Charlotte County Jazz Society
P.O.Box 495321
Port Charlotte, FL 33949-5321

Become a CCJS Supporter:

Our membership fees cover less than half of the cost to produce our concerts. We undertake various fund-raising efforts during the year to supplement these but inevitably we need to use assets from our endowment to balance the budget. We strive to keep our membership fees low to allow those with limited incomes to enjoy our shows. If you are fortunate enough to afford it please consider additional donations to our endowment fund. You may earmark your donation for support of our jazz performances or for the support of our educational/scholarship programs.

Endowment: \$ _____ Scholarship/Educational Fund: \$ _____