

## About The Jazz Gallery Fellowship

The Jazz Gallery is pleased to announce our new Fellowship program.

In our years of nurturing young, emerging artists, it has come to our attention that mid-career artists often struggle to sustain the momentum of their creative output and career trajectory. The Jazz Gallery has long supported the youngest generation of jazz musicians through various programming initiatives and now seeks to address the relative scarcity of resources dedicated to mid-career artists, who often balance the professional demands of performing, touring, and teaching with additional obligations related to their families (e.g., parenting), which are less likely to affect younger or older artists.

The Jazz Gallery Fellowship comprises of a \$10,000.00 award as well as a two-week residency at the Pocantico Center of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. Fellows also have access to The Jazz Gallery space during its off-hours. The Fellowship aims to provide the financial support and logistical freedom to its recipients to focus their energy for a brief but substantial period on new compositional projects. The Jazz Gallery will present formal premieres of completed works. We believe that this opportunity will enable the fellowship recipients to develop potentially career-transforming new works that would otherwise not be possible.

With the Fellowship program, we hope to strengthen our holistic approach to supporting artists and the art form. Many grant programs, competitions, contests, and journalistic awards explicitly feature "emerging" improvisers and composers, while high-visibility cultural awards are generally reserved for much older figures in jazz. The Jazz Gallery hopes to address a gap in allocating funds and resources for mid-career artists, who, unfortunately, are sometimes taken for granted by the jazz audience and press. Although this program would be a small step toward redressing the relative lack of opportunities for those who fit neither the profiles of rising star nor jazz legend, as favored in the jazz business, the Gallery hopes that such a program will draw attention to this deficiency, setting a precedent to inspire other organizations to devote greater resources for mid-career artists.

For its inaugural year, The Jazz Gallery is awarding the Fellowship to bassist Eric Revis and drummer Johnathan Blake.

### JOHNATHAN BLAKE

Johnathan Blake, one of the most accomplished drummers of his generation, has also proven himself a complete and endlessly versatile musician - "the ultimate modernist," as John Murph of NPR has dubbed him. Blake's gift for composition and band leading, so ably demonstrated on his 2012 recording debut *The Eleventh Hour*, reflects years of live and studio experience across the aesthetic spectrum.

Through years-long memberships in the Tom Harrell Quintet, the Kenny Barron Trio and other top ensembles, Blake has reaped the benefits of prolonged exposure to the greats of our time

- arguably of all time. Through his powerful, evocative drumming and fully rounded artistry, he's also left a huge imprint on the music of such rising figures in jazz as Hans Glawischnig, Alex Sipiagin, Donny McCaslin, Avishai Cohen, Omer Avital, Patrick Cornelius, Michael Janisch, Shauli Einav, Jaleel Shaw and more. To date, Blake has appeared on over 50 albums.

Born in Philadelphia in 1976, Johnathan Blake is the son of renowned jazz violinist John Blake, Jr. - himself a stylistic chameleon and an important ongoing influence. After beginning on drums at age 10, Johnathan gained his first performing experience with the Lovett Hines Youth Ensemble, led by the renowned Philly jazz educator. It was during this period, at Hines's urging, that Blake began to compose his own music. Later he worked with saxophonist Robert Landham in a youth jazz ensemble at Settlement Music School.

Blake graduated from George Washington High School and went on to attend the highly respected jazz program at William Paterson University, where he studied with Rufus Reid, John Riley, Steve Wilson and Horace Arnold. At this time Blake also began working professionally with the Oliver Lake Big Band, Roy Hargrove and David Sanchez. In 2006 he was recognized with an ASCAP Young Jazz Composers Award, and in 2007 he earned his Masters from Rutgers University, focusing on composition. He studied with the likes of Ralph Bowen, Conrad Herwig and Stanley Cowell.

Deeply aware of Philadelphia's role as a historical nerve center of American music, Blake has immersed himself in the city's storied legacy - not just jazz but also soul, R&B and hip-hop. In many ways he's an heir to Philadelphia drum masters such as Philly Joe Jones, Bobby Durham, Mickey Roker and Edgar Bateman, not to mention younger mentors including Byron Landham, Leon Jordan and Ralph Peterson, Jr. Today Blake is himself an exponent of the Philadelphia sound, described by Aidan Levy of JazzTimes in a review of *The Eleventh Hour* as *the vertiginous sensation of being both slightly behind the beat and hurtling into the next measure*.

Approaches like this, one might add, can only be learned by sitting at Mickey Roker's right hand and absorbing exactly how the ride cymbal is struck. Such is the painstaking firsthand exploration that undergirds and informs Blake's musicianship.

Blake's playing helped the Mingus Big Band land Grammy nominations for the albums *Tonight at Noon* (2002) and *I Am Three* (2005). It has also earned Blake spots in groups led by Russell Malone, Randy Brecker, Joe Locke, Ronnie Cuber and other seasoned jazz veterans. As trumpet great Brian Lynch has said *Johnathan Blake is without peer among young drummers for the clarity of his beat and the incisiveness of his swing*.

His forward-thinking vision as a leader, moreover, and ability to harness the varied talents of his band mates, makes *The Eleventh Hour* one of the strongest debuts in recent memory, and surely the first of many fine efforts to follow.

## ERIC REVIS

One of the most talented and accomplished musicians of his generation, Grammy Award-winning bassist and composer Eric Revis has, over the past 15 years, become an important voice in jazz. Branford Marsalis states, “Eric’s sound is the sound of doom; big, thick, percussive.” Scores of musicians across various disciplines agree. Revis has performed and recorded with Betty Carter, Peter Brotzmann, Jeff “Tain” Watts, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Steve Coleman, Ralph Peterson, Lionel Hampton, McCoy Tyner, Andrew Cyrille, and Tarbaby (the experimental trio he tri-leads with Orrin Evans and Nasheet Waits).

Manning the bass chair with Branford Marsalis’ powerfully flexible quartet since 1997, Revis has also recorded four brilliant albums as a leader. 2004’s *Tales of the Stuttering Mime* and 2009’s *Laughter’s Necklace of Tears* have both revealed his startling range as a musician and composer. Informed by his past but not tethered to it, a glimpse into the musical trajectory of this artist is indelibly clear on his latest release *Parallax* (Clean Feed ) and the soon to be released *City of Asylum* (Clean Feed).

“*Tales of the Stuttering Mime* was an amalgam of songs I’d been composing for quite some time,” Revis explains. “Being that there were a lot of different influences at play, it required that I use various band configurations on almost every tune, which was great in that I had a very real connection to all of the musicians involved.” With *Laughter’s Necklace of Tears* the same conceptual construct was in place in terms of the confluence of musical influences, but the goal was to present it in a more cohesive fashion in terms of having one group navigate the songs for the record as opposed to five or six”.

Conceptually improvisational and thematically broad, *Parallax* (Clean Feed) is timeless and borderless. The albums’ approach is one of inclusion, extrapolation and exploration. Joined by Jason Moran, Ken Vandermark and Nasheet Waits, it is a true document of Revis’ growth as a composer, bassist and sounding board. As on previous recordings, Revis’ playing is personal and distinctive: his tone deep and woody, his execution, agile, melodic and clear. A musical polyglot, Revis is comfortable in any setting, any direction. His skills as a band leader and composer are equally profound and inspiring.