

MUSIC: DANA GAVIN

## Diverse Jazz Festival Offers Music and More

On Sunday, Aug. 21, the 16th annual Jazz in the Valley music festival returns to Poughkeepsie's Waryas Park for an afternoon of jazz luminaries, as well as hot new up-and-comers.

The festival, produced by the locally based nonprofit multidisciplinary arts organization TRANSART, will feature two stages packed with performances, a food court and a global marketplace from noon until 6 p.m., with gates opening at 11 a.m.

Jazz in the Valley's artistic director, tenor saxophonist Javon Jackson, garnered notice when he toured and recorded with the celebrated drummer Art Blakey as a member of his band, Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers. He went on to release numerous recordings as a band leader and record albums as a performer himself. He is also an educator — he currently serves as director of the Jackie McLean Institute at the University of Hartford.

Now in his third year at the helm of Jazz in the Valley, Jackson spoke enthusiastically about this year's festival and what attendees can anticipate. He referenced Greer Smith, who established TRANSART in 1990, and Smith's vision and connections with the community. "The festival has a great impact on people," he said. "Greer has great relationships, and the music serves as a conduit. It's an appreciation of the fans."

The blend of established legends of the jazz movement with emerging stars was "something Greer had in mind," Jackson said. This year, fans will be able to relish star performances by pianist Randy Weston, trum-



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**Javon Jackson is the artistic director of the Jazz in the Valley music festival.**

peter Randy Brecker and trombonist Craig Harris, to name a few, while being thrilled, perhaps for the first time, by young vocalist Charenee Wade.

"Different generations come together," Jackson said. "There's cross-pollination. They learn from and support each other. There's always the connection from Latin jazz and established jazz, like the genre of Louis Armstrong, through bebop and what we look at as modern music. You'll see that all shared on one stage. There's a little bit for everyone, and you'll see the diversity within the idiom."

Jackson is particularly looking forward to reuniting with his friends, including drummer Jimmy Cobb from the masterpiece Miles Davis album "Kind of Blue," who perform in the supergroup Jazz by 5. "We've done one tour in Europe back in May, and I'm looking forward to seeing these guys. I look forward to seeing Randy Weston — I'm such a fan of his longevity. I get inspired by his music."

*General admission is \$50 in advance and \$60 at the gate. Students gain entrance for \$20. Tickets can be purchased at [www.jazzinthevalleyny.org](http://www.jazzinthevalleyny.org).*

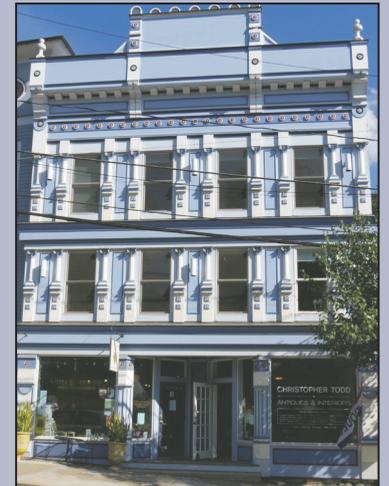
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