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Elevator fund • donations
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The Vipers
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music BY BRETT CAMPBELL

Bringing it All Back Home

Local music lovers bring jazz greats

We've all heard how the Internet is allowing bands to take their careers into their own hard drives, declaring independence from evil record companies, booking agencies, etc. (It especially helps to be Radiohead.) But fans, too, are increasingly finding ways to bring the sounds they want home without relying on a major institution or venue. Years ago, music lovers of means and vision founded the Shedd and Oregon Festival of American Music to bring great sounds to town and to inspire homegrown music making. But you don't have to be a Medici; it can cost less to commission a reputable composer to write, say, a string quartet than you'd spend on a long weekend in San Francisco. Music- and arts-loving locals started the Jazz Station and DIVA downtown, both of which provide a nurturing space for local artists. And last summer, an enterprising Eugene couple decided to bring the critically acclaimed pianist Joanne Brackeen to town. Overcoming skepticism and limited finances (she's an office manager and singer, he's a veteran jazz musician and former commercial salmon fisherman), Gary and Jeanne Christiansen found others who believed in their vision — some of whom they didn't even know — and raised enough donations to pay Brackeen's fee and book United Lutheran Church. They're doing it again Oct. 12 when the fabulous **Jessica Williams** will dazzle the ebonies and ivories at the church at 22nd & Washington.

Deeply influenced by Thelonious Monk, Williams is another critical darling who's won a Guggenheim composition fellowship and combines her theoretical knowledge and agile virtuosity with a firm grounding in tradition (stride, Errol Garner and more) to produce some of the most thoughtful, vital jazz of our time. She's made at least four dozen albums and pioneered her own online music store, bypassing the corporate music establishment. You can often hear some of her cues on NPR's "Fresh Air," and that show's website contains a fascinating show featuring Williams that will demonstrate why she's held in such high regard. The Christiansens are going to need community support to keep this up-close and intimate series going — you can find out how to help at the show.

More distaff jazz at Cozmic Pizza the following evening with **The Tiptons**, an all-woman group named after Billy Tipton, a big-band saxophonist who posed as a man for half a century. The high-spirited New York/Seattle sax quartet (plus drummer) embraces influences from Eastern Europe to New Orleans. And on Oct. 21, Cozmic hosts still another fine female improviser: flutist/vocalist **Emily Hay** and her trio. Equally comfortable in the postclassical avant-garde, free improv and jazz worlds — she's studied with jazz master Dave Holland and with postclassical composer Joan Tower — Hay uses classical and extended techniques and electronic effects to create a compelling and unique sound world. This setting with organist Wayne Peet and percussionist Brad Dtuz sometimes echoes Miles Davis' *Bitches Brew*.

Jessica Williams



The following evening, Cozmic hosts still more new jazz when the **Douglas Detrick/Dave Swigart Jazz Orchestra** uncorks its big band sounds. Comprising some of the UO's most accomplished musical talents, the brassy baker's dozen features original and quite accessible music that should find favor with traditionalists as well as moderns. There's more UO jazz on Oct. 17 in room 178 of the school's music building when New York trumpeter **Andre Canniere** joins faculty pianist **Toby Koenigsberg**, bassist **Tommy Sciple** and drummer **Jason Palmer**.

Such jazz-contemporary classical interaction is nothing new, as Benny Goodman proved in 1940 when he commissioned Bela Bartok to write a piece featuring clarinet. You can hear his colorful, mood-swinging "Contrasts" at 3 pm Oct. 21 when the UO's Chamber Music Series brings three of today's most respected classical musicians — violinist-violist **Ani Kavafian**, pianist **André-Michel Schub**, clarinetist **David Shifrin** — to Beall Hall to play it, along with Mozart's bubbly Kegelstadt trio, an arrangement of tunes from Stravinsky's wry "A Soldier's Tale" and more. The UO hosts a free 75th birthday tribute to one of its most esteemed emeritus faculty members, award-winning composer **Hal Owen**, at on Oct. 12 at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 13th and Pearl, featuring sacred choral works, a setting of Rumi texts for soprano and clarinet and more.

Young ukulele wizard **Jake Shimabukuro** has lately been giving jazz cred to his unlikely instrument, thanks to his virtuoso technique and musicality. On Oct. 15, he plays Springfield's Wildish Theater and will likely cover modern standards: his last show featured tunes by the Beatles, Led Zeppelin, Sarah McLachlan and more.

And speaking of the Shedd, as we were way back at the top, that venue hosts a couple of intriguing shows. On Oct. 12, **Dervish** plays Celtic music at the erstwhile downtown church. For almost two decades, the award-winning Sligo-based sextet has won accolades for its energetic take on trad Irish tunes, garnished with mandola and bouzouki and Cathy Jordan's piquant vocals. On Oct. 14, another all-female aggregation, **Uncle Earl**, shows what happened when old Celtic tunes made their way to the Appalachians. The g'Earls have worked with Gillian Welch, Chris Thile, Dirk Powell and even Zep's John Paul Jones, who produced their new CD, which features both bluegrass traditionals and impressive originals. **EW**