



FR. JONES

Wednesday, January 18, 2022, 7:30pm
Zellerbach Hall

Monterey Jazz Festival on Tour *Celebrating 65 Years*

Dee Dee Bridgewater, *vocals*

Kurt Elling, *vocals*

Christian Sands, *music director, piano, keyboards*

Lakecia Benjamin, *alto saxophone*

Yasushi Nakamura, *bass*

Clarence Penn, *drums*

*This performance will last approximately 90 minutes
and be performed without an intermission.*

*This performance is made possible, in part, by
Joe W. Laymon, Kiese Laymon, Jeanne Laymon, and Thomas Laymon.*

COVID-19: Masking is required inside the auditorium, and is strongly recommended, though not required, for indoor lobby/waiting areas as well as outdoor spaces. Up-to-date vaccination is strongly recommended, though not required for entry. The latest information on Cal Performances' COVID-19 safety policies is available at calperformances.org/safety.

Photographing and/or recording this performance is strictly prohibited.

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Over the course of a multi-faceted career spanning four decades, Grammy and Tony Award-winning jazz giant **Dee Dee Bridgewater** has ascended to the upper echelon of vocalists, putting her unique spin on standards, as well as taking intrepid leaps of faith in re-envisioning jazz classics. The two-time Grammy winner most recently won the award for Best Jazz Vocal Album for *Eleanora Fagan (1915–1959): To Billie with Love From Dee Dee*. She earned her first professional experience as a member of the legendary Thad Jones/Mel Louis Big Band, and throughout the 1970s performed with jazz legends Max Roach, Sonny Rollins, Dexter Gordon, Dizzy Gillespie, and others. Bridgewater's voice combines the voluptuousness of Sarah Vaughan with the sweet, girlish clarity of Ella Fitzgerald. Awarded a NEA Jazz Master fellowship in 2017, she has performed at the Monterey Jazz Festival (MJF) six times since 1973.

Renowned for his singular combination of robust swing and poetic insight, two-time Grammy winner **Kurt Elling** has secured his place among the world's foremost jazz vocalists. The *New York Times* proclaimed him "the standout male vocalist of our time." Over a 25-year career of touring and recording, Elling has won three French Prix du Jazz Vocal awards, two German Echo Awards, and two Dutch Edison Awards, and has been nominated for 15 Grammys. Elling had a 14-year run topping the *DownBeat* Critics and Readers polls and has won 12 Jazz Journalists Awards for "Male Vocalist of the Year." His voice is instantly recognizable, and he is a virtuoso improviser and a compelling storyteller. The *Guardian* (UK) named Elling "one of jazz's all-time great vocalists." He has performed at MJF six times, including acting as Artist-in-Residence in 2006, and was the vocalist for the MJF on Tour All-Stars in 2009–10.

Voted the winner of the 2020 *DownBeat* Critics Poll Rising Star Alto Saxophonist and Up and Coming Artist of the Year by the Jazz Journalists Association, charismatic and dynamic saxophonist **Lakecia Benjamin** fuses traditional conceptions of jazz, hip-hop, and soul. Her electric presence and fiery sax work has shared stages with legendary artists, including Stevie Wonder, Alicia Keys, The Roots, and Macy Gray. Benjamin's album *Pursuance* is an intergenerational masterpiece that pays homage to two of the greatest musical innovators of the 20th century, John and Alice Coltrane. Her new album, *Phoenix*, out in late January 2023, features Patrice Rushen, Dianne Reeves, Angela Davis, and Wayne Shorter and was produced by Terri Lyne Carrington. Benjamin has performed at MJF twice since 2016.

Pianist and MJF on Tour Music Director **Christian Sands** is a two-time Grammy nominee. Growing up in New Haven, Connecticut, he started playing professionally at the age of 10 and received his BA and master's degrees from the Manhattan School of Music. A protégé of Dr. Billy Taylor, Sands began a six-year association with bassist Christian McBride in 2009, and has followed in Dr. Taylor's footsteps by encouraging, inspiring, and advocating for the preservation and history of jazz. As Monterey Jazz Festival's Artist-in-Residence from 2020–22, Sands launched his online video series "Welcome to the Sands Box," interviewing his friends and favorites from the jazz world. Sands' third recording for Mack Avenue Music Group, *Be Water*, captures and establishes him as a forceful leader in composition and conceptual vision. He has performed at MJF five times since 2014 and acted as MJF on Tour's musical director in 2018–19.

Bassist **Yasushi Nakamura** is one of today's most commanding bass players. Born in Tokyo, Nakamura moved to Seattle, Washington and received his bachelor's degree in jazz performance from Berklee College of Music, and an artist diploma from the Juilliard School. He has recorded or performed with Wynton Marsalis, Wycliffe Gordon, Toshiko Akiyoshi, Hank Jones, Dave Douglas, Emmet Cohen, and many others, and is a member of the American Patchwork Quartet. As an educator, Nakamura has led master classes and summer intensive courses at Juilliard, The New School, Koyo Conservatory, Osaka Geidai, and Savannah Swing Central. In 2016, Nakamura released his debut album *A Lifetime Treasure*, and in 2017, his second record, *Hometown* received the 2017 Album of the Year award from *JazzLife* magazine. Nakamura has performed at MJF many times since 2004 and was the bassist for MJF on Tour in 2018–19.

The charismatic and dynamic **Clarence Penn** is one of the busiest jazz drummers in the world, a leader of multiple bands, a composer, a prolific producer, and an educator. Penn currently leads several ensembles and is a member of the American Patchwork Quartet. His most recent “rhythmically intoxicating” recording is 2014's *Monk: The Lost Files* on Origin Records. Since 1991, when he arrived in New York City, Penn has placed his unique blend of mega-chops, keen intellect, and heady musicianship at the service of a staggering array of A-list artists—a chronological short-list including Ellis and Wynton Marsalis, Betty Carter, Stanley Clarke, Steps Ahead, Makoto Ozone, Michael Brecker, Dave Douglas, Maria

Schneider, Luciana Souza, Richard Galliano, and Fourplay. Penn's impressive discography includes several hundred studio albums (including the Grammy-winning recordings *34th and Lex* by Randy Brecker and *Concert in the Garden* and *Sky Blue* by Maria Schneider). He recently joined the University of Central Florida Department of Music as an assistant professor of jazz percussion, having previously taught with the Banff International Workshop in Jazz and Creative Music, the Stanford Jazz Workshop, the Saint Louis College of Music in Rome, Italy, and Jazz at Lincoln Center's Intensive Jazz Institute. Penn has performed at MJF three times since 2013.

About Monterey Jazz Festival

MJF's mission is to inspire the discovery and celebration of jazz, anchored by an iconic festival. Representing the longest continuously-running jazz festival in the world, MJF on Tour groups have brought the festival's reach to over 150,000 jazz fans across the country and Canada since 2008, featuring some of the genre's greatest practitioners, including James Moody, Christian McBride, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Gerald Clayton, Christian McBride, Benny Green, Bria Skonberg, Kenny Barron, Regina Carter, Nicholas Payton, Ravi Coltrane, Russell Malone, Chris Potter, Melissa Aldana, and Ambrose Akinmusire, to name a few.

Monterey Jazz Festival on Tour is produced by Danny Melnick for *Absolutely Live Entertainment (ALE)* and booked by the *Kurland Agency*, which also produced and booked three previous MJF tours in 2013, 2016 and 2019.