2026 Medford Jazz Festival
August 14-16

West Medford Community Center

Medford Jazz Festival
Friday, August 14

Vertigo Trio+

Tim Blackman (piano), Doug Toland (drums), Ethan Focht (bass), Debbie Lane (vocals)

Born out of a shared fascination with the Bill Evans Trio, Vertigo brings that legendary ensemble's spirit of democratic improvisation, where every voice carries equal weight, into fresh, intimate territory. Based in Arlington, the quartet has grown beyond its roots to embrace the broader Great American Songbook, with a particular love for the Golden Age of Hollywood (1929–1959), when composers and lyricists gave the world some of its most enduring melodies. Joining the group is vocalist Debbie Lane, whose experience and versatility make her a natural guide through this rich repertoire — songs that were made for smoky rooms, late nights, and close listening.

www.vertigotrio.com

7:00 PM

Reese Pike Trio

Reese Pike (piano), Seba Ramírez (drums), Jan Portisch (bass)

The Reese Pike Trio is made up of musicians who came together at the Berklee Global Jazz Institute. Bringing influences from their home countries of the United States, Paraguay, and Germany, the group is interested in exploring influences on jazz from around the world and examining the intersections of social activism, storytelling, and music. They are currently performing a project based on the life of Mexican-American composer María Grever and Pike's own family history.

8:00 PM

Sponsors

West Medford Community Center, Medford Community Media, Berklee Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice, Audient Sound Company, Winchester Community Music School, Arts Alive Medford Foundation, Medford Arts Council, Morningside Music Studio, Patreon, and Individual Sponsors

Vendors

Triangle Manor

The Elephant in the Room

The Danish Pastry House

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Medford Jazz Festival
Saturday, August 15

Farayi Malek Quintet

Farayi Malek (vocals, acoustic guitar), Greyson Hillin (vocals, electric guitar), Jacob Means (vocals, mandolin), Max Ridley (vocals, upright bass), Héctor Falu Guzmán (drumset)

Farayi Malek is a jazz and contemporary vocalist, composer, and educator. She received her bachelor's degree in Contemporary Improvisation from New England Conservatory of Music in 2017, where she studied with vocalist and composer Dominique Eade. After NEC, she went on to receive a master's degree at the Berklee Global Jazz Institute in 2018, under the tutelage of world-renowned pianist and composer, Danilo Pérez. Since 2018, Malek has been a member of the Grammy-nominated group Danilo Pérez's Global Messengers. In addition to performing, Malek is a passionate music educator and founded Allegro Virtual Preparatory Instruction, an online learning platform that provides access to the highest quality of music education. Malek now teaches at both Berklee College of Music and the New England Conservatory in multiple capacities.

www.farayimusic.com

1:00 PM

Mina Cho Quartet

Mina Cho (piano, Korean traditional percussion), George Lernis (drums, percussion), Youngchae Jeong (bass), Matthew Ryu (guitar)

The Mina Cho Quartet brings the bold, joyful sound of Gugak Jazz — where Korea's centuries-old rhythms, folk melodies, and ritual traditions meet the improvisational fire of modern jazz. Led by pianist and composer Dr. Mina Cho, whose music has been celebrated from Boston and Montreal to Montpellier and Busan, the quartet creates a vivid cross-cultural soundscape. Dr. Mina Cho is a Boston-based jazz pianist, composer, and scholar as well as the founder and director of the Gugak Jazz Society and the International Gugak Jazz Institute. She holds doctorates from Brandeis University (PhD, Musicology) and New England Conservatory (DMA, Jazz Composition) and serves on the faculty of Emerson College.

www.minachojazz.com | www.igji.org

2:15 PM

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Sunday, August 16

Nicko Guerrero Trio — 2:00 PM

Nicko Guerrero (drums), Samuel Cerra (vibraphone), Greg Loughman (bass)

Nicko Guerrero is a Bogotá-born drummer, composer, educator, and researcher based in Boston. He has spent more than a decade building a body of work that treats the rhythmic heritage of the Colombian Caribbean as a living, contemporary idiom. His sound sits at the confluence of bullerengue, lumbalú, porro and jazz: unmistakably his own. He was the first Colombian admitted to the Berklee Global Jazz Institute, where he earned a Master's degree and a Post-Masters Fellowship. He has collaborated with Grammy-winning jazz vocalist Luciana Souza and toured across the US, Latin America, and Europe. He currently serves as a Professional Accompanist at Berklee College of Music and is the creator of Pura Bulla, a project rooted in fieldwork in San Basilio de Palenque (UNESCO) that brings Colombian heritage into dialogue with contemporary jazz.

Berklee Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice — 3:00 PM

Personnel announced from the stage

The Berklee Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice focuses on equity in the jazz field and the role that jazz plays in the larger struggle for gender justice. The institute celebrates the contributions women have made in the development of the art form and advocates for more equitable working conditions for all people pursuing careers in jazz. The jazz industry remains predominantly male due to a biased system, imposing a significant toll on those who aspire to work in it. In understanding the importance of balance and equity, the goal of the Berklee Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice is to do corrective work and modify the way jazz is perceived and presented so that the future of jazz looks different than its past and doesn't render invisible many of the art form's creative contributors.

The Ally Project — 4:00 PM

Terry E. Carter (poetry), Jonathan Fagan (piano), Greg Toro (bass), Gordon Engelgau (drums)

The Ally Project was conceived in 2020 by Medford poet Terry E. Carter and Arlington pianist Jonathan Fagan, after Fagan heard Carter's original work for the first time. After a brief meeting, they decided to mesh Fagan's dynamic composing and playing with Carter's expressive lyricism at the intersection of jazz and social justice. Several years into the project, the duo has morphed into a quartet with a debut CD (2023), an avid local following and several different players forming a tight lyrical quartet. They've played at a number of different venues, jazz concerts, and special events. They have a sense of mission and musicality that are both unique and artistically engaging.

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Welcome to the West Medford Community Center!

The Mission of the West Medford Community Center is to connect the diverse people of West Medford and the wider Mystic River Valley region through social, educational, cultural, health, and recreational activities. For over sixty years, the West Medford Community Center has provided opportunities for individuals and families to gather, learn from each other, grow, and celebrate together.

111 Arlington Street, Medford, Massachusetts 02155
call: (781) 483-3042 email: info@wmcc.us

About Medford Jazz Festival

The Medford Jazz Festival produces inspiring concerts at the iconic West Medford Community Center each year, featuring local talent and world-class musicianship with diverse influences. Started as a virtual event during the summer of 2020, the festival has become an important outlet for Medford-based bandleaders to present their compositions to local audiences, bringing together listeners and celebrating the cultural perspectives within the city. The Medford Jazz Festival is a registered 501c3 nonprofit organization with tax-exempt status.

Contact us!
Email: medfordjazzfestival@gmail.com
Website: medfordjazzfestival.com

Become a Patreon member
Provide much-needed continual monthly support:
patreon.com/medfordjazz

Ways to Help

Know a corporate or organizational sponsor that would support Medford Jazz Festival 2027?
Want to volunteer at future festivals or jams?
Have ideas about future performers?

Support needed with: social media marketing, grant-writing, non-profit knowledge/expertise, volunteering, promotion

One-time donation: Venmo
@MedfordJazzFestival

Your generous donations help sustain the Medford Jazz Festival and support artists and educational programs. Thank you for keeping the spirit of jazz alive and thriving!