

Oberlin Artist Recital Series: The Spring Quartet

by Mike Telin



It's been three decades since the Oberlin Conservatory launched its Jazz Studies Program, and beginning on Monday, April 15, the school will mark the milestone with a three-day celebration. (A full schedule is below.) The festivities will culminate on Wednesday, April 17 at 7:30 pm in Finney Chapel with an Artist Recital Series performance by

The Spring Quartet, an all-star ensemble that includes drummer Jack DeJohnette, saxman Joe Lovano, bassist/vocalist Esperanza Spalding, and pianist Leo Genovese. Tickets are limited and available [online](#).

The membership of the Spring Quartet spans three generations, something that DeJohnette, a 2012 NEA Jazz Master, said makes for a nice balance of older and younger generations. "There's this exchange of inspiration from Esperanza and Leo and you need that young energy," he said during an interview.

In a separate interview Joe Lovano said that the group shares a common musical vocabulary which is the reason the four members "clicked from the very first downbeat."

DeJohnette agreed. "Sometimes people come together and the magic happens," he said. "We have a lot of love and respect for each other as people and as artists, and the propensity to work together cooperatively is greatly enhanced because of that."

The root of the Spring Quartet family tree can be traced directly to DeJohnette. "We've all been listening to Jack's music," Lovano said. "He's been one of the premiere modern jazz musicians on the scene for quite some time, from his work with

Charles Lloyd, Miles Davis, Keith Jarrett, and all the things he's done as a leader through the years. His music has inspired me, Esperanza, and Leo."

Lovano, who holds the Gary Burton Chair in Jazz Performance at the Berklee College of Music, has known Esperanza Spalding and Leo Genovese since their student days. "They were both part of my ensembles and recital classes, and since that time Esperanza was part of my Us Five quintet, so we've been playing since around 2006. But Jack is such a forward thinking, amazing musician that he knew what Esperanza and Leo were into long before anybody had heard of them — he's got a lot of radar."

Regarding the playlist for Wednesday's concert, Lovano said that they'll be presenting "a beautiful repertoire of original compositions that we all brought into the mix."

The group got together for a couple days of rehearsals at Lovano's studio and revisited some tunes they performed on their last tour, as well as some new pieces. "At the end of the two days we had 20 different tunes that we're going to explore during these concerts. Each night we're going to put a different combination of them together."

Although the group played through far more than 20 tunes over the two days, Lovano said they chose the ones that "rose to the level of expression that we wanted. We want every tune to have its own feeling — we don't want any repeats.

On Monday, we'll hear more from Jack DeJohnette and Joe Lovano as they discuss their long careers and their thoughts on music education.

Oberlin Jazz Studies 30th Anniversary celebration schedule

Monday, April 15

7:00 pm — Film screening with Mark Cantor, filmmaker and collector. "Giants of Jazz," featuring the music of Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Bill Evans, the International Sweethearts of Rhythm, Thelonious Monk, Stan Kenton, and others. Stull Recital Hall.

8:00 pm — Film screening with Mark Cantor, filmmaker and collector. "The Jazz Vocalist," featuring performances by Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Abbey Lincoln, June Christy, Mel Torme, Lambert, Hendricks and Ross, and others. Stull Recital Hall.

10:00 pm — Film screening with Mark Cantor, filmmaker and collector. “Combos Big and Small” featuring the music of Charlie Parker, the Savoy Sultans, Lee Konitz, Benny Goodman, Marian McPartland, the Art Ensemble of Chicago and a number of other seminal jazz combos. Stull Recital Hall,

Tuesday, April 16

3:30 pm — Panel Discussion: Producing Jazz — Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow, with jazz studies professor Jay Ashby, Grammy-winning producer Todd Barkan and jazz writer Michael Cuscuna. Stull Recital Hall.

7:30 pm — Oberlin Jazz Faculty in Concert, with Chris Anderson & Jay Ashby, trombone, Gary Bartz, saxophone, Peter Dominguez, bass, Bobby Ferrazza, guitar, La Tanya Hall, voice, Billy Hart, drums, Eddie Henderson, trumpet, and Dan Wall, piano. Finney Chapel. (Free)

Wednesday, April 17

3:30 pm — Faculty Panel Discussion: Amazing Jazz Stories. Guests include jazz & ethnomusicology faculty member Fredara Hadley. Stull Recital Hall.

7:30 pm – Oberlin Artist Recital Series: The Spring Quartet, with drummer Jack DeJohnette, saxman Joe Lovano, bassist/vocalist Esperanza Spalding, and pianist Leo Genovese. Program to be announced. Finney Chapel. Tickets are limited and available [online](#).

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