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Editors Please Note: Photography is available. Please call

Javon Jackson, Les McCann Headline Estes Park Jazz Festival

Legendary Les McCann will join the Javon Jackson Band in performing during this year's annual Estes Park Jazz Fest on May 17 and 18, a free annual event in this mountain community at the entrance to Rocky Mountain National Park.

Jazz Fest is Colorado's first seasonal outdoor festival of the year that features America's only indigenous music genre. The event is held in the town's intimate Performance Park amphitheater, 417 W. Elkhorn Ave., and begins at noon on both Saturday and Sunday. Those coming for the lineup of great jazz performances should bring blankets or lawn chairs to make seating more comfortable. There is no admission charge.

Headlining this year's Jazz Fest is the Javon Jackson Band featuring the legendary Les McCann on Sunday afternoon.

Saturday's (May 17) lineup begins at noon with the Estes Park Big Band performing the swinging sounds of Duke Ellington, Les Brown, Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, Glenn Miller and Count Basie. Others performing on May 17 are Brad Goode (violin) with the Ken Walker Trio (bass, piano and drums), The United States Air Force Big Band; a driving force in the jazz world, and George Whitesell and His All-Stars featuring Jill Watkins performing classic Jump, Swing, R&B and Blues of the golden era when "show bands" with a female singer were the rage.

On Sunday, Max Wagner (tenor and soprano saxophone, and vocals) and the Ken Walker Trio take the stage at noon performing a wide variety of jazz styles. The O-Tones Brass Band follows with original funk, Latin, and soul, mixed with a serious helping of New Orleans groove.

Jackson's band with special guest McCann are up next and the weekend's sounds of jazz come to an end with the Dexter Payne Quintet featuring Derek Banach performing a Brazilian intricate musical specialty called; "Choro," which parallels New Orleans traditional jazz, ragtime, classical, jazz and Latin romance.

Jazz Fest coincides with Art Walk Weekend, a self-guided tour of galleries, artist studios and special exhibitions throughout the Estes Park area. The Art Walk begins each day at 10 a.m. and continues until 5 p.m., although hours may vary at some locations. Art Walk maps are available at any of the participating galleries or at Performance Park. For more information on the Art Walk, call 970-586-9203.

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The Jazz Fest Lineup at a glance:

Saturday, May 17, 2008		Sunday, May 18, 2008	
Noon	Estes Park Big Band	Noon	Max Wagner and the Ken Walker Trio
1:05 p.m.	Brad Goode with the Ken Walker Trio	1:20 p.m.	O-Tones Brass Band
2:25 p.m.	The United States Air Force Falconaires Big Band	2:40 p.m.	Javon Jackson Band with Special Guest Les McCann
4:00 p.m.	George Whitesell and His All-Stars featuring Jill Watkins	4:00 p.m.	Dexter Payne Quintet featuring Derek Banach

About the Headliners:

Saxman Javon Jackson began working professionally in local jazz clubs at age 16, playing with former Max Roach Quintet pianist Billy Wallace. Jackson's style on tenor earned him an invitation to join Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. Jackson hits the road this summer with his group, and special guests including Dr. Lonnie Smith, Les McCann and more. Jackson's newest recording, *Now*, features more rock solid grooves from Javon and company. *Now* has something old, a little something new; including nine new tunes from Jackson, a little James Brown, vocals from Lisa Fischer, fresh from her worldwide tour with the Rolling Stones along with Roberta Flack, Johnny Mercer, Kenny Garrett and more.

Les McCann is best known for his work in the late 60s and early 70s and pioneered the use of electric piano, clavinet, and synthesizer, to record one of the earliest electronic jazz albums. McCann partnered with saxman Eddie Harris, whom he first met at the Montreux Jazz Festival. Their first collaboration, *Swiss Movement* (1960), was a top selling jazz record, and the single *Compared to What* sold platinum. The same year, McCann hit the charts again for recording the ballad, *With These Hands. Second Movement* (1971), reunited McCann and Harris, with acclaimed recordings, *Invitation to Openness* (1972), the double-record *Live at Montreux* (1973), and *Layers* (1973); a revolutionary, improvisational experiment that included 15 musicians in one 27-minute song. McCann was inducted into the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame in February of 2008.

Saturday, May 17: Noon - Estes Park Big Band

Don't let the group's name, reflective of the community make-up of its membership, fool you. This group of musicians, many of whom have played professionally with headliners throughout the United States prior to their "retirement" in this resort village, is known for their powerful sound that adheres to precepts of the big band era. Now in their 13th year of performing, the band performs the swinging sounds of Duke Ellington, Les Brown, Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, Glenn Miller and Count Basie.

Saturday, May 17: 1:05 p.m. - Brad Goode with the Ken Walker Trio

Brad Goode: The recording artist was born in Chicago in 1963 and classically trained on violin from age four. At age 11, he switched to guitar and cornet. Goode took an early interest in the music of Louis Armstrong, learning many of his classic solos by age 13. He studied trumpet with Cat Anderson, Byron Baxter and Vincent DiMartino, and studied string bass with Larry Gray and Donald Garrett.

Ken Walker: Hailing from Denver, Ken Walker is the trio's leader and bassist. He's performed with James Moody, Eric Alexander, Mose Allison, Della Reese and others. The rest of the sextet is also from Denver. Walker has performed as the regular bassist at El-Chapultepec, and with groups including the Art Porter Trio and the popular Artistry. As house bassist for jazz clubs, Walker has accompanied entertainers and international jazz recording artists such as Mose Allison, Eddie Harris, Jon Abercrombie, Clifford Jordan, and Eddie Daniels.

Saturday, May 17: 2:25 p.m. - The United States Air Force Falconaires Big Band

The Falconaires are one of the Air Force's two premier jazz ensembles that have brought the sounds of Big Band Jazz to national audiences for more than 50 years. The 18 full-time jazz musicians are some of the most sought-after clinicians in America and regularly appear at prestigious events such as the International Association of Jazz Educators' National Conference, the Music Educators National Conference's National Convention, and Musicfest Canada. The Air Force Academy Bands' are a driving force in the jazz world and the Falconaires play a major role in cultivating our national heritage through its only indigenous musical genre, jazz.

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Saturday, May 17: 4 p.m. - George Whitesell and His All-Stars featuring Jill Watkins

This band keeps alive the tradition of the classic Jump, Swing, R&B and Blues bands of the golden era when "show bands" with a female singer were the rage. It performs music that bridges the gap between big band swing and rock 'n roll. It's a deceptively simple sound, but it takes a high level of musicianship to pull it off. With a skin-tight rhythm section and a horn trio, guitarist and vocalist George Whitesell believes this ensemble sound the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Add singer Jill Watkins to the mix, and you get a band that has breadth, style and class.

Sunday, May 18: Noon – Max Wagner and the Ken Walker Trio

Max Wagner grew up in a musical family in Estes Park. Although he was far from the jazz centers of the world, Wagner grew up listening to Louis Armstrong, Jon Hendricks and anyone and everyone who was in jazz, honing his own skills on the saxophone. Over the past 25 years, Wagner's extensive touring, recording and touring work prepared him to become an accomplished musician in the jazz tradition. Wagner's abilities on the tenor and soprano saxophones and as a vocalist coupled with his grasp of a wide variety of jazz styles have given him the opportunity to perform with many top jazz musicians. Years of playing nightly in for many diverse clubs have allowed Wagner to hone his skills and ability to communicate and express himself musically.

Sunday, May 18: 1:20 p.m. – O-Tones Brass Band

Original funk, Latin, and soul, mixed with a serious helping of New Orleans groove, are found in the eight-piece group. The O-Tones have marched in parades, festivals and mardi gras celebrations, taking the grooves out into the crowds, out to the people. They also have played concert venues and bars, fronting for the Preservation Hall Jazz Orchestra, among others.

Sunday, May 18: 2:40 p.m. - Javon Jackson Band with Special Guest, Les McCann

Javon Jackson: An alumnus of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, Jackson's soulful playing has established him as one of the top young saxophonists in jazz. Jackson was born in Carthage, MO and raised in Denver, CO. As a high school student, he was selected to play in various city and statewide musical groups and additionally chosen as a member of the McDonald's All-American High School Marching Band. Following high school, Jackson attended college at the University of Denver and Berklee College of Music. During his studies at Berklee, he auditioned and earned a seat in Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. Over the years Jackson has been involved with over 80 jazz recordings, and has become a leader in the jazz genre.

Les McCann: Jazz [piano](#) player and vocalist McCann's success came as a crossover artist into R&B and soul. McCann has been playing with well-known soul, R&B and rock performers for four decades. McCann has played with most of the major performers of his day. In 1971, McCann and saxophonist Ed Harris, Wilson Pickett, The Staple Singers, Santana and Ike & Tina Turner flew to Accra Ghana and performed before 100,000 Ghanaians in an historic 14 hour concert. McCann was sidelined in the mid-1990's by a stroke, but rebounded and released his newest album in 2002. He continues to perform nationally and at international festivals in Paris, Italy, Greece, Canada, Japan, and in Austria at the Vienna State Opera. On February 21, 2008 McCann was inducted into the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame.

Sunday May 18: 4:00 p.m. - Dexter Payne Quintet featuring Derek Banach

Dexter Payne Quintet: Denver native Dexter Payne, a proficient and emotive performer on clarinet and alto saxophone, embarked upon a world music odyssey in 1994 that continues today. The Dexter Payne Quintet performs a Brazilian musical specialty called choro which parallels New Orleans traditional jazz, ragtime, classical, jazz and Latin romance. The melodies are intricate, many of the tempos fast, and some of the keys difficult. Choro preceded samba and bossa and is still popular in Brazil. The music is seldom heard in America, but is special for these five accomplished musicians. Dexter Payne performs with premier musicians and band members Bill Kopper, Bijoux Barbosa and Raoul Rossiter who are an event by themselves.

Derek Banach: A Colorado native, Derek Banach has played trumpet for more than 30 years and has performed in a variety of groups in Italy, Uganda Africa, Peru, and throughout the Caribbean. His major influences being jazz stylists Freddie Hubbard, Lee Morgan and Woody Shaw, he also composes and performs Afro-Cuban jazz, acid-jazz and world music. Derek co-produced "Northstation," a CD collaboration with Jeremiah Moore which melds electronic music with experimental jazz. He has taught trumpet improvisation at CU Boulder and currently performs with La Salsa, Mambo Rico, David Mporampora African Band, George Inai and several straight-ahead jazz groups.

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