

# Amelia Island Jazz Festival

September 29 to October 6, 2024

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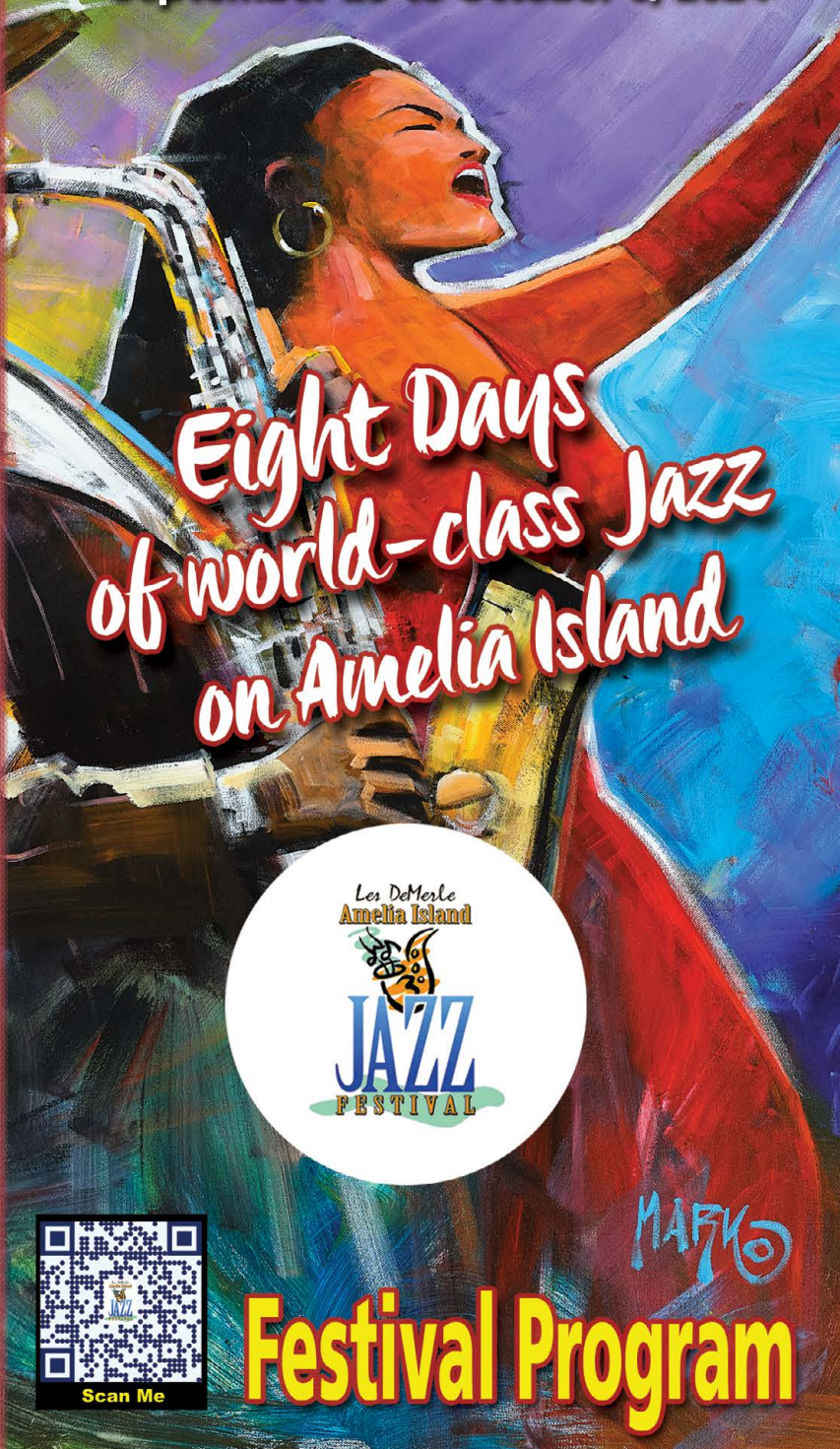
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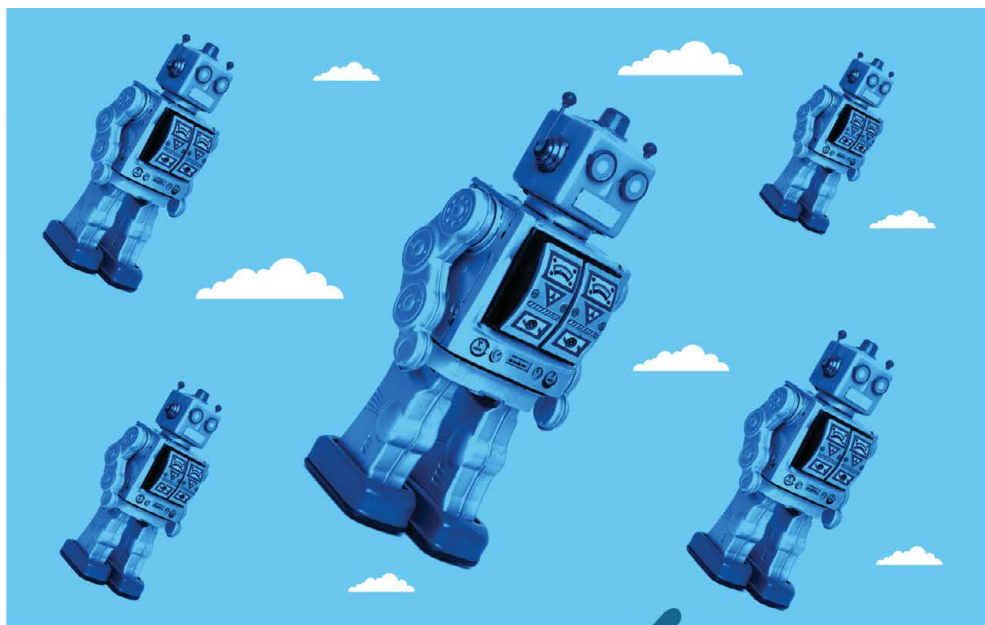
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Eight Days  
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on Amelia Island



Festival Program



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# 21 years of Exciting Concerts, Jam Session, Brunch and more at the Amelia Island Jazz Festival

Welcome to the **21st Annual Amelia Island Jazz Festival**, where eight unforgettable days of world-class jazz await! This year's explosive lineup promises to keep you swinging with captivating performances by some of today's most electrifying jazz talents.

We've built a rich legacy with iconic headliners like The Manhattan Transfer, the Tierney Sutton Band, John Pizzarelli Trio, Steve March-Tormé, Delfeayo Marsalis, Jamil Sharif, Requite Trio with Janis Siegel, Henry Johnson, Néstor Torres, Bria Skonberg, Houston Person, Kevin Mahogany, Larry Coryell, Randy Brecker, Tony Monaco, Mindy Abair, Royal Crown Revue, Spyro Gyra, David Benoit, Buckwheat Zydeco, Ramsey Lewis, David Sanborn, Christian Tamburr, Harry Allen, Marcus Printup, Richie Cole, Frank Tiberi, the Woody Herman Sax Section, and more. This year is no exception. We're thrilled to bring you **Grace Kelly**, the dazzling saxophonist and vocalist whose dynamic energy is sure to light up the stage. Get ready to groove to the legendary **Marcia Ball**, delivering her signature Texas blues and soulful vocals.

Don't miss the Dynamic **Les DeMerle**, our Artistic Director, drummer, and vocalist, featuring the sensational **Bonnie Eisele** on vocals, whose performances have been a festival highlight for years. Feel the rhythm and unleash your inner mambo with the fiery sounds of **Tony Cruz & the Latin Jazz Legends**. With so much talent across eight days, this year's festival promises to be an exhilarating celebration of jazz!

*Join us in celebrating the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of The Amelia Island Jazz Festival – it's going to be another unforgettable experience.*

**ARE YOU READY?**

*Les DeMerle*

Artistic Director, Amelia Island Jazz Festival



Janis Siegel    Les DeMerle    Alan Paul    Bonnie Eisele    Cheryl Bentley

*The Manhattan Transfer & Les DeMerle with Bonnie Eisele at the 2023 AIJF*

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# Proclamation

**WHEREAS**, for many years the Les DeMerle Amelia Island Jazz Festival has brought exciting world-class jazz entertainment to Fernandina Beach in styles including Contemporary, Big Band, Latin, Swing, Dixieland, Blues and more; and

**WHEREAS**, this year, the Amelia Island Jazz Festival is celebrating its 21st Anniversary featuring headlining performers which include prodigious award-winning Saxophonist/Vocalist Grace Kelly, legendary Texas Rhythm & Blues Vocalist/Pianist, Marcia Ball, exciting 12-piece Salsa Band, Tony Cruz & the Latin Jazz Legends, the 21-piece University of North Florida Jazz Ensemble 2 directed by Dennis Marks, the Spare Rib Six Dixieland Band, and the Dynamic Les DeMerle Band featuring Bonnie Eisele. It is truly an honor and a privilege to have these world-class performers among us; and

**WHEREAS**, the Amelia Island Jazz Festival is endorsed by jazz icons Wynton Marsalis, Tony Bennett, David Sanborn, Ramsey Lewis and The Manhattan Transfer; and

**WHEREAS**, in an effort to reach out to as many concert goers as possible, the Amelia Island Jazz Festival is offering a wide range of concert venues including the Courtyard Amelia Island/Spring Hill Suites by Marriott, The Decantery, Mocama Beer Company, and the Fernandina Beach Atlantic Rec Center; and

**WHEREAS**, the Amelia Island Jazz Festival presents a free community concert and many educational programs including Jazz In The Schools, Jazz For Kids, Jazz For Seniors, as well as a Scholarship Program which supports continuing music education for high school musicians who desire to study jazz music in college.

**NOW THEREFORE**, I, Bradley Bean, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Fernandina Beach, Florida, do hereby encourage the citizens of Fernandina Beach to participate in the Amelia Island Jazz Festival celebrations and further proclaim the week of September 29 through October 6, 2024 as:

## “Les DeMerle Amelia Island Jazz Festival Week”

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I hereunto set my hand and cause the Official Seal of the City of Fernandina Beach, Florida to be affixed this 17th day of September, 2024

CITY OF FERNANDINA BEACH

*Bradley M. Bean*

Bradley M. Bean  
Mayor - Commissioner



# 2024 Amelia Island Jazz Festival Board of Directors



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## The Mission of the Amelia Island Jazz Festival

As a not for profit 501(c)(3) corporation, the Les DeMerle Amelia Island Jazz Festival distributes proceeds toward a scholarship program to fund college educations for aspiring jazz musicians and works to provide a rich, diverse jazz offering to the Amelia Island area.

It is doing this by offering educational programs and jazz workshops in area schools and senior centers and promoting Amelia Island as a tourist destination by drawing jazz enthusiasts from around the nation and the world.

## A Special "Thank You" to our Volunteer Committee Chairs

**Barb Kent**

Volunteer Coordinator

**Dawn Lunt**

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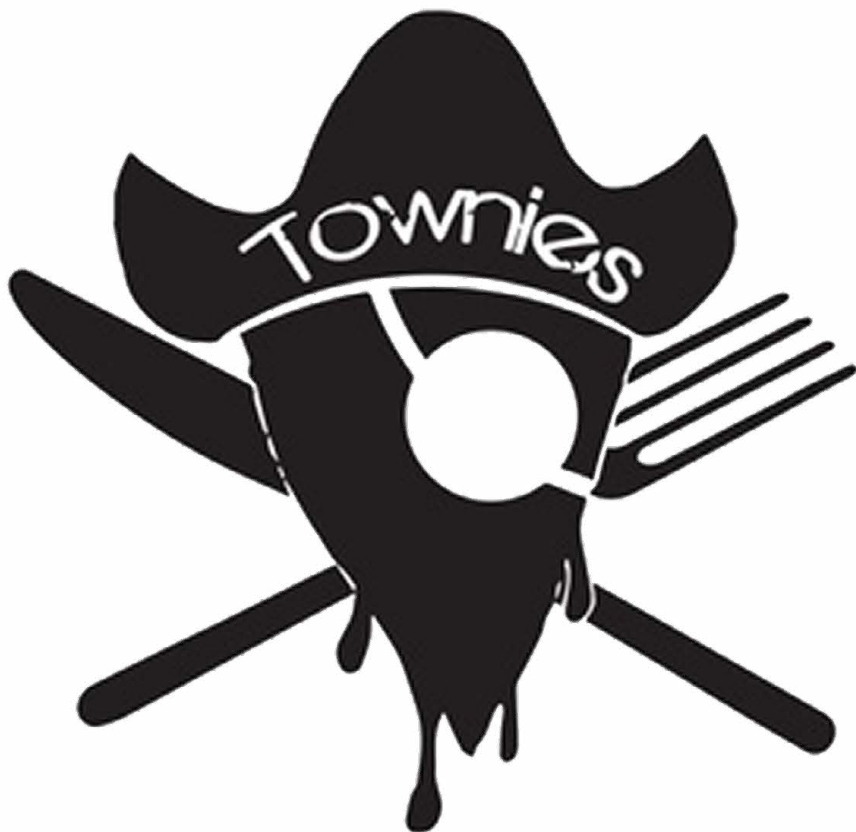
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Les DeMerle	Dawn Lunt	Michael Rothschild	Brendon Twiggs
Bonnie Eisele	Early McCall	Jack & Lynne Ruppel	Chris Twiggs

\* If your name is not mentioned and/or if you joined after our printing deadline, note that all of us are grateful to you as well and we look forward to seeing you at the Volunteer Party.

## *Special Thanks ...*

*to people and organizations who so generously contributed their time and expertise to the Amelia Island Jazz Festival*

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\* We apologize if your name or company does not appear because you joined after our printing deadline. Be assured that we are very thankful to everyone who helped and worked so hard to make the 2024 Amelia Island Jazz Festival a success.



# 2024 Amelia Island Jazz Festival Sponsors

This Festival would not be possible without the generous support of the following individuals and organizations.

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In order to fulfill its potential, the Amelia Island Jazz Festival must raise funds to sustain growth. To facilitate fund raising, the Festival seeks sponsorship from corporations and individuals.

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2023 Dixie to Swing Jazz Brunch



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# GRACE KELLY

*Saxophonist, Singer, Songwriter*



Grace Kelly, a musical prodigy, has made an indelible mark on the jazz world as a singer, saxophonist, songwriter, composer, and bandleader. With sold-out concerts, 15 acclaimed albums, and performances at the Hollywood Bowl, she has captivated audiences – all before reaching her mid-twenties. She also served as a member of the house band for *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, and in 2022 became the youngest member of the Berklee College of Music’s Board of Trustees.

Her early career highlights include performing at Barack Obama’s 2009 inauguration at 16 and, at 14, playing as a soloist with the Boston Pops, showcasing an original composition. Since then, Grace has led over 1,000 shows in 35 countries, gracing stages like the Kennedy Center and Moscow Symphony Hall. Known for her fiery saxophone and smooth vocals, she has collaborated with luminaries such as Lin Manuel-Miranda, Wynton Marsalis, Harry Connick Jr., Dave Brubeck, and Jon Batiste.

In 2018, Grace’s single *Feels Like Home* won “Song of the Year” in the John Lennon Songwriting Contest. She has been a consistent presence in *Downbeat Magazine’s* Annual Critics Poll, appearing nine times for “Rising Star Alto Saxophone,” winning in 2017. In 2023, she won the Critics Poll for “Rising Star Baritone Saxophone.” Her impressive accolades also include ASCAP Composer Awards, Boston Music Awards, and International Songwriting Awards.

Grace has been featured as herself in film and television productions like *Sound of Redemption: The Frank Morgan Story*, Amazon's Emmy-nominated *Bosch*, and Yamaha's Emmy-winning production *The Right Note*. *Vanity Fair* hailed her as a millennial shaking up the jazz world, while her innovative electro-jazz-pop and digital content have reached millions of fans across social media. She's also been featured in national campaigns for M&M's and Subaru.

Her latest album, *At The Movies: Grace Kelly with Strings*, with a 15-piece large ensemble, is a tribute to her favorite album, *Charlie Parker with Strings*, and her love for movie soundtracks. The album reimagines iconic movie scores like *Back to the Future*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Mission Impossible*, and Billie Eilish's *No Time to Die*. Grace played sold-out shows across the U.S., highlighting her orchestral skills and stage presence.

In her 2022 album *All That I Need*, Grace takes inspiration from Maya Angelou's words, particularly in the empowering anthem "We Will Rise," a tribute to the resilience of women. Shaped by the challenges of the pandemic, this album radiates optimism and courage, emphasizing the importance of women's voices. Grace is also deeply committed to

advocacy, partnering with the nonprofit organization She's the First, which works to defend women's rights and amplify their voices.

A skilled clinician, Grace specializes in jazz improvisation and stage performance, teaching thousands of students both online and in person. She co-founded *Saxy School* with Leo P (*of Too Many Zooz*), an online saxophone school for beginners and seasoned players alike. Grace has also held a guest teaching residency at Berklee College of Music and spearheaded the Fred Taylor Endowed Scholarship Fund, raising over \$70,000 through a benefit concert.

Grace's influence extends beyond the stage and classroom. She is a Yamaha Music and Boston Sax Shop artist, playing the 82Z Alto Saxophone and YBS Baritone Sax. She uses the Vandoren Alto V16 A8 S+ mouthpiece, Boston Sax Shop Custom Alto Reeds, and Boston Sax Shop Superlative Alto Ligature.

Grace Kelly's talent, passion, and innovation continue to push the boundaries of jazz, making her a dynamic force in both the music industry and beyond. With her unwavering dedication to performance, education, and advocacy, Grace's future promises to leave an indelible mark on the world of music.



# Marcia Ball

*Pianist, Vocalist*

"Fifty years have passed in a flash," says pianist, songwriter, and vocalist Marcia Ball, reflecting on her storied career. Ball, the 2018 Texas State Musician of the Year, has gained global fame for her ability to light up any stage with her electrifying performances. Born in Orange, Texas, and raised in Vinton, Louisiana, her Acadian roots and deep connection to Gulf Coast rhythm and blues have made her a beloved figure worldwide. Known for her soulful voice, remarkable piano skills, and inventive songwriting, Marcia's reputation continues to grow with each new release. Her passion for performing has taken her to festivals, concert halls, and clubs across the globe.

Marcia's latest album, *Shine Bright*, is considered one of the most hopeful and uplifting collections of her five-decade career. Produced by Steve Berlin of Los Lobos and recorded in Texas and Louisiana, *Shine Bright* features 12 tracks, including eight originals. The title track is an anthem calling for courage, while songs like *Pots and Pans*, inspired by Texas writer Molly Ivins, are infused with humor and political commentary. With upbeat tracks like *Life of the Party* and the optimistic *World Full of Love*, Ball never lets the fun stop, even when tackling serious subjects. "The secret," she says, "is to set the political songs to a good dance beat."

Music has always been a part of Marcia's life. She started piano lessons at age five, playing songs from her





*Limits*, HBO's *Treme*, and *The Late Show with David Letterman*. Marcia also performed in *Piano Blues*, a film directed by Clint Eastwood as part of Martin Scorsese's *The Blues* series.

In 2001, Marcia joined Alligator Records with the release of *Presumed Innocent*, which won the 2002 Blues Music Award for Album of the Year. Her follow-up album *So Many Rivers* was Grammy-nominated and won Contemporary Blues Album of the Year. Subsequent releases like *Live! Down the Road and Peace*, *Love & BBQ* also garnered Grammy nominations, with the latter debuting at #1 on the Billboard Blues Chart. Over her career, Marcia has earned five Grammy nominations, 11 Blues Music Awards, and 10 Living Blues Awards.

Ball has been inducted into the Gulf Coast Music Hall of Fame, the Louisiana Music Hall of Fame, and the Austin City Limits Hall of Fame. Her influence extends beyond music—during the COVID-19 pandemic, she co-founded HOME (Housing Opportunities for Musicians and Entertainers), which helps older musicians with rent and utilities in Austin.

Marcia is happy to be on the road with her band. "I still love the feel of the wheels rolling and the energy in a room full of people ready to go wherever we take them."

**"A welcome ray of sunshine...Ball is a killer pianist, a great singer and songwriter. Potent blues, sweet zydeco, soulful, fast and furious Texas boogie...heartfelt, powerful and righteous."**

– Billboard

grandmother's Tin Pan Alley collection. However, her love for soul music blossomed after watching Irma Thomas perform in 1962. After briefly attending Louisiana State University, Marcia joined the blues-based rock band Gum, setting her musical career in motion.

In 1970, a road trip to San Francisco led Marcia to Austin, Texas, where she decided to stay after her car broke down. She soon began performing with Freda and the Firedogs, a group that played a key role in the Progressive Country movement. During this time, she discovered New Orleans piano legend Professor Longhair, solidifying her musical direction. After Freda and the Firedogs disbanded in 1974, Marcia launched her solo career, signing with Capitol Records in 1977. She released her country-rock debut *Circuit Queen* before honing her signature sound on six critically acclaimed albums throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

Marcia collaborated with Angela Strehli and Lou Ann Barton on the 1990 album *Dreams Come True*, and in 1998, she released the Grammy-nominated *Sing It!* alongside Tracy Nelson and Irma Thomas. She has appeared on national television, including performances on *Austin City*

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Carol Guse  
in memory of Dan

Les DeMerle  
Amelia Island



**JAZZ**  
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# Tony Cruz & The Latin Jazz Legends

Tony Cruz and the Latin Jazz Legends are a premier Latin band hailing from Jacksonville, Florida, renowned for their vibrant and energetic performances that blend various tropical music genres. With a repertoire spanning Salsa, Merengue, Cumbia, Bachata, and more, their music offers a rich representation of the Latin culture that thrives throughout the United States. The band's captivating performances have made them a favorite among diverse audiences, bringing the sounds and rhythms of Latin America to life.

Originally formed by a few of the founding members of Latin Impact (Impacto Latino) in the mid-1980s, the Latin Jazz Legends have continued to carry forward the group's legacy of delivering high-energy, passionate performances. Over the years, their dedication to Latin music has remained unwavering, creating a dynamic sound that appeals to both traditional Latin music lovers and new audiences alike.

Led by the talented Tony Cruz, the Latin Jazz Legends are known for their ability to transport audiences to the heart of the tropics with their infectious rhythms and impeccable musicianship. Their unique blend of salsa beats, soulful melodies, and lively improvisation makes each performance an exhilarating experience. As they take the stage for the Hot Latin Jazz Concert and Dance, the Latin Jazz Legends will bring an unforgettable evening of music, rhythm, and dance, perfectly capturing the vibrant essence of Latin jazz.





# Les DeMerle

*Drums / Vocals*

Les, a native of Brooklyn, NY, launched his career at age 16 as drummer for jazz vibraphone great, Lionel Hampton. He toured for 12 years with jazz trumpet master, Harry James, and recorded three albums with him including the Grammy Award winning, "King James Version". Les' own jazz/rock/fusion band, Transfusion, recorded five award-winning LPs. He has toured with The Manhattan Transfer and appeared with such musical greats as Lou Rawls, Sammy Davis, Jr., Frank Sinatra, Mel Tormé, and Joe Williams. A resident of Amelia Island since 1991, Les continues to perform at concerts, festivals and Jazz cruises with his trio, quartet and Dynamic Les DeMerle Big Band Orchestra featuring Bonnie Eisele. They have recorded 16 CDs including the new release, *SOUND 67 Once In a Lifetime* on Origin Records.

As an author, Les has written two best-selling educational drum books: "Jazz/Rock Fusion, Volumes I and II", published by Hal Leonard. In addition he produced a two-part instructional drum videos, "Jazz Drum Set Applications, Parts I & II", to impart his extensive knowledge to drummers

around the world. He extends his teachings via private in-person and on-line lessons and ongoing appearances at drum clinics nationwide.

In 2001, Les' longtime dream of creating a diversified jazz festival on Amelia Island came to fruition. He and his wife Bonnie produced the Festival for three years prior to its incorporation as a non-profit 501(c) 3 tax exempt organization. With the help of generous sponsors and hardworking volunteers, the Amelia Island Jazz Festival has grown into an event which attracts major jazz artists and attendees from across the country. But Les insists there will be more. "We're still growing" he says, "and we continue towards our goal of building the festival into a nationally recognized annual event."

***"Les DeMerle is the best all-around drummer I've ever had, and that's saying a lot when you remember that Buddy Rich and Louis Bellson manned that post before him."***

~Harry James, World famous trumpeter and bandleader





# Bonnie Eisele

Vocals

A native of Chicago suburb Naperville, Illinois, vocalist and recording artist, Bonnie Eisele, began her career singing in community theater productions. She continued her studies of music and voice at the University of Illinois, Champaign, where she starred in musical plays in the University Theatre while majoring in speech/speech therapy. After graduation she toured the United States and Europe with The Chicago Free Street Theater, an original musical theater and dance group. Returning to Chicago, Bonnie became vice president and sales representative of a jingle company and also sang on many local and national television commercials including spots for United Airlines, KFC, and Hallmark Greeting Cards.

Bonnie's diverse performing experience includes singing at the Chicago Playboy Club, Chicago Fest, Drury Lane Theater and Miami's Fontainebleau Resort. She studied music and dance in Brazil on a

Rotary Foundation Graduate Fellowship.

Wife of Les DeMerle, Bonnie is the featured vocalist with the Dynamic Les DeMerle Band, from trio to 17-piece orchestra, currently appearing in Jazz Clubs, concerts, festivals, corporate

engagements and as a guest entertainer on cruise ships. She has performed with Les DeMerle at many popular jazz clubs including Somerset's in Singapore, City Jazz in Orlando,

The Jazz Corner in Hilton Head, Arturo Sandoval's in Miami, Breezy Jazz House in Jacksonville and Venice Jazz Club in Italy.

Bonnie has recorded 15 studio and live CDs as featured vocalist for the Dynamic Les DeMerle Band. She is admirably comfortable with a wide range of material in four languages. Her extensive and tasteful repertoire transcends all forms of jazz artistry, from Swing to Latin. No matter the type of song, Bonnie injects a distinctive and soulful style into its performance.

***“Extraordinary best defines the talents of Bonnie Eisele who just illuminates with her powerful voice, which in some ways is reminiscent of Keely Smith with a faint touch of Billie Holiday.”***

~eJazzNews.com



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Begin your mornings with the invigorating aroma of freshly brewed Starbucks coffee, right on-site. For those gastronomic delights, the Tides Bistro and pool bar promise a menu of scrumptious vacation fare, all complemented by refreshing beach-inspired cocktails. Fitness enthusiasts will appreciate the well-equipped gym, boasting state-of-the-art amenities including a Peloton bike for those high-energy workouts.

Location-wise, the Courtyard sits at the heart of all major attractions. Whether you're keen to explore the pristine Fernandina Beach, delve into the natural beauty of Ft. Clinch State Park, or immerse yourself in the historic allure of downtown Fernandina Beach, this hotel serves as your ideal gateway. Choose Courtyard by Marriott for a seamless blend of business amenities and Amelia Island adventures.

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# UNF Jazz Ensemble 2

Dennis Marks, Assistant Professor of Jazz Bass, is the conductor of this elite jazz band at the University of North Florida. The performance repertoire of this 21-piece University of North Florida Jazz Ensemble is quite varied. The material chosen is from all idioms of big band jazz, including swing, bop, funk, and fusion. This ensemble is consistently joined by high-quality players, realizing a wide variety of sound colors and textures. The UNF Jazz Ensemble 2 has played at several important venues over the last few years and has the honor of being the opening act for the featured spring artist in the Great American Jazz Series and once again they kick off the 21<sup>st</sup> AIJF with great style and energy.



*UNF Jazz Ensemble 2*



*Terry "Doc" Handy - Percussion*

## Terry "Doc" Handy

Born and raised in Jacksonville, FL – Doc credits his older brother's love for the piano for driving him to become a musician. Doc has played percussion for over 30 years over a diverse array of genres including Rhythm & Blues, Jazz, and Latin Jazz. He has performed globally in Europe, Korea, and Panama and was also selected as the opening act for many greats including James Brown, Aaron Neville, Macy Gray, Kool and the Gang, Kirk Whalum, Brian Culbertson, and EL Gran Combo.

## Bill Cain

Bill is originally from the Philadelphia area, now living in Atlantic Beach with his wife Debbie and their two golden retrievers. He studied music at Temple University in Philadelphia and was fortunate to study under Alan Able of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Bill has performed with many Symphony Orchestras in the Philadelphia/New York/Baltimore area as well as with the TBA Big Band, the Straight Ahead Big Band, Doc Severinsen, Ray Charles, Roger Daltry, Amy Lee and Evanescence, Luciano Pavarotti and many others.



*Bill Cain - Vibes*

## Clarence Hines

As a performer, Clarence has had the opportunity to perform and tour with musicians such as Johnny Mathis, Josh Groban, The Temptations, The O'Jays, Johnny Rivera, Hector Tricoche, John Pizzarelli, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra and the Harry James Orchestra. In addition to performing all across the U.S., Clarence's musical endeavors have taken him around the world – from Canada to Panama, France to Russia. He can be heard as a sideman on various recordings on labels such as Origin and Sea Breeze. As a composer and arranger, Clarence has written works for various ensembles ranging from large and small jazz ensembles to studio orchestras. Clarence served as trombonist in the U.S. Army's famed 82nd Airborne Division Band and the 79th Army Band.



*Clarence Hines - Trombone*

## Jim Malmgren

Jim joined the United States Navy as a musician/trumpeter in 1984. He studied trumpet with Jazz legends Bobby Shew, Wayne Bergeron, Charley Davis, Steve Dillard, Gary Pack, and Eric Miyashiro. Jim performed on stage with Jon Faddis, Jeff Tyzik, Eric Miyashiro's EM Big Band, Tom Pierson Big Band, Les DeMerle Big Band, The Fabulous Equinox Orchestra, Ben Vereen, The Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, just to mention a few.



*Jim Malmgren - Trumpet*

## Dennis Marks

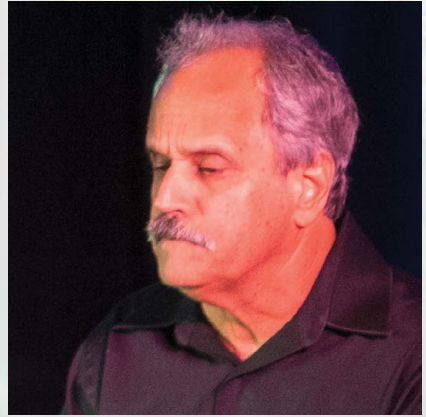
Dennis Marks has played bass with Arturo Sandoval for many years and has performed on Sandoval's last six recordings, including the Grammy award winning *Hot-House*. Dennis also has performed with such jazz greats as Dizzy Gillespie, Dave Liebman, Bob Mintzer, Maynard Ferguson, and Pat Matheny. He has played at many major jazz festivals in recent years, including the JVC Festival in New York, the Playboy Festival in Los Angeles, and the North Sea Festival in Holland.



*Dennis Marks - Bass*

## Mike Levine

Pianist, Mike Levine, is a man of many talents whose career is a blend of different aspects of music. He attended the University of Miami where he studied piano with Vince Maggio. While at UM, Mike formed a group with Billy Ross. They released their first album *That Summer Something* in 1981, which featured Pat Metheny as a guest artist. Mike wrote the majority of the band's compositions. The recording earned national recognition and stayed on the top ten contemporary jazz charts for six weeks. Subsequently they recorded *Humidity* which also did well. The Ross-Levine Band was the opening act for Michael Franks, Gato Barbieri, Dionne Warwick, and many others. Mike also recorded three well received CD's that were on the top of the Smooth Jazz Charts, *From The Heart*, *Thinking of You*, *Star Gazing*, and *Just Chillin'*. Mike has been a member of the Les DeMerle Band and Orchestra for many years. He also works closely with Les creating many of the Band's arrangements.



Mike Levine - Piano



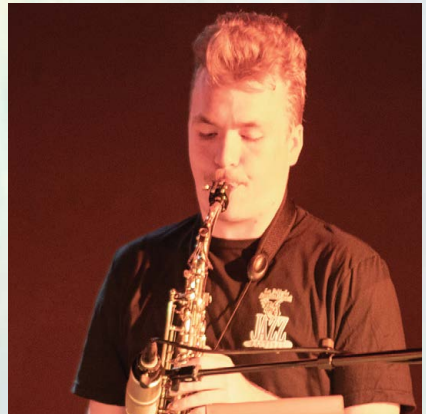
Doug Matthews - Piano

## Doug Matthews

Doug has performed with Louie Bellson, Randy Brecker, Dizzy Gillespie, Branford Marsalis, James Moody, Percy Sledge, Dennis Yost and the Dynamic Les DeMerle Big Band. He is an active composer and arranger, and several of his compositions and arrangements have been recorded by various artists. Doug also is director of the piano program at LaVilla School of the Arts in Jacksonville. Doug is one of the most exciting pianists to perform with Les and Bonnie. He always adds fire to the performances.

## Ajax McDonell

Ajax McDonell is a young jazz musician from Ocala, Florida, who is studying at the University of North Florida. He is currently playing lead alto saxophone in JE1, UNF's premier big band. Ajax has been performing and studying various jazz styles such as swing, bebop, Blues, Bossa Nova, funk and more for nearly a decade. He has previously been featured in the Les DeMerle band alongside Dr. Bill Prince and Bonnie Eisele. He has also studied under the incredible jazz talents of Todd DelGiudice, Lynne Arriale, Dennis Marks, and Scott Giddons.



Ajax McDonell - Saxophone

# Longineu Parsons II

Parsons has been hailed internationally as being one of the world's finest trumpet players. He is also a master of recorders, flute, percussion, and sings the blues. His music crosses genres and defies classification. He played the role of Louis Armstrong in the Natl. Production of "Satchmo". Dr. Parsons has performed in over thirty countries in North, South and Central America, Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa, appearing before such dignitaries as the King of Morocco, the President of Gabon, the Royal Family of the Netherlands, The Royal Family of Monaco and for UNESCO and more.



*Longineu Parsons - Trumpeter/Composer*

# Dr. Bill Prince



*Bill Prince Multi Instruments*

Dr. Bill Prince is a professor emeritus of music at the University of North Florida and holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree with a major in Theory and Composition from the University of Miami. His compositions and arrangements have been performed and/or recorded by jazz ensembles throughout the United States and Canada. Music has taken him to all 50 states and approximately 75 countries. One of Bill's most unique talents is his ability to perform professionally on several instruments including trumpet, flugelhorn, trombone, flute, clarinet, saxophone, piano, and electric bass. He also produced

his own CD, *Happy Thoughts*, on which he composed, arranged and performed all parts. Dr. Bill Prince was inducted into the Jacksonville Jazz Festival Hall of Fame for his contribution to jazz education and his legacy as a performer and supporter of jazz in Jacksonville.

# Paula Prince

Paula Prince, wife of renowned musician Dr. Bill Prince, is originally from Cincinnati, Ohio. A graduate of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. She played lead alto saxophone in the Monday Night Big Band for 15 years. Now in Jacksonville, she performs saxophone and flute with groups like TBA Big Band, Swing and a Miss Jazz Quintet, First Coast Wind Symphony, the North Florida Saxophone Quartet and the Amelia Island Jazz Festival.



*Paula Prince - Saxophone/Flute*



# Ricky Ravelo

Ricky Ravelo, a respected bassist, recorded with the Marcus Printup Group on Blue Note Records, is featured on the Les DeMerle CDs *Cookin' at the Corner, Vol. I & Vol. II* on Origin Records and performed worldwide. He also taught jazz bass at the University of North Florida. Ricky is joining the Dynamic Les DeMerle Little Big Band for the Jump, Jive, and Wail Swing Night concert and dance on Wednesday, Oct. 2nd.



Ricky Ravelo - Bass

# Cameron Strine

Trombonist Cameron Strine is an active musician in the Jacksonville area performing regularly in a variety of groups including big bands, combos, and orchestral settings. Cameron spent several years in New York City studying music and performing with many of the city's top musicians. He holds a Bachelor of Music from UNF and a Master of Music from the Manhattan School of Music. While in New York, Cameron was an active teacher, running his own private music studio and teaching music at several NYC public schools.



Cameron Strine - Trombone

# Paul Tafoya

Paul Tafoya is a gifted trumpeter, composer, and bandleader with over a decade of experience in the music industry. Awarded "Marine Musician of the Year" during his time in the Marine Corps, he has performed with Grammy and Emmy winners, and led bands across Hawaii, NYC, Florida, and beyond. Now based in Jacksonville, he collaborates with local talents like Somos LPT and Les DeMerle. Additionally, he serves as an adjunct brass instructor at Episcopal School of Jacksonville, continuing to share his passion for music.



Paul Tafoya - Trumpet

## Matt Vance

Matt Vance is one of the top-call professional woodwind performers in Florida and the southeast United States. He is a member of seven-time Grammy-nominated recording artists Chuck Owen and the Jazz Surge, performs regularly with the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, and has performed with many name artists throughout his career, including Aretha Franklin, Gladys Knight, Barry Manilow, Martina McBride, Olivia Newton-John, Debbie Reynolds, The Temptations and Ben Vereen.



*Matt Vance - Saxophone*

## Don Zentz

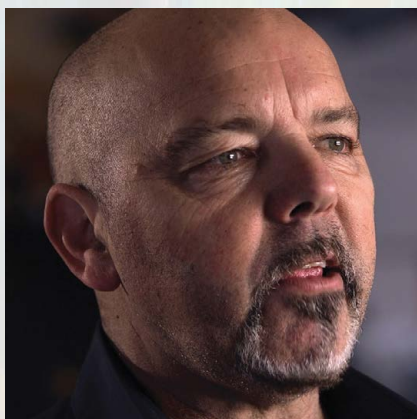
Don has been a fixture in the Jacksonville area professional music scene for almost thirty years. He grew up in the Daytona Beach area and started playing in the local big band there at the age of 15. As a saxophonist and woodwind doubler, Don has performed with Nancy Wilson, Dave Brubeck, Doc Severinsen, Natalie Cole, Ray Charles, Diane Schuur, Della Reese, Dizzy Gillespie, and The Manhattan Transfer. Don Zentz is currently the Director of Jazz Studies at Douglas Anderson School of the Arts in Jacksonville, FL. Previously he served as the Music Director of the St. Johns River City Band. He also is regularly a featured musician with the Les DeMerle Orchestra.



*Don Zentz - Tenor Saxophone*

## Marko Mavrovich

Born to Croatian parents in California, Park West Gallery artist Mavrovich developed a passion for the sea while spending time on the islands off Croatia's coast. Initially torn between a career at sea or in art, a near-fatal accident led him to pursue painting full-time. Mavrovich now creates seascapes, coastlines, and landscapes, influenced by California and Mediterranean scenery. He created Jazzz, the official Amelia Island Jazz Festival painting for this year's Festival.



*Marko Mavrovich- Official 2024 AIJF Artist*

# Next Generation Jazz Band

The Next Generation Jazz Band is comprised of exceptionally talented, up-and-coming artists. Led by the 2024 AIJF Scholar, Ayanna Nelson, they will be performing at the Late Night Jams. Be sure to catch this incredible group, showcasing the future of jazz.



**Ayanna Nelson**, the 2024 Amelia Island Jazz Festival Scholar, is a talented bass player from Jacksonville, Florida. She has performed at the Midwest Clinic, Jazz Education Network, and festivals nationwide. Ayanna has worked with renowned musicians like Marcus Printup, Rodney Whitaker and Jazzmeia Horn. She is completing her Bachelor's in music at Jacksonville University.



**Rory Ames** began playing classical and jazz piano at LaVilla School of the Arts in Jacksonville, FL. Now a junior at Douglas Anderson School of the Arts, he has won awards at the Lakeside Jazz Festival and performed at the Jacksonville Jazz Festival. Rory also participates in the prestigious Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz and plays with Jazz Ensemble 1, recognized by DownBeat Magazine in 2024. He is grateful to perform at the 2024 Amelia Island Jazz Festival.



**Alanna Simmons** is a talented freshman at the University of North Florida, pursuing a jazz studies degree. A multi-instrumentalist on saxophone, flute, and clarinet, she has performed at Carnegie Hall, The Midwest Clinic, and the Jazz Education Network. Alanna was an alternate for NYO Jazz and a winner of the Gerry Mulligan Jazz Challenge.



**Aiden Dubberly**, a jazz drummer entering his senior year at Douglas Anderson School of the Arts in Jacksonville, has performed at the Amelia Island Jazz Festival with 2023 AIJF Scholar, Giovanni Martinez. He has also played at Carnegie Hall and the Western International Band Clinic in Seattle with DA ensembles.

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# About the Amelia Island Jazz Festival

The Amelia Island Jazz Festival enriches local culture by introducing diverse audiences to the vibrant world of jazz, an authentic American art form. Featuring swing, bebop, Dixieland, big band, Latin, and contemporary styles, the festival takes place in beautiful Amelia Island venues, including the Courtyard | Springhill Suites by Marriott, the Decantery, the Mocama Beer Company and the Atlantic Rec Center.

Held annually in October, the festival blends jazz legends with emerging talent. Founded in 2001, it has steadily grown, following in the footsteps of iconic events like Monterey and Newport Jazz Festivals. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Les DeMerle, an acclaimed jazz drummer, the Amelia Island Jazz Festival brings world-class performances to the region while fostering a love for jazz in the community.

Over the past two decades, notable performers have included The Manhattan Transfer, John Pizzarelli Trio, Delfeayo Marsalis, Spyro Gyra, Ramsey Lewis, David Sanborn, and many more. This mix of jazz greats and new talents ensures that each year's festival offers something fresh for both seasoned fans and newcomers.

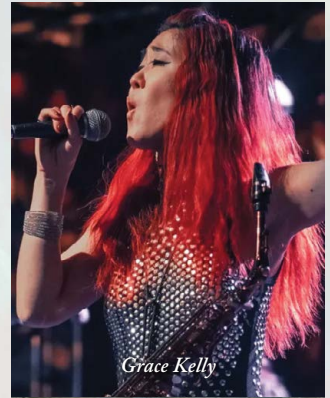
The 2024 festival marks its 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary and will feature incredible headliners, including saxophonist Grace Kelly, legendary pianist and vocalist Marcia Ball, and festival director Les DeMerle with vocalist Bonnie Eisele. Their performances will make this year's celebration of jazz truly unforgettable.

In addition to concerts, the festival offers late-night jam sessions, educational programs, and jazz workshops designed to inspire the next generation of musicians. By promoting jazz education, the festival helps nurture future talent, ensuring the genre continues to thrive for years to come.

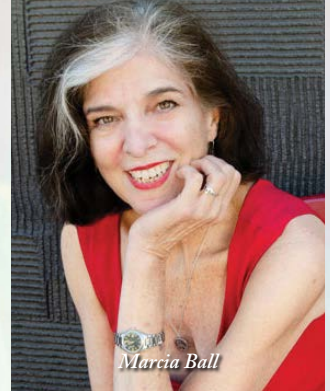
The festival is a vital part of the local cultural landscape, uniting people of all ages and backgrounds in their love for jazz. With a mission of delivering world-class jazz while promoting cultural enrichment and education, the festival has established itself as a key cultural event on Amelia Island.

As it attracts visitors from around the country, the Amelia Island Jazz Festival also contributes to local tourism, showcasing the island's charm alongside incredible music.

Now celebrating 21 years, the festival's success is thanks to the dedication of its artists, volunteers, and supporters. Whether you're attending for the first time or have been a longtime fan, your enthusiasm helps keep jazz alive in our community.



*Grace Kelly*



*Marcia Ball*



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# The Amelia Island Jazz Festival Educational Programs

The cornerstone of the Amelia Island Jazz Festival is its educational programs. Led by Les DeMerle, Founder and Artistic Director, the Festival seeks to enrich minds with the sounds, excitement and vitality of jazz. Programs include:

## Jazz in the Schools

The purpose of this program is to expose young people to the art of jazz, while motivating students to pursue jazz as a musical endeavor, featuring workshops led by master musicians for grade school, middle school, and high school students. Several hundred area students attend this program



*Jazz in Schools*

each year. Again, in 2024 the Festival partnered with Arts Alive Nassau and held several summer camps to encourage young performers to pursue careers in jazz. Working together with Arts Alive Nassau, the goal of the Amelia Island Jazz Festival is to continue to offer a rich cultural experience for youth.

## Jazz for Seniors

In 2024, the Amelia Island Jazz Festival partnered with the Nassau County Council on Aging to present two performances for the local senior community. These annual events offer engaging musical programs, providing cultural enrichment for seniors unable to attend other festival shows.



*Jazz for Seniors*

# PARK WEST GALLERY



**Title:** Jazz  
for the 2024 Amelia Island Jazz Festival

**Artist:** Mavrovich, Marko

[www.parkwestgallery.com](http://www.parkwestgallery.com)



# The Amelia Island Jazz Festival Scholarship Program

Every year, the Amelia Island Jazz Festival's educational initiatives culminate in the presentation of the Amelia Island Jazz Festival Scholarship. The Festival's Board of Directors is committed to preserving jazz, a quintessential American art form, by offering support to young, talented individuals pursuing their aspirations of becoming jazz musicians.

This financial grant is dedicated to deserving high school musicians who exhibit substantial potential for excelling in jazz at the college level. Each scholarship is bestowed upon a graduating high school senior who has been accepted into a college jazz program. The recipient can allocate the scholarship funds toward their college-related expenses, essential for majoring or minoring in music with a focus on jazz performance or related studies.

*If you, or someone you know, is interested to apply for this award, contact the AIJF Scholarship Program in writing or find more details about the scholarship and/or the application on line at [www.ameliainlandjazzfestival.com/our-jazz-education-program/](http://www.ameliainlandjazzfestival.com/our-jazz-education-program/)*

## Ayanna Nelson 2024 AIJF Scholarship Winner

Ayanna Nelson is an 18-year-old jazz and classical double bass player and jazz vocalist, from Jacksonville, Florida. Raised in a family of singers, she was introduced to the double bass at a young age and quickly developed a passion for music. Her journey as a musician has led her to work with esteemed artists

such as Rodney Whitaker, Marcus Printup, Alexa Tarantino and Jazzmeia Horn, experiences that have honed her skills and deepened her love for jazz.

During her senior year at Douglas Anderson School of the Arts, Ayanna discovered a newfound passion for jazz vocals, which led to her nomination as a 2024 YoungArts winner in Jazz Vocal. Her unique blend of jazz bass and vocals showcases her versatility and talent, making her a standout young artist in the jazz world.

Ayanna's next chapter includes pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Jazz and Commercial Music at Jacksonville University, where she plans to

continue refining her craft. With her talent, drive, and dedication, Ayanna Nelson is poised to make a significant impact on the jazz scene.



*2024 AIJF Scholarship Winner  
Ayanna Nelson - Bass/Vocals*

## Wine Tasting & Jazz

Tuesday, October 1 • 5 - 6:30 pm & 7 - 8:30 pm

The Decantery  
117 Centre Street • Amelia Island, FL



Bonnie Eisele

Starring: **The Jazztet**

**Paul Tafoya** - trumpet, **Ajax McDonell** - saxophone, **Doug Matthews** - piano, **Bonnie Eisele** - vocals

Hosted by AIJF Artistic Director **Les DeMerle** - drums/vocals and the Decantery

## Jump, Jive And Wail / Swing Night Concert & Dance

Wednesday, October 2 • 7 - 10 pm

Courtyard | Springhill Suites by Marriott  
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The Dynamic Les DeMerle Little Big Band

Featuring: **The Dynamic Les DeMerle Little Big Band**

with **Bonnie Eisele** - vocals, **Jim Malmgren** - trumpet, **Clarence Hines** - trombone, **Don Zentz** - saxophone, **Ajax McDonell** - saxophone, **Doug Matthews** - piano, **Ricky Ravelo** - bass, **Les DeMerle** - drums/vocals

## Hot Latin Jazz - Concert & Dance

Thursday, October 3 • 7 - 10 pm

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## 2024 Festival Concert Program

### Grace Kelly Band in Concert

Friday, October 4 • 7 pm

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Photo: Pasha Riger

Starring: **Grace Kelly**

a prodigious singer, saxophonist, songwriter, and composer whose electrifying performances and revolutionary approach to jazz music has won the hearts of millions worldwide.

Also featuring:

#### **The Les DeMerle Jazz Quintet**

**Les DeMerle** - drums, **Mike Levine** - piano, **Dennis Marks** - bass, **Doc Handy** - percussion, **Bonnie Eisele** - vocals



10 pm 'til 12 am

#### **Late Nite Jam at "Dizzy's Den"**

At Mocama Beer Company  
629 S. 8th Street Fernandina Beach

Hosted by 2024 AIJF Scholar,  
Ayanna Nelson.

### Marcia Ball Band in Concert

Saturday, October 5 • 7 pm

Courtyard | Springhill Suites by Marriott  
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Starring: **Marcia Ball Band**

A force of nature on stage, Marcia Ball has been captivating audiences for over 50 years.

Also featuring:

#### **Les DeMerle Hittin' the Blue Notes Band**

**Longineu Parsons** - trumpet, **Don Zentz & Matt Vance** - saxophones, **Mike Levine** - piano, **Dennis Marks** - bass, **Bonnie Eisele** - vocals, **Les DeMerle** - drums/vocals & special guests



10 pm 'til 12 am

#### **Late Nite Jam at "Dizzy's Den"**

At Mocama Beer Company  
629 S. 8th Street Fernandina Beach

Hosted by 2024 AIJF Scholar, Ayanna Nelson.

### Dixie to Swing Jazz Brunch

Sunday, October 8 • 10:30 am & 1 pm

Courtyard | Springhill Suites by Marriott  
2700 Atlantic Avenue • Fernandina Beach

Wrap up the 2024 Jazz Festival with our Jazz Brunch, featuring a special Festival Menu at this fantastic venue.

Featuring:

#### **The Spare Rib Six Dixieland Band**

**Longineu Parsons** - trumpet, **Bill Prince** - clarinet, **Cameron Strine** - trombone, **Mike Levine** - piano, **Dennis Marks** - bass, **Les DeMerle** - drums/vocals, **Bonnie Eisele** - vocals, and special guests



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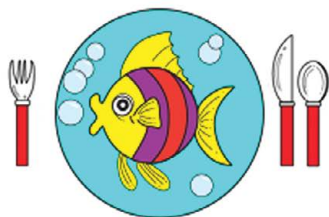


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*~ Jack Bowers, All About Jazz*



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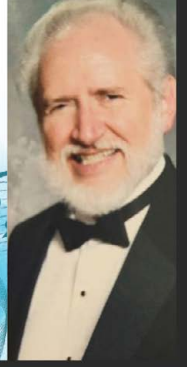


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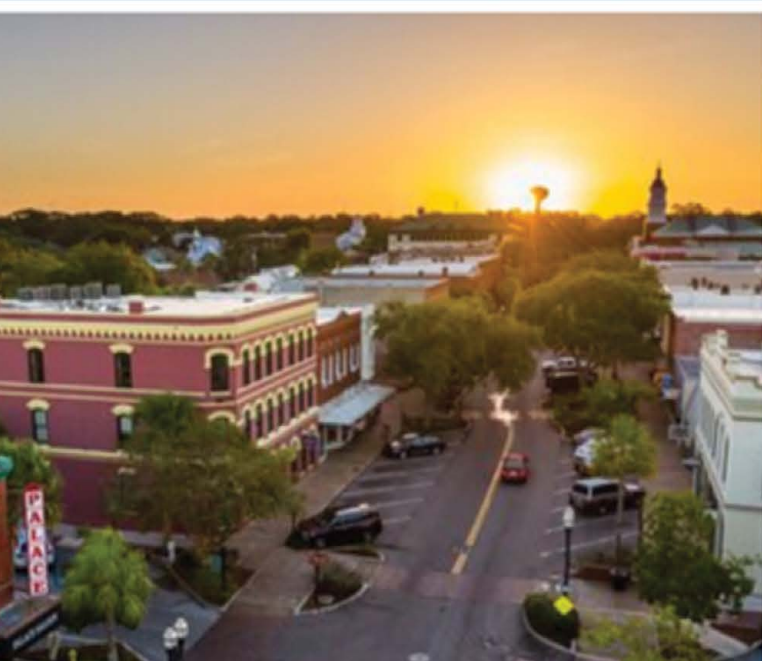
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