



PROGRAM

Chris Johnston Trio

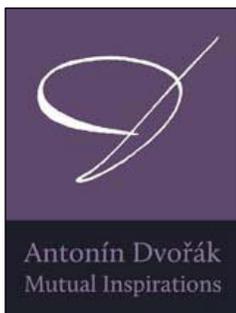
September 30, 7:30 pm
Embassy of the Czech Republic

The Chris Johnston Trio, with Herb Smith on saxophone and Michael Thomas on trumpet, will perform a salute to Czech composing giant Antonín Dvořák. The program will feature the works of Harry T. Burleigh, Will Marion Cook, and Rubin Goldmark, American composers who were students of Dvořák. The program will also feature works by George Gershwin, a student of Goldmark, and Duke Ellington, a student of Cook.

This ensemble led by Chris Johnston will provide you with an entertaining evening of music as we explore that special lineage of folk songs that are quintessentially American accompanied by the legacy of Dvořák in the United States and the development of the art and its artist that ultimately became that most American of creations - jazz!

Performed by Chris Johnston (piano), Michael Thomas (trumpet), Herb Smith (saxophone), Wes Biles (bass), Clai Richardson (drums)

ABOUT THE FESTIVAL



The *Mutual Inspirations Festival 2011 - Antonín Dvořák* runs from September 8, 2011, commemorating the 170th anniversary of the birth of the composer, and ends on October 28, 2011, Czech National Day. The festival features more than 500 local and international artists, 30 concerts and events, and a dozen prestigious venues in the Washington, DC, community. The festival is spearheaded by the Embassy of the Czech Republic, under the patronage of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Karel Schwarzenberg, focusing on the mutual inspirations between Czech and American cultures. For more information about the festival, please visit www.mutualinspirations.org.

BIOGRAPHIES

Chris Johnston Jazz Trio



Chris Johnston (piano) received his bachelor's degree in Music Composition from Indiana University (composition), and a master's degree in Music (Conducting) from George Mason University. He also studied piano at Howard University. He received "Claes Nobel" award for excellence in teaching and the 2008 "Youth Educational Leadership" award from Leadership Fairfax, Inc. moreover in 2006, he received the Wolftrap Foundation Scholarship Award. He has composed numerous works for high school, college, and professional ensembles. Mr. Johnston currently teaches composition at the Fairfax Academy for Communication and the Arts and has been a pioneer in developing music technology programs nationwide. He is the Music Director and conductor of the NVCC Annandale Symphony, Co-leader and pianist for the Reunion Music Society Jazz Orchestra and leader of The Chris Johnston Trio.



Wes Biles (bass) was born and raised in Nashville, Tenn., where he began music lessons at age eight, studying violin and. He became interested in bass violin and tuba at age 13, and began a career playing with local R&B groups in the area. Wes received degrees from Fisk University, (B.S., Economics, Cum Laude) and Boston University, (M.S., Urban Econometrics). He has toured for five years with Curtis Mayfield, The Natural Four, the Dramatics, King Floyd, The Jones Girls, and Ike and Tina Turner, among others. Wes currently lives in Washington, D.C., operates his own catering business (Real In-House Foods), and performs with Ronnie Wells and Ron Elliston, The Chris Johnston Trio, Alex Jenkins, The Capital Jazz All Stars, among others.



Clai Richardson (drums) is a graduate of West Virginia University's School of Music (B.M.Ed.) and The College of William and Mary's Marshall-Wythe School of Law (J.D.). Mr. Richardson is a former school music teacher and high school and college ensembles guest conductor. He has played for T.V., radio and was a member of the Leonard Hannigan and the Doc Dikeman Big Bands, as well as the Russell Wilson Trio. He is currently a member of the Reunion Music Society Jazz Orchestra, The Chris Johnston Trio, NVCC Annandale Symphony, where he has also been a guest conductor, and the Annandale Brass Ensemble and for St. Margaret's Episcopal Church. Clai is an Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney in Prince William County, Va., where he has prosecuted several nationally reported cases.

Special Guests:



Herb Smith (saxophone) received his Bachelor of Arts in Music from the University of Kansas in 1965, and a Master's degree from Southern Illinois University in 1971. Mr. Smith also studied composition at Washington University in St. Louis and served in the 528th U.S. Air Force Band from 1965 to 1969. He was Professor of Jazz Studies at Southern Illinois University and Director of Jazz Studies at Howard University, and he developed the jazz studies degree for Howard University. Mr. Smith is currently the Director of Jazz Studies for Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC). He performs regularly with the Herb Smith - Jamshid Bastani Duo, the Taimour Saecdi - Herb Smith Duo, among others.



Michael Thomas (trumpet) was born in Las Vegas, Nevada, and began his musical life as a 13-year-old trumpeter. During high school, he played in All-County and All-State ensembles. Mr. Thomas received a bachelor's degree in Music Performance and Computer Science from Grambling University in Louisiana. Mr. Thomas performed in the Errol Parker Tentet, the Normandy Festival in France. He performed with Ed Smith, Bill Saxton, Betty Carter, Jimmy Heath, Larry Willis and others. Mr. Thomas is a recipient of the Fish Middleton Jazz Scholarship Contest at the East Coast Jazz Festival. He has hosted jam sessions at HR-57 and conducts educational seminars with Nasar Abadey. Mr. Thomas is a regular member of Tootsie Gripper's Jazz Vespers Ensemble. He is also the leader of the Michael Thomas Quintet; his group's CD, Live at Twins Vol. I & II, was nominated for a Grammy award in 2010.