

JAZZ Legacies Fellowship

The Jazz Foundation of America, In Partnership with the Mellon Foundation, Announces \$15 Million 'Jazz Legacies Fellowship' Honoring the Artistic Achievements of Its Inaugural Cohort of 20 Fellows

February 18, 2025 (New York, NY) - The Jazz Foundation of America (JFA), in partnership with the Mellon Foundation, has announced the launch of the 'Jazz Legacies Fellowship' – a newly created \$15 million fellowship, which will support 50 seasoned and accomplished jazz artists aged 62 years and older over the next four years. The fellowship honors each recipient with a lifetime achievement award and an unrestricted grant of \$100,000. Recipients will also be provided with resources for tailored professional and personal support, including master class and performance opportunities, production assistance, legal and financial counsel and more.

The Jazz Legacies Fellowship is the centerpiece of a \$35 million, multifaceted Mellon initiative aimed at supporting the cultural preservation of jazz, championing the legacy of the artists who have played a pivotal role in its formation, and strengthening the broader jazz ecosystem. Mellon's support of JFA also includes funding for its core program **the Musicians' Emergency Fund**, which provides housing assistance, pro bono healthcare, disaster relief and direct financial support to musicians and their families in need across the country.

"We see this fellowship as a community-wide embrace of jazz-world heroes," **says Joe Petrucelli, Executive Director of the Jazz Foundation of America.** "We are proud to have launched this project, funded with a grant from Mellon, and guided by input from more than 100 musicians, presenters, educators, and organizers who participated as nominators, panelists and advisors"

The Jazz Legacies Fellowship was designed for artists, and in close collaboration with a host of celebrated musicians, including: Terri Lyne Carrington, Christian McBride, Jason Moran, Arturo O'Farrill, Esperanza Spalding, and presenter Sunny Sumter with the aim to foster intergenerational dialogue, honor lifelong artistic contributions, and ensure the integrity of our multivocal historical record.

"The selection process considered creativity, generational impact, and the realities of being a working jazz musician in America," **Petrucelli continues.** "With a sense of consensus and urgency, we celebrate these artists as mentors, trailblazers, and inspirational figures. This fellowship not only recognizes their contributions but also provides much-needed financial security—an all-too-rare resource in the field."

The inaugural class of 20 Jazz Legacies Fellows, also announced today, represent the pinnacle of creative achievement, technical mastery and boundary-pushing expression, and are the first of 50 artists to be named fellows over the next four years. The diverse cohort of fellows comprises artists across a range of instruments and spans a variety of styles from the traditional to the experimental. Fellows represent a mix of internationally renowned and locally celebrated talents – all of whom have profoundly shaped the jazz landscape.

Bertha Hope, the celebrated pianist and 2025 Jazz Legacies Fellow reflects, "My heart is full. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and I am sincerely honored and humbled to have been chosen as a recipient. It will change my life forever, providing financial relief I never imagined possible. Now, I can assemble dream projects that I thought would never see the light of day."

The fellowship is administered by JFA's Jazz Legacies Fellowship team led by Program Director Veronika Châtelain and including Human Services Director Anne Foerg and Senior Artistic Advisor Seth Abramson.

As Chatelein observes, "The Jazz Legacies Fellowship is long overdue. I am honored to be part of something that offers much-needed recognition to our legendary veteran musicians who have shaped the essence of jazz in America. This support will have a lasting impact, not just for our fellows but for the entire jazz community and especially the younger generations who seek to connect with the pioneers who paved the way."

The distinguished Selection Committee comprised of artists, scholars and jazz professionals including Aja Burrell Wood, Brian Blade, Helen Sung, Jackie Harris, Jerome Jennings, Joe Farnsworth, Melanie Charles, Nicole Glover, Nicole Mitchell, Regina Carter, Robert Hurst, Suraya Mohamed, Theo Croker, Willard Jenkins and Yosvany Terry.

JFA Artistic Director Steve Jordan notes, "The recognition for the recipients of the Jazz Legacies Fellowship exemplifies the importance of the artistic and creative process. These individuals have positively influenced the lives of a great many people, in various capacities, including my own. It gives me great hope, in these extremely uncertain times, that we don't lose sight of the magnitude of the great qualities these individuals hold. I am thrilled to honor them along with JFA and Mellon."

The 2025 Jazz Legacies Fellows are:

- **George Cables**, 80, pianist, Queens, NY
Humble keyboard genius with impeccable technique and distinctive songbook
- **Valerie Capers**, 89, pianist, Bronx, NY
Groundbreaking artist-educator melding classical and jazz
- **George Coleman**, 89, saxophonist, New York, NY
Peerless soloist from fabled '50s Memphis scene and bridge between jazz eras
- **Akua Dixon**, 76, cellist, Westchester, NY
String specialist who blazed new trails in all styles of music

- **Manty Ellis**, 92, guitarist, Milwaukee, WI
Local icon known as the Godfather of Milwaukee Jazz
- **Tom Harrell**, 78, trumpeter, New York, NY
Beloved bandleader-soloist with a deep emotional resonance
- **Billy Hart**, 84, drummer, Montclair, NJ
Hero of jazz rhythm and esteemed mentor known to fans worldwide as “Jabali”
- **Bertha Hope**, 88, pianist, New York, NY
Bebop torchbearer and pioneering advocate for women in jazz
- **Roger Humphries**, 81, drummer, Pittsburgh, PA
Jazz phenom who committed career to nurturing his hometown scene
- **Carmen Lundy**, 70, vocalist, Los Angeles, CA
Multi-instrumentalist and composer who sets a standard for artistic independence
- **Amina Claudine-Myers** 82, pianist, New York, NY
Avant-garde legend firmly grounded in gospel and blues traditions
- **Roscoe Mitchell**, 84, multireedist, Fitchburg, WI
Illustrious experimental composer and educator; Art Ensemble of Chicago mainstay
- **Johnny O'Neal**, 68, pianist, New York, NY
A musicians’ musician with a “million-dollar touch”
- **Shannon Powell**, 62, drummer, New Orleans, LA
New Orleans jazz ambassador known as the King of Tremé
- **Julian Priester**, 89, trombonist, Seattle, WA
Multifaceted jazz virtuoso and invaluable educator
- **Dizzy Reece**, 94, trumpeter, Bronx, NY
Enigmatic musical metaphysician whose influence spans generations
- **Herlin Riley**, 68, drummer, New Orleans, LA
Irrepressible bandleader bringing the rhythm of New Orleans to the world
- **Michele Rosewoman**, 71, pianist, New York, NY
Singular composer, bandleader and teacher fusing jazz, Cuban folkloric sounds
- **Dom Salvador**, 87, pianist, Long Island, NY
Brazilian visionary who fuses samba, jazz and funk
- **Reggie Workman**, 87, bassist, New York, NY
Master artist-educator; jazz luminary for nearly 70 years

To learn more about the Jazz Legacies Fellows and their work please visit: jazzfoundation.org. To stay informed of additional funding for Mellon’s jazz initiative, subscribe to the Mellon Foundation newsletter at mellon.org/newsletter.

About The Jazz Foundation of America

The Jazz Foundation of America is a national nonprofit that provides financial assistance, social services, and employment opportunities to jazz, blues, and roots musicians affected by circumstances such as

financial crises, health problems, natural disasters, and lack of work. It is our belief that in offering aid that enhances the wellbeing of artists, we contribute intrinsically to the legacy of the artform. With a licensed clinical social work team, JFA strives to find creative solutions for the struggles that musicians face anywhere in their lives. Our methodology is rooted in fostering long-term, personal relationships to empower clients and restore hope and dignity in their most trying times. Our performance programs create meaningful gigs for hundreds of musicians every month and bring free concerts to thousands of listeners at public schools, nursing homes, parks, and other community venues across the country. The organization was founded in 1989 and now assists artists and their families in 7,000 cases a year.

About The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is the nation's largest supporter of the arts and humanities. Since 1969, the Foundation has been guided by its core belief that the humanities and arts are essential to human understanding. The Foundation believes that the arts and humanities are where we express our complex humanity, and that everyone deserves the beauty, transcendence, and freedom that can be found there. Through our grants, we seek to build just communities enriched by meaning and empowered by critical thinking, where ideas and imagination can thrive. Learn more at mellon.org.

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