

# 2025



# Medford JAZZ FESTIVAL

Generously Sponsored by:



**AUGUST  
15-17**



West Medford Community Center

111 Arlington Street, Medford, Massachusetts 02155

**Free Admission - Donations Encouraged**

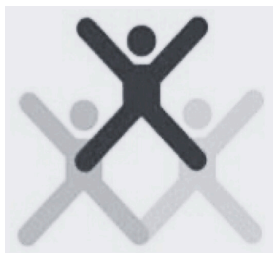
# Welcome to the West Medford Community Center!

The Mission of the West Medford Community Center is to connect the diverse people of West Medford and the wider Mystic River Valley region through social, educational, cultural, health, and recreational activities. For over sixty years, the West Medford Community Center has provided opportunities for individuals and families to gather, learn from each other, grow, and celebrate together.

This is what makes West Medford Community Center unique, the belief we belong to each other and that we are stronger, healthier, and more complete when we can come together. While programs and events for children, teens, and adults continue to fill our calendar, the magic lies not in our programs but in our people.

Our goal is to support this idea of “community” – that intangible quality where people know they belong and that others have their interest at heart. To do this, we provide opportunities for folks from different generations, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, economic statuses, or any other arbitrary divisions to come together, learn from each other, and experience this idea of “community.” While the demographics of Medford are changing, the need to feel a part of a community remains.

111 Arlington Street, Medford, Massachusetts 02155  
call: (781) 483-3042 email: [info@wmcc.us](mailto:info@wmcc.us)



*A massive thank you to the  
West Medford Community Center  
for allowing us to use this space for  
jams and our annual festivals.  
Special Thanks to Terry E. Carter.  
THANK YOU!*

# SCHEDULE

## **Friday, August 15th**

Student Night: Inside

**6:00-7:00 PM:** Morningside Jazz All-Stars

**7:00-8:00 PM:** Anita Wood's: "A) and the Groove"

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## **Saturday, August 16th**

Outside, Weather Pending

**1:00-2:00 PM:** Receita de Samba  
ft. Anna Borges & Bill Ward

**2:15-3:15 PM:** The Ally Project  
ft. Terry E. Carter & Jonathan Fagan

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## **Sunday, August 17th**

Outside, Weather Pending

**1:30-2:30 PM:**

Berklee's Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice  
ft. Ivanna Cuesta

**3:00-4:15 PM:** Donna McElroy  
w/ George Russell Jr. and friends

# FRIDAY 6-7

## THE MORNINGSIDE

### JAZZ ALL-STARS

**Peter Orne** - Trumpet

**Mike Zack** - Tenor Sax

**Debbie Lane** - Vocals

**Philippe Lewelle** - Piano

**Reese Pike** - Featured Guest Pianist

**Mark Pfaff** - Bass

**Dan Sullivan** - Bass

**Mike Chamness** - Drums

**Jude Texier** - Drums

In 2007, Morningside Music Studio was founded in Arlington Center, transforming what started as a single ensemble into one of the largest ensemble programs in New England, now hosting over 25 weekly ensemble groups for all ages and levels. Today, Morningside Music has grown to three locations and provides a variety of services, including music lessons, ensembles, group classes, music tour travels, the nonprofit Arlington Jazz Festival, an entire community of music enthusiasts, and more!

[www.morningsidemusic.org](http://www.morningsidemusic.org)



**MORNINGSIDE**  
**MUSIC STUDIO**

# FRIDAY 7-8

## ANITA WOOD'S: AJ AND THE GROOVE

After musical connections and friendships were made in the local Jazz Jam circuit, AJ and the Groove was formed in spring 2025. Led by West Medford native Anita "AJ" Wood, you'll hear jazz standards (often with a twist) played with passion.



**Anita "AJ" Wood** - Vocals

**Steve Linscott** - Alto Sax

**Carolyn "Sue" Howard** - Piano

**Karl Helmer** - Guitar

**Rose Villiani** - Bass

**Larry Prestia** - Drums

Thank you to Jonathan Fagan for providing an opportunity for AJ and the Groove's debut performance!

# SATURDAY 1-2

## RECEITA DE SAMBA

Receita de Samba, taken from Jacob do Bandolim's choro of the same name, means in Portuguese "recipe for samba", an apt name for a group whose focus is to showcase the many flavors of Brazilian music in their purest form, with no artificial additives like drum machines or electronic sampling.

The chefs de cuisine are husband and wife duo Anna Borges and Bill Ward, who draw from Boston's vibrant Brazilian music scene to cook up only the finest bossa nova and samba, as well as regional specialties such as forró, ijexá, and coco.

**Anna Borges**, originally from Recife, Pernambuco, began her career in Brasília, singing in local nightclubs and theaters. Eventually she learned to play guitar and enrolled in the Escola de Música de Brasília, where she studied voice with Jane Duboc and sang in choral groups, studying both classical and popular techniques. After many years working closely with Brazilian guitarist Agilson Alcântara, Anna moved to Boston, where she began a musical collaboration with Bill Ward.

**Bill Ward** is a pianist, guitarist and singer who has explored, in-depth, many musical universes. He began as a jazz pianist, winning Downbeat polls as a high school student and later studying at Oberlin Conservatory with Dan Wall and Sanford Margolis. He got his first João Gilberto record when he was thirteen, but it wasn't until college that he fell deeper and deeper into the vortex of Brazilian music. Lately, he has immersed himself in the universe of classical piano, pursuing a Master's degree in Piano Performance at Boston University, where he studies with Boaz Sharon and Gila Goldstein.

***receitadesamba.com***



**Bill Ward** - Piano

**Anna Borges** - Vocals

**Greg Toro** - Bass

Drummer to be announced  
from stage

# SATURDAY 2:15-3:15

## THE ALLY PROJECT

Pianist/composer **Jonathan Fagan** and poet **Terry E. Carter** met at the intersection of jazz and social justice, each looking to make a bold new statement about music's ability to amplify the spoken word for a serious partnership of protestors and peacemakers. The Ally Project, conceived in 2020, combines Carter's expressive lyricism with Fagan's thoughtful arrangements. Several years into the project, the duo has morphed into a quartet with a debut CD (2023), and an avid local following. The group now performs regularly at a number of different venues, jazz concerts, and special events, featuring the talents of drummer **Gordon Engelgau** and bassist **Greg Toro**. They have a sense of mission and musicality that are both unique and artistically engaging.

[www.brownskinnedpoet.net/product-page/the-ally-project-cd](http://www.brownskinnedpoet.net/product-page/the-ally-project-cd)



**Terry E. Carter** - Poetry

**Jonathan Fagan** - Piano

**Gordon Engelgau** - Drums

**Greg Toro** - Bass

# SUNDAY 1:30-2:30

## BERKLEE INSTITUTE OF JAZZ AND GENDER JUSTICE, FT. IVANNA CUESTA

Founded in 2018, the Berklee Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice focuses on equity in the jazz field and the role that jazz plays in the larger struggle for gender justice. The institute celebrates the contributions women have made in the development of the art form and advocates for more equitable working conditions for all people pursuing careers in jazz, working toward a necessary and lasting cultural shift in the field.

The jazz industry remains predominantly male due to a biased system, imposing a significant toll on those who aspire to work in it. In understanding the importance of balance and equity, the goal of the Berklee Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice is to do corrective work and modify the way jazz is perceived and presented so that the future of jazz looks different than its past and doesn't render invisible many of the art form's creative contributors.

The institute welcomes students of all gender and sexual identities to achieve the goal of true gender diversity and addresses gender inequities at the college through curriculum, recruitment, residencies, performances, research, and community engagement. Founder Terri Lyne Carrington also has deep roots in the local jazz scene. Raised in Medford, Massachusetts, she often visited the West Medford Community Center with her father, saxophonist Sonny Carrington, who was also the founder of the Boston Jazz Society.



**Ivanva Cuesta** - Drums

**Jan Portisch** - Bass

**Yujin Han** - Piano

**Fall Ray** - Saxophone

# SUNDAY 1:30-2:30

## IVANNA CUESTA



Ivanna Cuesta is a drummer, composer, and educator from Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, known for her powerful artistry and ability to blend diverse musical traditions.

She holds degrees from the Dominican Republic Music Conservatory and Berklee College of Music, where she studied with world-renowned artists including Neal Smith, Terri Lyne Carrington, Francisco Mela, and others. Ivanna is a compelling live performer, appearing at major festivals and venues such as the Dominican Republic Jazz Festival, DC Jazz Festival, Mary Lou Williams Jazz Festival at the Kennedy Center, Monheim Triennale Festival, Soberano Awards, and more. She is proudly endorsed by Paiste Cymbals and Vater Drumsticks.

Since her featured performance at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC) in 2019, she has collaborated with a wide range of influential artists including Aaron Parks, Kandace Springs, Miguel Zenón, Concha Buika, Kris Davis, Aaron Goldberg, George Garzone, Jacques Schwarz-Bart, Nando Michelin Quartet, Alisa Amador, Sócrates García Latin Jazz Orchestra, Jane Bunnett and Maqueque, and Pepe Rivero.

Her debut album as a bandleader, *A Letter to the Earth* (Orenda Records), features Grammy-winning pianist Kris Davis, Ben Solomon, Max Ridley, and Paulina Camou. The album received a Bronze Medal at the 2024 Global Music Awards and has been featured at Dizzy's Club (NYC), The National Jazz Museum in Harlem, Mission Hill Arts Festival, Dot Jazz Series, and the 2025 Charles River Jazz Festival.

[www.college.berklee.edu/jazz-gender-justice](http://www.college.berklee.edu/jazz-gender-justice)  
[www.ivannacuesta.com](http://www.ivannacuesta.com)

# SUNDAY HEADLINER

DONNA MCELROY

**Donna McElroy** is a retired Professor Emeritus of Voice at Berklee College of Music, where she was a guiding force behind many student vocalists who are now emerging as local, national and even international singers and musical performers. Donna McElroy is herself a Dove award-winning gospel and contemporary singer/arranger/background vocalist. She has performed on gold and platinum releases like “Why Haven’t I Heard From You?” by Reba McEntire, “We Shall Be Free” by Garth Brooks, “Addictive Love” by BeBe and CeCe Winans, and “House of Love” by Amy Grant. She also has recorded several solo projects including the Grammy- nominated “Bigger World” (Warner Bros.)

She has been a musical missionary with International Christian Artists Reaching the Earth (ICARE) in Ghana, Africa and has appeared as a performer on the Arsenio Hall Show, Tonight Show, and Grammy Awards broadcasts. Donna has a B.M. (Bachelor of Music) from Nashville’s historic Fisk University, where she was a member of the school’s famed Jubilee Singers. She is a fabulous interpreter of the jazz idiom and a phenomenal a capella singer too. Donna is a well-established and highly popular performer who has gained a huge local following and become a favorite daughter of Medford, Boston, and New England.



# SUNDAY

## 3:00-4:15

### GEORGE W. RUSSELL, JR.

A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, **George W. Russell Jr.** is a performer, composer, and educator. He began taking piano lessons when he was 7 years old. Along with studying formally, he had the fortune of growing up playing at his local church. There was no written music at church, so he was given the opportunity to develop his ear. As Russell continued studying music in college, he discovered jazz and its harmonies. It was then that he began to understand, from a theoretical viewpoint, what exactly he was playing both in church and in his classical repertoire. In that period of time, his unique fusion of gospel and jazz was beginning to form. His performances have ranged from solo piano to a groove-oriented jazz trio to a soulful, fresh-sounding larger ensemble that intrigues the listener's intellect and touches their soul. His playing is filled with passion, fire, soul, and spirit, which fits with his motto: "I would rather inspire than require."

Prior to becoming chair of Berklee's Harmony and Jazz Composition Department, Russell served as a Professor of Harmony and Piano. He has been awarded the Ted Pease Award for Excellence in Teaching and the Curriculum Development Award for the Professional Writing and Music Technology Division. He has also been recognized with the highest award that Berklee gives to faculty, the Most Distinguished Faculty Award. He has recorded a number of jazz-oriented projects with some of New England's best musicians.

**Instagram:**

@donnamcelroymusic

@georgewrusselljr

# ABOUT MJF

The **Medford Jazz Festival** produces inspiring concerts at the iconic West Medford Community Center each year, featuring local talent and world-class musicianship with diverse influences. Started as a virtual event during the summer of 2020, the festival has become an important outlet for Medford-based bandleaders to present their compositions to local audiences, bringing together listeners and celebrating the cultural perspectives within the city. The Medford Jazz Festival is now an officially registered 501c3 nonprofit organization with tax-exempt status.

## **Other Ways to help:**

Know a corporate or organizational sponsor that would support Medford Jazz Festival 2026?

Want to volunteer at future festivals or jams?

Have ideas about future performers?

**Website: [medfordjazzfestival.com](http://medfordjazzfestival.com)**

*Any questions about the festival can be addressed to Jonathan Fagan at [medfordjazzfestival@gmail.com](mailto:medfordjazzfestival@gmail.com)*



# BEHIND THE SCENES

**Director:** Jonathan Fagan

**Location Coordinator:**

*West Medford Community Center:* Terry E. Carter

**Sound:** Avi Fagan and Audient Sound Company

**Video:** Medford Community Media

**T-Shirts:** Triangle Manor (trianglemanor.gay)

**Special thanks:** Reese Pike, Eva Balogh, Lauren Garcia, Shayla McDermott, Terry E. Carter, Gail Carey

**Thank you to our volunteers!**

**Thank you to our phenomenal musicians!**

**Thank you to our sponsors!**

PLEASE DONATE at cash box, QR CODES or Venmo  
(@MedfordJazzFestival)



@MEDFORD  
JAZZFESTIVAL

*Your generous donations help sustain the Medford Jazz Festival and support artists and educational programs. Thank you for keeping the spirit of jazz alive and thriving!*

# SPONSORS

## INDIVIDUAL 2025 SPONSORS OF NOTE:

*Our Patreon monthly donation program has allowed MJF to host jam sessions and provide needed funding for our festival.  
Thank you immensely to our top donors!*

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Keith Daniel  
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## ORGANIZATIONAL SPONSORS 2025

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For any sponsorship omissions or program errors, we deeply apologize. Please notify us ASAP.  
-Jonathan and Shayla

## DONATE:



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