

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Portland's Essiet Okon Essiet to Headline Montavilla Jazz Festival August 19–20, 2017

*Montavilla Jazz Festival 2017 lineup and event details announced.*

**PORTLAND, Oregon, May 30, 2017** -- Critically acclaimed bassist Essiet Okon Essiet, will headline Montavilla Jazz Festival 2017. Now in its fourth year, the festival features local jazz artists on the forefront of creative expression.

The Montavilla Jazz Festival is pleased to announce that the festival will be held at Portland Metro Arts on August 19-20, 2017. This year, several extraordinary local musicians will perform new compositions as well as feature world-class musicians in their ensembles:

- **Essiet Okon Essiet Quartet with Sylvia Cuenca**—"Essiet Essiet is, as always, a rock solid foundation on which the others build their improvisational construction." - *Seacoast Newsletter*
- **Rich Halley 5 with Vinny Golia**—Rich Halley quartet plus Los Angeles based multi-reed virtuoso Golia perform music from their most recent release *The Outlier*.
- **Blue Cranes**— "One of Portland's brightest lights...evoking post-rock icons Sigur Ros and Godspeed You! Black Emperor." - *Downbeat*
- **David Friesen Quartet**—"Bassist David Friesen is a phenomenon, a player whose musicianship, tone, time, and imagination are uncategorizable." - *Nat Hentoff*
- **PJCE with Jasnam Daya Singh**—The nonprofit PJCE teams up with Brazilian-American composer, Jasnam Daya Singh, to premiere a brand new work, *Ektah - The Unity Project*.
- **Ezra Weiss Sextet**—Internationally acclaimed composer/pianist Ezra Weiss leads an incredible sextet, comprised of world-class Portland-based musicians.
- **Andre St. James Sound Ensemble with George Sams**—Portland bassist leads a groundbreaking set, featuring St. Louis avant-garde trumpeter, George Sams, and Bay Area violinist India Cooke.
- **Rebecca Kilgore**—One of America's leading song stylists brings her quartet of well-known Portland jazz stalwarts for a captivating set of original songs.
- **Joe Manis Double Drums Quartet**—Rising saxophone star and SteepleChase recording artist leads a quartet that plays freewheeling, high energy jazz.
- **Ron Steen Quartet**—Portland jazz legend brings a brand new quartet to open Montavilla Jazz Festival 2017 playing energetic, swinging original tunes.
- **Trio Subtonic with Dan Balmer**—A groove-heavy power trio that blends genre bending funk with slow burning soul-jazz.

- **Quadrapphones + Andrew Durkin**—The accomplished all-female saxophone quartet performs compositions of former Industrial Jazz Group leader, Andrew Durkin.

“The Montavilla neighborhood is becoming an epicenter of arts and culture in Portland,” said Neil Mattson, executive director for the festival. “We created the Montavilla Jazz Festival to capitalize on the neighborhood’s appreciation and support of local artists and world-class cultural events. Jazz is one of America’s greatest gifts to the arts community and we are thrilled by what the talent lineup and quality of the festival means to our neighborhood and community.”

Additional artists will also perform new, original work and offer attendees the opportunity to explore music that makes Portland a unique city on the forefront of jazz in the new millennium.

Festival headliner and Portland’s own Essiet Okon Essiet first received critical acclaim more than a decade ago as a member of saxophonist Bobby Watson’s post-hard-bop group *Horizon*. He has long since established himself as one of the premier bassists on the jazz scene. His parents moved from Nigeria, West Africa, to Omaha, Nebraska, where he was born, and they moved throughout the U.S., Europe and Africa. His family finally settled in Portland, Oregon, where he began studying the bass and jazz at the age of 14.

He has performed and recorded with such notable musicians as Benny Golson, Johnny Griffin, James Moody, Freddie Hubbard, Bobby Hutcherson, Cedar Walton, Sam Rivers, Pat Martino, Kenny Burrell, Jackie McLean, Frank Morgan, Kenny Barron, Louis Hayes, Ben Riley, Jimmy Cobb, Billy Higgins, Billy Hart, Art Farmer, Abby Lincoln, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Billy Cobham, Bennie Maupin, Al Foster, Eddie Henderson, Steve Turre, Kenny Garrett, Kenny Kirkland, Mulgrew Miller, Jeff "Tain" Watts, Mike Stern, Kevin Mahogany, Kurt Elling, Fort Apache Band, Danilo Perez, Claudia Acuna, Geri Allen and Ralph Peterson.

### **Montavilla Jazz Festival generates community support for music education.**

Created by a small group of Portland residents, the festival not only showcases local artists but is also focused on supporting the next generation of local music talent.

Addressing a national trend of limited funding for music and arts programs, festival organizers worked closely with the Montavilla business community to create new opportunities for area youth in the form of the Montavilla Schools Music Fund.

This year, after a competitive selection process the festival will award Creative Science School \$1,000, made possible with proceeds from 2016 festival ticket sales. The grant will help ensure that CSS can provide music classes for its Kindergarten through 5th grade students.

“The MSMF grant will allow Creative Science School to continue our current music program into the next school year. Without the grant it was unlikely the we would raise enough money to cover the entire year”, said incoming Creative Science School principal, Meisha Geisler.

Montavilla Jazz Festival is possible due in large part to an array of dedicated, community-minded sponsors and partner organizations, from Montavilla and beyond. These include the following MJF 2017 partners: KMHD Jazz Radio, Montavilla/East Tabor Business Association, Academy Theater, Advantage Tax & Accounting, Audix Microphones, City Beautiful Design, East Glisan Pizza, East Side Printing Co., Fix Auto, Flying Pie Pizzeria, Kathryn Elsesser Photography, KB Custom Framing, Kristin Thiel Editing, Montavilla Neighborhood

Association, Mosaic Consulting, Mr. Plywood, PDX Jazz, Portland Jazz Composers Ensemble, Portland Metro Arts, Portland Pedal Power, Portland Piano Company, PROWUS, SE Uplift, Sound Doctor PDX, Stark Street Pizza Co., The 1905, The Bipartisan Cafe, Vespertine Works, and Vino Veritas, among others.

In the spirit of jazz, everyone has something to bring to the table. The Montavilla Jazz Festival believes that everyone has a part to play in the support of music, culture and experiences that bring us together. Individuals, businesses and organizations are encouraged to get involved with the Montavilla Jazz Festival through volunteer and sponsor opportunities.

**Dates, Location and Tickets:**

When: Saturday and Sunday, August 19-20, 2017

Where: Portland Metro Arts, 9003 SE Stark, Portland, OR 97216

Tickets: Information about day-pass prices and availability to be announced soon.

**Contact:**

- For media inquiries, sponsorship opportunities and general questions, please contact: [info@montavillajazzfest.com](mailto:info@montavillajazzfest.com).
- For volunteer opportunities, please contact: [volunteers@montavillajazzfest.com](mailto:volunteers@montavillajazzfest.com).
- For more information, please visit: [www.montavillajazzfest.com](http://www.montavillajazzfest.com) and [www.facebook.com/montavillajazzfestival](https://www.facebook.com/montavillajazzfestival).

**About Montavilla Jazz Festival:**

*The Montavilla Jazz Festival supports and strengthens local music culture and enriches the community by showcasing the best of Portland's originally composed, progressive jazz. Montavilla Jazz Festival is fiscally sponsored by SE Uplift, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and coalition of twenty Portland neighborhoods.*

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