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## **Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz Festival Lineup Adds 2018 NEA Jazz Master Todd Barkan to Festival Lineup**

***Acclaimed Jazz Producer to host two D.J. sessions spinning vinyl from artists featured in the first five years of the Saratoga Jazz Festival – 1978-1982***

(Saratoga Springs, NY) – Saratoga Performing Arts Center announced that on the heels of **Todd Barkan's** recent National Endowment for the Arts' (NEA) Jazz Masters fellowship award -- the highest honor the U.S. bestows on jazz artists -- he will join its Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz Festival as the featured host and D.J. broadcasting live from the SPAC amphitheater. On Monday, April 16, Barkan was inducted into the 2018 class of NEA Jazz Masters, which also honored pianist Joanne Brackeen, singer Dianne Reeves and guitarist Pat Metheny, receiving the A.B. Spellman NEA Jazz Masters Fellowship for Jazz Advocacy for his decades as a Grammy-winning producer.

For more than 40 years, Todd Barkan has distinguished himself as one of the world's outstanding jazz concert and record producers. From his early work as the owner, manager and programmer of the legendary San Francisco jazz club, Keystone Korner to his most recent activity as a producer, Todd Barkan has developed an international reputation as one of the highest quality and most effective jazz producers on the current scene.

Slated for **Saturday, June 23** and **Sunday, June 24** at the [Saratoga Performing Arts Center](#), Todd Barkan will host selected sets of classic jazz music from former Jazz Festival artists who performed in Saratoga from 1978 – 1982, the first five years of the festival. Barkan will broadcast from the amphitheater apron starting at 10am when the gates open until approximately 1:30pm on both days. Live performances will begin at 11am on the newly built Charles R. Wood "Jazz Discovery" Stage, formerly known as the Gazebo Stage, and at 3pm on the amphitheater stage.

"Our jazz festival fans have urged us to bring back 'classic jazz' artists from the early days of the festival's inception – dating back to 1978. While many of those artists are no longer living or touring, we are delighted to have the opportunity to host legendary jazz producer and advocate Todd Barkan on our stage. Barkan, the authority on classic jazz, will pay homage to artists like Dizzy Gillespie and Dave Brubeck, infused with his one-of-a-kind commentary and storytelling," said Elizabeth Sobol, SPAC's president & CEO.

"Todd Barkan is one of the all-time legendary forces in jazz presentation and advocacy," said Danny Melnick, the festival producer and President of Absolutely Live Entertainment. "I am blessed to call him a mentor, colleague and friend, and he rightly earned the NEA Jazz Master honor that was bestowed upon him on Monday night."

Barkan will join the 2018 Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz Festival featuring fellow NEA Jazz Master **Herbie Hancock, Jon Batiste, Chris Botti, Gregory Porter, Joey Alexander**, and gospel and R&B legend **Mavis Staples** -- and emerging artists making their Saratoga debuts such as **José James, Lakecia Benjamin and SoulSquad, Scott Sharrard & The Brickyard Band, Jazzmeia Horn** and **Keyon Harrold**. In addition, unique collaborations and ensembles never-before-seen at the festival will take center stage including the Saratoga debut by **TEN**, which features **Terri Lyne Carrington, Esperanza Spalding** and **Nicholas Payton**.

Tickets for the festival are available online at [www.spac.org](http://www.spac.org). Back by popular demand are \$20 amphitheater ticket options for children ages 15 and under and students with school-issued ID at time of entrance. Seating is best available with some exclusions. Lawn seating is free for children ages 15 and under.

#### **ABOUT FREIHOFFER'S SARATOGA JAZZ FESTIVAL:**

Founded in 1978 by jazz impresario George Wein, Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz Festival is the fifth longest-consecutive-running jazz festival in North America. Initially founded as "the Newport Jazz Festival at Saratoga" the weekend event was renamed Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz Festival in 1998. With an inside seating capacity of 5,200, and lawn seating of 20,000, the two-day, two-stage festival continues to be one of the largest jazz music events in North America, beloved by audiences for both the remarkable annual line-up of international jazz talent and the spectacular setting at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center in the idyllic Saratoga Spa State Park.

More information about what to bring to the Jazz Festival can be found online at [www.spac.org](http://www.spac.org). Stella Artois returns to the festival as the lead sponsor of the lawn experience ("the hang"). The upscale Belgian beer company is no stranger to sponsoring high-profile arts and cultural events; they have been notably involved with the Chicago Jazz Festival, the Singapore Jazz Festival, and the Sundance Film Festival.

#### **ABOUT SARATOGA PERFORMING ARTS CENTER**

The Saratoga Performing Arts Center (SPAC), located in the historic resort town of Saratoga Springs in upstate New York, is one of America's most prestigious summer festivals. Its tranquil setting in a 2,400-acre park preserve surrounded by hiking trails, geysers, and natural mineral springs draws vacation crowds and arts connoisseurs each year for immersive experiences of performances by resident companies New York City Ballet, The Philadelphia Orchestra, The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz Festival, Opera Saratoga, and concerts by Live Nation. SPAC also hosts the annual Saratoga Wine and Food Festival in addition to imaginative programming such as the popular "SPAC on Stage" series and Caffè Lena @ SPAC.

SPAC is a 501c3 charitable organization. Donations and proceeds from fundraising events benefit the Center's children's education programs and support the vibrancy of its classical season. For more information visit [spac.org](http://spac.org).

*The 41st Annual Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz Festival is co-presented by SPAC and Absolutely Live Entertainment, LLC.*

*\*\*\* Please note 2018 Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz Festival line-up is subject to change*