

WORLD'S BEST JAZZ CITIES >>

**Profiles of
25 CITIES
Where Jazz
THRIVES**





NYC: STILL THE CAPITAL

During the past century, three cities—New Orleans, Chicago and New York—played leading roles in the development of jazz. In the 21st century, however, New York reigns as the world’s undisputed jazz capital, an essential place for jazz musicians to make their bones. As singer and Chicago native Kurt Elling recently told *DownBeat*, “If you’re a jazz musician, you don’t want to live your whole life and not live in New York.”

Since at least the 1920s, New York has been the center of the business of jazz, housing more jazz record companies, recording studios, clubs, music schools and, inevitably, attracting more jazz musicians than any other city in the world.

Musicians still flock there to meet the best jazz players and—if they have enough talent, luck and grit—to play with them. To test their mettle. To raise their profile and maybe gain national attention in the country’s media capital. In short, for the opportunities that only New York affords.

Many of the quintessential moments in jazz history were New York moments: Sonny Rollins practicing on the Williamsburg Bridge; the 1958 gathering of current and future jazz icons for Art Kane’s photograph dubbed “A Great Day in Harlem”; The Harlem Stride piano cutting contests of the 1920s; Duke Ellington at the

Cotton Club; the legendary Carnegie Hall concerts of Benny Goodman and Duke Ellington; Bird, Dizzy and Miles on 52nd Street in the 1940s and 1950s; the legendary live recordings of Thelonious Monk at the Five Spot.

The 52nd Street jazz scene is just a memory now, but today’s New York still boasts the legendary Village Vanguard and a dozen other clubs in Greenwich Village, including The Blue Note, Smalls, Mezzrow and 55 Bar; Birdland, Iridium and Jazz Standard in Midtown; Jazz at Lincoln Center’s three plush venues; Smoke and Minton’s uptown; The Jazz Gallery and The Stone, both incubators for forward-leaning artists; as well as venues in Brooklyn.

The dozens of record companies include the three giants: Sony, Warner and Universal (which includes Blue Note, Impulse and other labels); independents like Pi Recordings, HighNote/Savant and Motéma; and labels associated with jazz clubs, including SmallsLIVE and Smoke Sessions. Making the scene, particularly at the clubs that offer late-night jams, are students from all over the world who have come to study jazz at Juilliard, The New School, Manhattan School of Music and nearby William Paterson University in Wayne, New Jersey, among others.

Bassist Matt Garrison, who in addition to his trio work with Jack DeJohnette and Ravi

Coltrane runs the ShapeShifter Lab in Brooklyn, said that living in the metropolis created openings for him that he just wouldn’t have had elsewhere. “When I was younger, I would play anytime, anywhere, whoever called. Each of those things, in almost every case, led to something else; that led to something else; that led to the thing on the big stage that paid lots of money. And they tend to emanate from these little stinky joints in New York.”

Clarinetist Anat Cohen echoes that sentiment: “For me, it was either go home to Israel or move here.” Cohen came to New York nearly 20 years ago after studying at Boston’s Berklee College of Music. Recalling her early days, she said, “It was having the horn on my back, walking from gig to gig, to jam, to sit in. It exists elsewhere, too, of course, but it’s more concentrated here. There were times I’d play Brazilian pop, Louis Armstrong music, big band music and play New Orleans music in the afternoons in the street, too—everything in one day. I don’t think I’d be able to do that elsewhere.”

Even though he and most of his staff are based in Los Angeles, Don Was, president of the storied Blue Note label since 2012, said, “I can’t think of any artist we’ve signed since I’ve been here that didn’t come through New York. The best current example is [pianist]

James Francies, who comes out of the same high school in Houston as [pianist Robert] Glasper and [drummers] Chris Dave and Eric Harland. Houston is a great music town, but James had to come to New York ... to attend The New School and make the connections that led to him playing with The Roots, Chris Potter, touring with José James. ... I don't think I would have found him if he hadn't been in New York."

In the 1990s, another New School alum, pianist Spike Wilner, played regularly at the Village basement hangout Smalls, eventually becoming a partner in the club. "It's just a bar, honestly ... but for the last 25 years it has become a hub for generations of jazz musicians," Wilner said. "It wasn't created for the topflight acts or for comfortable seating. Just a place where people could hang out as late as they liked for almost no money. And it created a culture of young jazz musicians who began to make it their home."

Wilner agreed that young jazz players need to come to New York to learn the tradition of masters of bebop and hard-bop like Art Blakey. "If you want to become a great Chinese chef," he asked rhetorically, "do you need to spend some time in China? You can't really assimilate the full culture of jazz anywhere else. To me, it should be called New York Jazz."

For Barney Fields, who runs the HighNote and Savant labels, the concentration of musicians and studios makes it hard for him to imagine operating his labels anywhere else. The labels' rosters include Cyrus Chestnut, Houston Person, Peter Bernstein, Mike LeDonne and Eric Alexander, among others. "The talent pool here is enormous," he said. "If you need a bass player, there are five different guys just on the West Side. ... The studio engineers here have recorded enough jazz that they know what they're doing, not like a studio that's recording rock one day and jazz the next."

Another indie label strongly associated with New York is Pi Recordings, founded in 2001 by Seth Rosner and Yulun Wang. "We were documenting guys like Vijay Iyer, Craig Taborn and Steve Lehman before the international jazz audience really knew about them," Rosner said.

Wang added: "I don't think we could be the label we are without being here. We feel the need to be on the ground, going out and listening to lots of musicians and getting to know them as people. You just can't do that by email or by listening to a digital file." Over time, Wang said, the musicians have "shared their honest thoughts about who we should be paying more attention to. ... Frankly, I don't think that's possible if we were, say, in Dubuque."

New York can be intimidating—even for the most talented young musicians. But Cohen believes they should come anyway: "I always tell them to spend some time in New York—it's really important. And when you get here, you'll have to get in line. For every gig, there's a line and a hierarchy. But if you're good, the line just goes faster."

—Allen Morrison

Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah performs at the 2018 DC Jazz Festival.



FRITZ PHOTOGRAPHIC

D.C. OFFERS HOMEGROWN JAZZ

Washington, D.C., was the birthplace for icons Duke Ellington, Charlie Rouse and Shirley Horn, and because the nation's capital is so steeped in history—of both the political and jazz variety—it remains an alluring destination for tourists. The city's music, however, has no plans to retire to the exhibit cases at the Smithsonian.

"There's so many things about D.C. that are unique," says Amy K. Bormet, a pianist and native Washingtonian who recently moved back after five years in Los Angeles. "I didn't realize how magical it was until I left it."

D.C.'s jazz ecosystem naturally has elite, international components to it. At the top of that list is the programming at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the country's national cultural center, which pianist Jason Moran has overseen since 2012. The Kennedy Center's prestige has drawn esteemed performers for decades. Under Moran, its jazz offerings have expanded steadily, ranging from concerts by Anthony Braxton to collaborations between Moran and a group of skateboarders who built a half-pipe in the center's outdoor plaza.

Washington also boasts the DC Jazz Festival each June; the event has grown since its 2005 inception to become one America's largest jazz festivals. In 2018, the DCJF attracted 82,000 attendees to its 165 events, with performances by Leslie Odom Jr., R+R=NOW, Maceo Parker and D.C. native Ben Williams.

But the city's greatest strength springs from local energy: the homegrown jazz artists, venues, advocates and fans that constantly replenish the local scene. Two vibrant examples are the neighborhood venue Alice's Jazz & Cultural Society, which hosts weeknight performances, and the Petworth Jazz Project, a summertime concert series at a local recreation center. Bars offering weekly gigs include Elijah Easton's Tuesday nights at U Street's Service Bar and Friday's late-night jams at Maddy's in Dupont Circle. Numerous players have organized ambitious events, like Bormet's influential Washington Women in Jazz Festival.

"This is the best community in the entire world," Bormet said. "I love L.A., but it's so spread out—people there work on separate things. Here, they collaborate and co-sponsor events, and take time to support other people's ventures. All that stuff means a lot to me. I wanted to be back here, so I could build things in this community, for this community."

—Michael J. West

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Ken Schaphorst (foreground) conducts the NEC Jazz Orchestra in a performance with bassist and faculty member Dave Holland (rear, left).

ANDREW HURLBUT/NEC

SCHOOLS RULE IN BOSTON

Boston's reputation as a jazz city rests on its importance as an education hub. It's a college town, after all. There are jazz clubs like Scullers and the Regattabar, which book internationally touring acts, as well as smaller venues like the Lilypad, Outpost 186 and the venerable Wally's.

But it's the thousands of aspiring musicians who fuel area performances—as listeners and players. And in large part, the schools serve as concert venues for the general public.

In addition to music-specific institutions like Berklee College of Music, New England Conservatory and the Longy School, student musicians also can study in music departments at any number of area colleges, including Boston University, Brandeis and Harvard (where pianist Vijay Iyer is a professor).

But the heavyweights of jazz education in Boston are Berklee and NEC. Both institutions set the template for jazz education in America: inviting world-class musicians to demonstrate the ins and outs of performance.

Berklee's current history began in 1954, with an ever-evolving faculty that has included legendary teacher/performers like trumpeter Herb Pomeroy (1930–2007), drummer Alan Dawson (1929–'96) and reedist John LaPorta (1920–2004), through to vibraphonist Gary Burton's long association with the school, including roles as professor, dean and executive vice president.

These days, the school has 6,500 students and a teaching staff of hundreds that includes Tia Fuller, Terence Blanchard and Danilo Pérez. Among its broad-reaching programs are the Berklee Global Jazz Institute and the Berklee Institute of Jazz and Gender Justice, directed by Terri Lyne Carrington (see cover story).

NEC, founded in 1867, turned its ears to jazz

in 1967, when Gunther Schuller (1925–2015) became president. In short order, Schuller hired composer George Russell (1923–2009) and pianist Ran Blake, who still teaches at the school.

Today, musicians at NEC study in both the jazz studies and contemporary improvisation departments, the latter a descendent of the Third Stream Department, which Schuller asked Blake to create as a laboratory for Schuller's ideas about the blending of classical and jazz idioms.

On any night, fans can catch free faculty-student recitals at either school. The Berklee Beantown Jazz Festival is a free multi-stage block party every September, featuring faculty, alumni and students. NEC's many free concerts in its storied Jordan Hall last fall included trumpeter Dave Douglas performing his 1998 album *Charms Of The Night Sky* with a student-faculty ensemble. The Berklee Performance Center is a major venue for touring acts, and the intimate Café 939 offers a showcase for touring acts.

Many musicians interact in some way with both institutions: The multi-instrumentalist and composer Mehmet Ali Sanlikol, 44, now a professor at NEC, earned a bachelor's degree at Berklee and then moved on to NEC to earn a master's and doctorate.

A native of Istanbul, Sanlikol came to the States dreaming of jazz and with no interest in traditional Turkish music. By the time he got to NEC, he recalled, "I was a 23-year-old jazz cat! I'm hip and hot and playing with [trumpeter] Tiger Okoshi." But the ethnomusicology courses offered by NEC led him back to his roots, and his own diverse oeuvre now mixes jazz and Turkish influences. "The institution has a way of encouraging students to go beyond their majors or concentrations," the Grammy-nominated Sanlikol said, "and that changed my life as a composer and jazz performer."

—Jon Garelick

Deep Pride in New Orleans

Jazz is more than a genre in New Orleans. It's a fundamental part of the city's ethos, woven into the fabric of its 300-year history and reflected back into daily life in ways that extend beyond the stages of celebrated clubs like Snug Harbor, the Prime Example and Fritzel's, or events like the Jazz & Heritage Festival, the French Quarter Festival and Satchmo Summerfest.

The city's collective reverence for local music reverberates 24/7 on the airwaves of WWOZ. During Sunday afternoon second-lines, when brass-band music spurs folks into fervent displays of self-expression, they're participating in a community-based form of collective improvisation. Often, those moments are staged against the backdrop of historic jazz sites like Congo Square, or newer focal points for jazz history, like the New Orleans Jazz Museum, which houses pieces ranging from Louis Armstrong's first cornet to a contemporary soprano saxophone donated by Aurora Nealand, an important voice in the city's thriving creative and improvised music scene.

Like jazz itself, New Orleans is engaged in a



struggle to move forward while sustaining cultural traditions embedded in its past. Amid changing demographics, local organizations have picked up the mantle, providing essential services to protect musicians, students and audiences. Arts magnet NOCCA is nationally recognized for offering a serious jazz education to youngsters. And programs like the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation's Heritage School of Music and the Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong Jazz Camp remain committed to teaching the next generation.

"Our programs help empower musicians to

pass along New Orleans' jazz and other cultural traditions to students," said trombonist and Preservation Hall Director of Programs Ashley Shabankareh. "As a result, we're seeing younger musicians engaged in the art form and playing alongside their elders."

From the musicians themselves to the vinyl freaks at Euclid Records or the Louisiana Music Factory to the city's habit of putting life on hold to serve the music, New Orleans is a place where jazz both is fueled and protected by a sense of community. —Jennifer Odell



MIAMI'S JAZZ PULSE

Much of Miami's jazz emanates from WDNA, which offers riches in jazz programming and public events live-streamed from the station's jazz gallery music venue. The station has a strong rapport with the University of Miami's Frost School of Music, an institution that boasts many notable jazz instructors, including Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Brian Lynch and 2018 Grammy nominee John Daversa, as well as student combos and jazz orchestras. In the face of challenges for funding the arts, WDNA's "doing a service for the incredible amount of great jazz musicians in the area, and our part for the world of jazz," according Maggie Pelleyá, the station's general manager.

WDNA's programming reflects tropical Latin rhythms, with broadcasts led by DJs Frank Consola and Fania-connected Andy Harlow, featuring lots of straight-ahead jazz

throughout the day.

French cafe Le Chat Noir is a great spot for small jazz groups, and outdoor concerts frequently are programmed among the dramatic murals at Wynwood. The club Ball and Chain books jazz combos as well. But a large Brazilian contingent in the area gets bragging rights for Rio jazz great Antonio Adolfo, who appears in local concerts periodically.

Tours of national and international acts move through town largely during the winter season. And for the third year, Snarky Puppy has booked intriguing international acts for its GroundUp Music Festival, which will be held in Miami Beach on Feb. 8–10. The lineup's set to include David Crosby, Lalah Hathaway, Tank & The Bangas and three nights of performances by Snarky Puppy. —John Radanovich



Esperanza Spalding performs at the 2018 Detroit Jazz Festival.

TAK TOKIWA



Lewis Achenbach (foreground) offers a painting demonstration while saxophonist Greg Ward and several other musicians perform at Chicago venue Constellation in 2017.

MICHAEL JACKSON

DETROIT

Detroit's reputation as a great jazz city is due, in large part, to the annual Detroit Jazz Festival. Celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2019, this free, outdoor event is held every Labor Day weekend.

It features unique programming, celebrated international stars and a bevy of Michigan-based jazz musicians, with upwards of 100 performances dispatched from five stages. In addition, there are a variety of educational activities to enhance the visitor experience, all of it taking place downtown at the picturesque Hart Plaza. The artist-in-residence for the 2018 fest was Chick Corea, who performed with members of his ensembles, as well as an orchestra. Festival artists also have included Esperanza Spalding, The Bad Plus and Motor City native Regina Carter.

For the other 51 weeks of the year, fans can check out music at venues such as the Jazz Cafe at Music Hall, Baker's Keyboard Lounge, Cliff Bell's and the Dirty Dog Jazz Cafe.

Bert's Marketplace includes not only a Jazz Room, but a Motown Room and the Warehouse Theater, which regularly stages award shows. This 24,000-foot entertainment complex is a favorite watering hole for saxophonist and Detroit native James Carter, who referred to the club's owner, 75-year-old Bert Dearing, as "a historic and soulful fixture on the Detroit music map." Carter added, "Every time I'm in town, I make a point to go there. I like to revisit the well to see how folks are doin' in town, to find out what's happening, musically. ... Bert's has a down-home feeling."

In addition to the city's night life, listeners can tune into Detroit public radio station WRCJ, which offers original and satellite programming.

Meanwhile, the next generation of jazz stars is studying in Wayne State University's jazz department. Visiting clinicians at the Detroit college have included Joe Lovano, Jon Faddis, Kenny Werner and Branford Marsalis. Benefiting students, as well as faculty, the school collaborates with the Detroit Jazz Festival and Mack Avenue Records. The label, which was founded in Detroit, has released critically acclaimed albums by Kenny Garrett, Christian McBride, Alfredo Rodriguez and Cécile McLorin Salvant, among others.

—John Ephland

SAGES FUEL CHICAGO SCENE

Saxophonist Chris Greene did not intend to become a mentor when he began playing professionally in Chicago 25 years ago. But he enjoys the role nowadays and is aware of the heritage that afforded him this stature.

"When you're in your 20s, 30s, you maybe don't think about being part of a lineage," he said. "But when I first became a tenor player, I would go to Von Freeman's sets and hear about his story. It kind of dawns on you, being a tenor player, especially a black tenor player in Chicago, you are part of the tradition whether you want to admit it or not. I'm in no way comparing myself to what Von did, but it is like what he did—encouraging people, if not offering guidance, an example of how to succeed and weather the storm as a professional musician."

Musicians' willingness to fulfill the role of personable sage remains a key reason why the Chicago jazz scene has flourished for more than a century. At the same time, Windy City legacies have combined with experimental inclinations. In the 1960s that meant adding in new harmonies and compositions to established blues and bop. Today, hip-hop-inspired production by artists like drummer Makaya McCraven augment instrumental improvisation.

A local infrastructure provides spaces to bring these musicians' ideas to audiences throughout the Chicago area. These include a number of independent record companies, including International Anthem and artist-run efforts like Greene's Single Malt Recordings. A range of venues also host diverse jazz performers throughout the city, including musician-owned spaces (drummer Mike Reed's Constellation and Hungry Brain), established institutions (Jazz Showcase and Green Mill)

and spots for jam sessions where mentors can connect with young adherents (Norman's Bistro). Perhaps the city's relative affordability—compared to the urban East and West Coasts—has helped them remain sustainable.

Such vibrancy extends to areas just outside the city, as numerous performance spaces thrive in the suburbs. Evanston venue SPACE celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2018. And a new venue/gastropub, Hey Nonny, recently opened in Arlington Heights. Along with bluegrass, blues and folk music, Hey Nonny regularly hosts local jazz artists, such as vocalist Typhanie Monique, drummer Dana Hall and saxophonist Shawn Maxwell. Its owner, Chip Brooks, has seen a positive reaction to the venue.

"There just hasn't been a place [in the northwest suburbs] for people who love jazz to go, so it's not a preset destination," he said. "We have to find the people who love jazz, introduce ourselves and get to know them."

Ultimately, artists continue to create their own experiences, while drawing on a supportive community of collaborators and listeners. One such upcoming musician is clarinetist/keyboardist Angel Bat Dawid. Her take on Afrofuturism follows the path of such Chicago forerunners as Kelan Phil Cohran (1927–2017), and she already has composed a Bible-inspired opera (*Song Of Solomon*) and recorded her debut album for intended release in 2019.

"There's a self-supporting, strong community here," Bat Dawid said. "Money-wise, not really. You have to be doing this for something else besides paper; it's not about that. This is deeper than an industry—it's cosmic, divine and spiritual. Chicago has this thing I've heard nowhere else."

—Aaron Cohen



Josh Nelson (left) Larry Koonse and Brian Walsh, seen here at the Angel City Jazz Festival, also have played at Los Angeles venue Bluewhale.

L.A. RENAISSANCE CONTINUES

Even before native son Kamasi Washington achieved international renown, a jazz renaissance was well underway in Los Angeles.

Today, the city is home not only to Washington and his group, the West Coast Get Down, but to a growing number of transplants from the New York and Chicago jazz scenes, as well as recent grads of jazz programs at UCLA, USC and CalArts, who have found an active community of players unafraid of intermingling with the city's thriving music scene.

If L.A. jazz has a hub, it's Bluewhale, a listening lounge opened by vocalist Joon Lee in 2009 in the city's Little Tokyo neighborhood. Lee competes with more established venues the Baked Potato and Catalina's for national talent, but also programs an adventurous mix of

boundary-pushing L.A. artists. Other small, but expertly curated venues include the LAX-adjacent Sam First, Highland Park cocktail bar ETA and Zebulon.

"It has turned out to be surprisingly fantastic," said Australian bassist Anna Butterss—who plays in guitarist Jeff Parker's quartet at ETA on Monday nights—of her adopted hometown.

L.A. also has a thriving festival scene that includes The Playboy Jazz Fest, the Angel City Jazz Festival and the Central Avenue Jazz Festival. And just down the road in Long Beach, KKJZ remains one of the country's best jazz FM stations. Combine all that with a deep pool of studio and session musicians, and one could argue that Los Angeles' jazz scene is the world's most underrated. —Andy Hermann



The SFJAZZ Collective, with Edward Simon on piano, performs at SFJAZZ Center in San Francisco.

BAY AREA EXUDES ENERGY

Boasting venues like Black Cat, Red Poppy Art House, and Bird & Beckett Books and Records, San Francisco is a great jazz city with a colorful past and a vibrant contemporary scene.

The 35-year-old SFJAZZ organization is a focal point, its SFJAZZ Center the first freestanding building in the U.S. devoted to jazz. "It's kind of the monolith of jazz in San Francisco," said vocalist Kitty Margolis, a Bay Area native.

SFJAZZ concerts, classes and talks were programmed mostly in-house for 46 weeks in 2018. The center is also home to the 15-year-old SFJAZZ Collective octet, the High School All-Stars and the Monday Night community band.

"We're very lucky to have a place like this in the city, and I'm so fortunate to be here now, because I can go hear a lot of great music that

goes through there," said SFJAZZ pianist and Sunnyside recording artist Edward Simon.

Other establishments regularly host performances by local musicians. Across the Bay in Oakland, the famed club Yoshi's is a tour stop for many jazz stars, while The San Francisco Symphony, Yerba Buena Gardens Festival and SF Performances all include jazz in their seasonal schedules. Nearby performing arts organizations, including Cal Performances (at UC-Berkeley) and Stanford Live (at Stanford University), do the same.

Broadcasting from the campus of the College of San Mateo, public radio station KCSM can be heard throughout the area and has excellent jazz, blues and Afro-Cuban shows around the clock. —Yoshi Kato

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SEATTLE

The passion of Seattle's jazz scene was demonstrated dramatically in 2016, when the community ponied up \$7 million to buy its own radio station, KNKX. Then known as KPLU and associated with Pacific Lutheran University, in Tacoma, Washington, the frequency was about to be absorbed by a fellow NPR station in Seattle.

"It was a testament to the community," said Joey Cohn, president and general manager of the new, community-owned jazz-and-news NPR affiliate with offices in Seattle and Tacoma. "We kept hearing that people had an emotional connection to the people on the air, who felt like family or friends."

Cohn added that lately he has been struck by how many young musicians pass through the station's live broadcast studio. Part of that trend includes the area's prodigious student jazz scene. Is there another city in America that sells out a 3,000-seat theater every year to showcase five high school jazz bands? That's what happens at the Starbucks-sponsored "Hot Java, Cool Jazz" concert at the Paramount Theatre.

Additionally, Cornish College of the Arts and the University of Washington have strong programs and present rounds of concerts.

One reason kids from Seattle's Garfield High School and Roosevelt High School have aced the Essentially Ellington competition in New York seven times between them just might be that their parents take them to see the A-list jazz musicians who regularly come through Dimitriou's Jazz Alley.

"I spent many years lobbying the governor and the liquor board to allow us to [admit minors]," said John Dimitriou, who opened Jazz Alley in 1980. "I see parents and grandparents and great-grandparents here, introducing their kids to the music."

Jazz fans also fill up the clubs Tula's, Egan's, the Triple Door and pianist Wayne Horvitz's cozy spot, the Royal Room. Jazz fans also can buy local, from Seattle's Origin Records, still going strong after 21 years, and a sponsor of springtime's Ballard Jazz Festival.

With jazz on the airwaves (also on KBCS, from Bellevue College), in the classroom, record bins, clubs and theaters—especially in October, when the now 30-year-old Earshot Jazz Festival floods the city with new sounds—Seattle jazz fans enjoy a robust jazz scene, indeed. —Paul de Barros

MONTREAL

Montreal is a city that embraces the large show—or "le grand spectacle," as it's called in French. It was a love affair that began in 1967, Canada's centennial year, when the city hosted Expo 67, a world's fair that attracted as many as 570,000 visitors a day to two islands in the middle of the St. Lawrence River.

Three years later, on that site, the Festival International de Jazz de Montreal debuted to 12,000 fans. Now, it's not unheard of for FIJM to draw 100,000 people to a free outdoor show. At any time during the festival's run, when 500 concerts are staged at 20 venues, downtown Montreal hums with life. A vast 760,000-square-foot site is closed to vehicles, and businesses inside the perimeter contend with crowds milling outside their doors.

"The key to making this all work is bringing everyone around the planning table," said Mikaël Frascadore, senior production director for L'Équipe Spectra, the company that operates FIJM and numerous other cultural events in Montreal. "It's all about communications—with city officials and our 'neighbors,' who include both business owners and residents."

He said FIJM's nightly schedule makes concessions to those who live in condominiums near the festival's site, shutting down concerts at 10:30 p.m., while indoor shows might run until midnight. The approach to open communication has helped



Drummer Jack DeJohnette and guitarist John Scofield perform at the Maison Symphonique de Montreal during the 2017 Montreal Jazz Festival.

everyone find something in FIJM's mammoth sprawl that works for them.

"The city wants to increase tourism," Frascadore said. "Montreal citizens love the exposure to the diverse music we program. Together, we have a common mindset."

Local musicians, too, recognize its value: "This festival has given me so much love in terms of providing a space for me to develop as a jazz artist," said saxophonist Christine Jensen, who first performed at FIJM in 1999 and also has attended outdoor concerts with her 8-year-old daughter in tow.

"Forty years ago," Frascadore said, "the organizers made up a lot of this as they went. Now, the technical quality is so high, with fiber-optic cabling at every site. We have great people working on this to make it the best it can be."

—James Hale

Portland

The closing of Jimmy Mak's—a fixture of Portland music for two decades—put a pall of worry over jazz fans in late 2016. True, the Biamp PDX Jazz Festival still was going strong, and a lot of young players were injecting fresh energy into the scene, but it felt like the jazz community was without a central hub.

Fortunately, things only have improved since then. The Jack London Revue opened in mid-2017, providing a new home for regulars like drummer Mel Brown and booking an array of touring acts. Jazz club/restaurant The 1905 stepped in to provide a home for local combos and regular jam sessions, as well as all-ages showcases for ensembles from area schools. Smaller spaces, such as Turn! Turn! Turn! and No Fun, have taken up the baton for the city's growing coterie of avant-garde players, with weekly gigs rife with adventurous sounds and styles.

Surrounding all of this local activity are organizations aiming to give Portland musicians the national and international platform they deserve. Chief among them is PDX Jazz, the nonprofit organization behind the festival, which takes over various venues around the city every February, and draws in top-tier talent like Mary Halvorson and John Scofield for one-off shows throughout the year.



Ravi Coltrane (left), Terri Lyne Carrington and Esperanza Spalding perform at the 2018 Biamp PDX Jazz Festival in Portland, Oregon.

The city also boasts the Portland Jazz Composers Ensemble, a 12-piece chamber orchestra that only performs original works by its members or commissioned material. That philosophy extends to its affiliate label, PJCE Records, which to date has released more than 30 albums by local artists, including multi-instrumentalist George Colligan.

Ryan Meagher, director of PJCE Records, commented on the label's focus: "It is originally composed Portland jazz with a high level of artistry. We have a pretty wide swath of aesthetics to offer. There are definitely swinging straightahead sounds, and there's really far-out sounds." While he's only talking about the work that the label has put out, his comment serves as an apt summation of this thriving city's entire jazz scene.

—Robert Ham

Nubya Garcia

MICHAEL JACKSON



London

London has a long history as a jazz-savvy city. In 1959, British saxophonists Ronnie Scott and Pete King opened Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club. The venue still flourishes in Soho, presenting local mainstream-to-modern talent, as well as internationally touring stars.

Fans of experimental music flock to The Vortex, whose director is Babel label honcho Oliver Weindling. Drummer Avreeayl Ra collaborated with saxophonist Evan Parker there recently.

Nearby, Cafe Oto presents progressive music in a casual setting. The ICP Orchestra, Ben LaMar Gay and Matana Roberts have performed there, and in April, pianist Alexander Hawkins will play a two-day residency with flutist Nicole Mitchell and cellist Tomeka Reid.

In Camden, the Jazz Cafe offers a hip space for r&b, soul and increasingly strong jazz book-

ings. Saxophonist Jean Toussaint, who moved to London in 1987, led his sextet there in December. The Bill Frisell Trio plays there Feb. 23.

Each November, the EFG London Jazz Festival presents an array of talent in venues throughout the city, including the essential 606 Club, PizzaExpress and the 100 Club.

Fabrice Bourgelle's 2018 documentary *We Out Here: A LDN Story* and its accompanying Brownswood soundtrack shine a spotlight on exciting young British artists informed not only by hard-bop but also hip-hop, drum 'n' bass and African rhythms. The film features saxophonists Shabaka Hutchings and Nubya Garcia, drummer Moses Boyd and others. Garcia commented in the film on her colleagues' aesthetic: "There's a constant pushing and desire to say something new, but also fully appreciate and take in what has been said before." —Michael Jackson

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HAVANA

Music nearly is inescapable in Havana. Cuba's capital city pulsates with not just styles long associated with Afro-Cuban jazz—such as *changüí*, *son*, *danzón* and *rumba*—but also with new hybrids incorporating elements from hip-hop, soul, pop, electronica and reggae.

"There is a strong jazz movement in Cuba that is constantly growing and evolving," said Cuban-born jazz singer Zule Guerra, who performed last year in Washington, D.C., at the Kennedy Center's Artes De Cuba: From the Island to The World festival. "A new generation of young jazz musicians with increasingly fresh and innovative languages is breaking through, showing the wide range of inherited rhythmic traditions and its enriching experimentation with contemporary music from around the world."

The annual Havana International Jazz Festival—with iconic pianist Chucho Valdés as its artistic director—is certainly a draw for jazz fans. The 41-year-old festival showcases a wealth of the island's finest jazz musicians, as well as other international stars, such as Dee Dee Bridgewater, Joe Lovano and Arturo O'Farrill.

A visit to some of Havana's venues, including La Zorra y el Cuervo, Jazz Café and the piano bar

Orlando "Maraca" Valle at the 2017 International Jazz Day Global Concert in Havana



STEVE MUNDINGER/
THELONIOUS MONK INSTITUTE OF JAZZ

Delirio Habanero, will reveal less well-known musical treasures.

One must-see spot is the Fábrica de Arte Cubano, a former cooking-oil plant turned multimedia arts venue. Situated in Havana's Vedado neighborhood, the place draws a huge crowd of mostly young locals as they take in a diverse selection of bands and DJ sets. One could just as likely hear Cuban musicians channel Robert Glasper's modern jazz innovations as they would delight in the Afro-Cuban sounds associated with the Buena Vista Social Club.

An outing to the historic EGREM recording studios is rewarding for any music buff interested in Cuba's history. The label EGREM, which was founded in 1964, has a catalog of more than 30,000 tracks, and the studio buildings have an adjacent record store and performance space for intimate concerts. —John Murph



TERMANSENS RIBE, DENMARK

Renowned Danish pianist Martin Schack has opened the jazz club **Termansens** in Ribe, the oldest city in Denmark. Located in a historic building that dates back to the 1500s, **Termansens** has hosted top Danish and international artists, including:

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VIENNA

Vienna always will be celebrated as a classical music landmark. It was the seedbed of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert. Yet the musically fertile soil also extends into the jazz realm—as evidenced by one of Europe's finest jazz clubs, Porgy & Bess.

Celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2018, Porgy & Bess boasts auspicious beginnings through the efforts of the madcap musician Mathias Rüegg. His big band project, the Vienna Art Orchestra, earned a reputation as one of the most adventurous large ensembles in the world, incorporating humor, intricate charts and references to music beyond jazz.

The venue's original location was in what had been known in the 19th century as the Fledermaus Bar (a nod to the famous operetta by Johann Strauss II). The current 400-seat location has been the club's home since 2000 and formerly played host to a 19th-century theater.

"Of course, Vienna is associated with Mozart, Beethoven, Mahler and Schoenberg," said Christoph Huber, who has run Porgy & Bess since 2000. "But we also had a saxophone titan named Hans Koller [1921–2003]. Don't forget that in the 1950s, the German jazz scene was called 'jazz im Kollerland.' There was a jazz club [in Vienna] called Fatty's Saloon, programmed by the great clarinet player Fatty George."

Besides Porgy & Bess—known for embracing more experimental and avant-garde sounds—jazz fans in Vienna frequent the Blue Tomato and Vienna's oldest continuously running jazz club, Jazzland. That venue's founder and director, Axel Melhardt explained, "Back in 1972, there were only a few places to play jazz. So, Jazzland was founded, with concerts by Albert Nicholas and Ben Webster."

Vienna also boasts a hearty annual summer jazz festival, Jazzfest Wien, founded in 1991. It is part of the prestigious International Jazz Festival Organization, just as Porgy & Bess is connected with the European Jazz Network, which helps facilitate cooperative bookings with venues in other cities.

Jazzfest Wien generally books smaller shows into both Jazzland and Porgy & Bess during its run, along with booking high-profile shows in the grand Vienna State Opera.

"We have cooperated with the Jazzfest Wien for many years," said Porgy's Huber. "They usually program a week at the club in the beginning of July. The festival is an important event in the Viennese jazz life, but ... I definitively prefer the club," he added with a laugh.

—Josef Woodard

Amsterdam

Amsterdam's jazz history is extensive. It even boasts a *Guinness Book of World Records* entry for the Ramblers as the world's longest-running dance band. The group formed in 1926 and gained legitimacy in 1934 when Coleman Hawkins, then starting out on a five-year sojourn through Europe, worked with the band. But the city truly made its mark in the '60s with the rise of the musicians who later would form the Instant Composers Pool—pianist Misha Mengelberg, drummer Han Bennink and saxophonist Willem Breuker—a collective that internalized the full breadth of jazz history while deploying feverish creativity.

In the decades since then, the city has established a reputation built upon a collision of tradition and rebellion, with a stellar cast of players steeped in that ICP ethos. Although it relocated to posh new digs in 2005, the Bimhuis has been the city's hot-house of experimentation since it opened in 1973.

The current century has seen the Amsterdam scene grow increasingly international while embracing a stronger emphasis on free improvisation. Guitarist/bassist Jasper Stadhouders said, "It's wonderful to see how ICP's history seeps through to the younger generation. Most musicians here



have a strong musical identity without neglecting or ignoring the musical past—where improvised music came from—while at the same time feeling confident about their own way of viewing improvised music."

The sprawling North Sea Jazz Festival occurs each summer in Rotterdam, an hour drive away, but Amsterdam possesses such a rich assortment of venues that there's never a shortage of performances by locals and touring musicians.

Although modest in size, the annual Doek Festival in June provides an intriguing look at the scene's overall health, presenting veteran musicians alongside key new figures like expat Slovenian pianist Kaja Drakslar and keyboardist Oscar Jan Hoogland. —Peter Margasak

COPENHAGEN

Copenhagen, Denmark, boasts one of Europe's oldest jazz clubs, even if it has changed location three times and was closed for 15 years (from 1995–2010). Jazzhus Montmartre first opened in 1959, booking many visiting or resident American artists, such as Dexter Gordon, Ben Webster, Stan Getz, Thad Jones and George Lewis. Now, it has a modern interior and returned to a location that previously housed the venue between 1961 and 1976.

At one point, a similarly named venue, Jazzhouse, was Copenhagen's main club for more wayward sounds, but this year, it merged with the venue Global to create Alice—a new place dedicated to jazz, electronica and folk music.

The city also boasts two jazz festivals: The massive summer incarnation of the Copenhagen Jazz Festival occupies nearly every possible venue in the city; its smaller winter incarnation still is fairly extensive. And the concept is all-encompassing, as the events welcome the biggest acts in large concert halls, as well as working with hardcore improvisers in alternative spaces. Many of its gigs are free, and the entire range of jazz styles is embraced.

One of Copenhagen's best (yet slightly overlooked) players is the guitarist Pierre Dørge, who has led his New Jungle Orchestra since 1980. The band remains active, mostly around the city, but DownBeat caught up with him during a run of gigs and asked him about the special qualities of the scene in Copenhagen: "There are many musicians



experimenting and creating spontaneous music stories, mixing and combining fragments not only from jazz history, but from the whole world, mixed with electronics and samples," he said. "Surprise is the key word."

Prominent players making a global impact include saxophonist Laura Toxværd, percussionist Marilyn Mazur, trumpeter Palle Mikkelborg, guitarist Jakob Bro and drummer Kresten Osgood. Toxværd is involved with the ILK improvising collective and record label, whose main haunt is much appreciated by Dørge.

"One of my favorite venues is in the old slaughterhouse named 5E," he said. "It was initiated by Kresten Osgood: a small, raw room with a wooden stove, where I heard my musical guru [and collaborator], John Tchicai, freestyling for the last time before he passed away." Indeed, that magisterial saxophonist was another Copenhagen-born treasure. —Martin Longley



PARIS

Fans of Martin Ritt's 1961 film *Paris Blues*, with Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn's magnificent score, might be stuck with the lingering image of crowds of existentialist fans crazy for jazz musicians. Things have changed significantly since then, but a line from the standard "Azure-Te" poses a question that remains relevant today: "How can I be blue in Paris?"

After all, Le Caveau de la Huchette is still here. Near Notre-Dame, the venue remains a stomping ground dedicated to late-night dancing in an ancient cave still echoing with the grooves of Lionel Hampton. Additionally, a variety of restaurants and cafés in Paris moonlight as jazz venues. The Cercle Suédois presents spirited jazz once a week. Chez Papa is a Saint Germain-des-Prés restaurant that presents jazz every day.

"Jazz in Paris is a multicultural crossroads involving all forms of jazz," said Stéphane Portet, owner of Sunset-Sunside, located on the Rue des Lombards, which claims four clubs strung along 100 yards. "This eclectic situation will give rise to the jazz of tomorrow."

Thanks to the presence of clubs like Le Baiser Salé and Le Duc des Lombards, many exciting players are drawn to this musical hub. U.S. artists routinely stop at Sunset-Sunside, which has booked guitarist Peter Bernstein's quartet to perform Jan. 4-5.

Located further from the city center, New Morning is a larger venue that presents a variety of genres (rock, hip-hop, gospel) and big-name jazz stars, like guitarist Lionel Loueke, who is scheduled for a Feb. 21 show.

—Jean Szlamowicz

Berlin

Even considering the event's sterling reputation, the 2018 edition of JazzFest Berlin made more of an international impact than usual, with the debut of its adventurous new artistic director, Nadin Deventer. "Taking on this task is a big privilege, but also a bit intimidating," she said. "I'm relieved that my open, participatory, cooperative and challenging idea of a festival has been so well received."

Not far from the center of the festival is the city's famed club A-Trane, where international stars frequently appear. Clubs such as Schlot and B-Flat present mainstream jazz, but there are more out-there alternatives as well, including Sowieso and Donau 115.

There are many imports in this markedly international city, including Osaka, Japan-born pianist Aki Takase, Finnish guitarist Kalle Kalima and, from Britain, pianist Julie Sassoon and trumpeter Tom Arthurs. Among the younger adventurous players based in Berlin are Silke Eberhard (saxophones), Magda Mayas (piano) and Christian Lillinger (drums/percussion).

Other festivals in Berlin include XJAZZ, which looks outward to electronic and new music. In the past six years, the upstart A L'ARME! festival has featured much music of the avant-garde and free-improv variety.

Berlin is a fine home for collectives, with Splitter Orchester and KIM Collective being of particular note, working in the territory between composition and improvisation.

—Martin Longley



Henry Threadgill (left), John Lindberg, Marcus Gilmore and bandleader Wadada Leo Smith perform at the 2015 Jazz em Agosto festival in Lisbon, Portugal.

LISBON

Lisbon's Hot Clube de Portugal, now more than 70 years old, is one of the world's mythic jazz rooms. It's an important stopping point for celebrated touring musicians, a vital space for Portuguese jazz artists and an anchoring center for jazz appreciation and education.

A school, Escola de Jazz Luís Villas-Boas, long has been part of the Hot Clube operation. "The Portuguese jazz scene is in fact surprisingly exciting," said Inês Cunha, the club's president since 2009. "There are now a few jazz schools, and a new generation of extraordinary musicians. But Portugal is a country in the 'tail' of Europe. It is harder for Portuguese musicians to play abroad. That is maybe why there are not that many Portuguese musicians known either

in Europe or in the States."

But the city's a well-established hot spot for experimental jazz and free-improv, especially in August, thanks to Jazz em Agosto, a 35-year-old festival that has been run by Rui Neves—also a jazz broadcaster, critic and producer—for much of its history.

Regarding Lisbon's jazz resources, Neves pointed to the improvisation-oriented Creative Sources label, run by violist Ernesto Rodriguez. In Portugal, Neves said, "Jazz is learned at the university, and private schools are everywhere—but this is not making more creative musicians, only formatted musicians playing by the rules. However, there is in Lisbon a bunch of improvisers we can discover at the Creative Sources label who are getting some recognition."

Additionally, the label Clean Feed, founded in Lisbon in 2001, is a prodigious supplier of recordings of improvisational and other non-mainstream jazz albums. —Josef Woodard

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Fasching is one of Stockholm's most famous jazz venues.

STOCKHOLM

Setting the pace for the Swedish jazz scene is the Stockholm Jazz Festival, which was founded in 1980. The festival runs 10 days every October, each year entertaining about 21,000 enthusiastic fans at clubs, concert halls and theaters. Organized by the jazz club Fasching, the festival's programming historically has ranged from straightahead to free and avant-garde to blues, with a special emphasis in recent years on world music. Wayne Shorter, Abdullah Ibrahim, Lina Nyberg, Fatoumata Diawara, Tia Fuller, Isabella Lundgren, Archie Shepp, Bobo Stenson, Monica Zetterlund and B.B. King reflect the festival's remarkable range.

Many of the festival venues maintain the jazz vibe all year. High on the list alongside Fasching are the intimate lounge Glenn Miller Cafe, the cozy Plugged Records (fans can head downstairs to their cavernous club), S:TA Clara Bierhaus, Mornington Hotel and the majestic Konserthuset Stockholm. Serving as Fasching's artist in residence for 2018, stalwart Stockholm native Magnus Lindgren speaks for many when he says, "Fasching has soul, always serving the best live jazz music with a lot of love. I love playing this club."

As artist in residence, the saxophonist collaborated with talents across the musical spectrum, including vocalist/pianist Ida Sand, bassists Ruben Farias and Kinga Glyk, and the Elaria Orchestra, a big band made up of younger musicians, half of whom are women. Lindgren's last date at Fasching, in December, found him sharing the stage with eclectic folk singer Lena Willemark.

The Swedish national radio station P2, while limited, does provide a steady diet of jazz. Every Tuesday evening P2 broadcasts jazz concerts, featuring mainly Swedish contemporary jazz, with more jazz programmed each Saturday.

Musicians revere the legendary Atlantis studio, formerly a movie house. Much jazz has been recorded there over the years, including work by Arne Domnérus, Quincy Jones and the Esbjörn Svensson Trio, not to mention Sweden's most famous global export: pop band ABBA.

Commenting on what makes Stockholm special, Lindgren noted that the city is home to both established jazz icons, as well as the leaders of tomorrow: "The Royal College of Music, with a new facility built in 2016, educates up-and-coming jazz stars every year."

—John Ephland

Mopo performs at the 2018 We Jazz festival in Helsinki.



HELSINKI

For jazz lovers, any visit to Helsinki should include a stop at Digelius, one of the world's best and most inviting jazz record stores, launched in 1971. Clubs where jazz can be found include Storyville, Koko, Dubrovnik Lounge & Lobby (owned by Finnish filmmaker Aki Kaurismäki) and new state-of-the-art club G Livelab, which programs jazz and other genres.

A list of elite Finnish musicians in the past and present has to include the late drummer Edward Vesala, and also his wife, pianist-composer Iro Haarla (who continues to make luminous music), as well as veteran saxophonist Juhani Aaltonen, guitarist Raoul Björkenheim and saxophonist Eero Koivistoinen.

Festival-wise, Helsinki has had a strangely checkered history, despite its being a thriving spot on the jazz world's GPS. Meanwhile, Finland's 37-year-old Tampere Jazz Happening is a highly regarded destination on the jazz place map. Other longstanding festivals take place in the neighboring cities of Espoo and Porvoo. The island-based Viapori Jazz festival is a limb

of the massive Helsinki Festival, with respected saxophonist Jukka Perko as artistic director.

Six years ago, along came the innovative We Jazz, an annual fest that presents each event over its eight-day spread in a different venue—many of which are not "venues" in any strict sense. We Jazz, which is also a record label with 10 releases so far, is led by Artistic Director Matti Nives and a group of young culture-keepers.

"The aim of We Jazz is both to introduce new ideas to the very concept of a 'jazz festival,' and to be the leading jazz event in Helsinki," Nives explained. "The heart of We Jazz is presenting what we consider the best jazz music, be it local acts or international ones, in settings which help the music fully achieve its potential."

"Making experiences possible is more important to us than having the current headliner topping the bill, as at other festivals. Each edition of the festival also includes more experimental concepts, such as a concert in complete darkness, an immersive 3D gig, and 24 gigs in 24 hours by [the trio] Mopo." —Josef Woodard

Saxophonist Jan Garbarek performs at the Oslo Jazz Festival in Norway.



Oslo

There is a joke going around the jazz world: In every city of reasonable size in Norway, you will find an airport and a government jazz office. Comic hyperbole aside, Norway's jazz life, emboldened by government arts support and an eager public ear, has become legendary.

Oslo's jazz club scene runs the gamut, from the mostly Norwegian focus of Kampenjazz to mainstream sounds at the Herr Nilsen club, jazz and world music at Cosmopolite, trad-jazz at New Orleans Workshop, and avant-gar-

de and improvisational music at venues that are part of the Blow Out! festival.

In August, the Oslo Jazzfestival caps off Norway's spring-summer jazz fest circuit. The city also hosts the adventurous All Ears fest.

Oslo has been ground zero for many Norwegian artists who came to public awareness in the United States thanks to ECM Records, going back to '70s recordings by icons like saxophonist Jan Garbarek, guitarist Terje Rypdal and others. In the past decade-plus, ECM has put out albums by trumpeters Nils Petter Molvær, Arve Henriksen and Mathias Eick, pianist Tord Gustavsen and keyboardist Christian Wallumrød.

A major development in the jazz system has been the partially government-subsidized venue known as Nasjonal Jazzscene, which has been run by music veteran Jan Ole Otnæs since it opened in 2008.

"We have a rich, vibrant scene for jazz in Oslo," Otnæs said. "You can hear great music every night. The jazz communities in the city are mostly cooperating in a constructive way in order not to compete, but to support each other in the best possible way." —Josef Woodard

Tokyo

Greater Tokyo is the world's largest urban area, with 35 million people spread across the vast Kanto Plain. Japan's capital city offers more than 100 jazz gigs nightly, spread out over a range of venues, from internationally famous clubs to small neighborhood bars in the suburban outskirts.

It would take several months to visit them all, but the short-term visitor looking for some great live music has numerous choices in the central part of town.

Tourists often pop into two of the most well-known clubs, both with significant history: Alfie in Roppongi and Body & Soul in Aoyama. Alfie was opened by the late drummer Motohiko Hino, a beloved figure in Japanese jazz circles and brother of world-famous trumpeter Terumasa. The venue features the brightest names in Japanese jazz on a nightly basis, and has late-night bar hours for post-gig drinks (something not all clubs in Tokyo provide).

Body & Soul is owned by Kyoko Seki, the grand dame of the Japanese jazz world for more than 50 years. It features a mix of local and visiting artists, often with vocalist-led groups, and is one of the few jazz clubs in town with good



Grand Marshall Oswald Jones and the Treme Brass Band march in a jazz parade during the 2017 Tokyo Jazz Weekend.

food.

Naru in Ochanomizu is another spot to catch local musicians nightly, with the last set kicking off at 10:30 p.m., making it a good place for a nightcap session.

The one must-see venue for any jazz fan in Tokyo is Shinjuku Pit Inn, Japan's version of the Village Vanguard. The Pit Inn has the history, the ambience and the high-quality music, and it is almost universally regarded as Japan's most important jazz club. One of its unique offerings is afternoon sets for a post-lunch crowd that hungers for live jazz. Regular shows by musicians like George Otsuka, Naruyoshi Kikuchi and Shinpei Ruike make the Pit Inn essential to the local scene.

Tokyo residents seeking a funkier vibe are drawn to The Room in the Shibuya area. For more than 25 years it has been a key spot for jazz, Latin and funk. Plus, DJs from around the globe drop by. "The scene here continues to evolve as skilled local musicians link up with club culture from around the world," said manager Tsuyoshi Sato, who has been with The Room from the start. "It's always a thrill to have unpredictable live sessions, DJ events and jams night to night."

In Japan, jazz gigs tend to start a bit earlier and mainly finish up by 11 p.m. There are, however, several places where musicians gather for informal, all-night jam sessions, such as the Manhattan Bar in the Asagaya neighborhood or Elektrik Jinja in Roppongi. —James Catchpole

CAPE TOWN

With its combination of beauty and location, Cape Town has attracted many different people to its picturesque shores over the decades. In the 1940s, saxophonist and singer Christopher Mra Ngcukana was a pioneer, performing with groups that entertained soldiers passing through Cape Town during World War II.

By the '50s Cape Town already was growing cosmopolitan and international because of the port. As a youngster, pianist and Cape Town native "Dollar" Brand (who later changed his name to Abdullah Ibrahim) is said to have earned his nickname because of a penchant for buying jazz LPs from visiting U.S. sailors at the port.

In 1965, vibraphonist-pianist-violinist Merton Barrow and his wife, Cynthia, founded the Jazz Workshop. This school has remained a cornerstone for nurturing Cape Town jazz musicians, and it now has 11 instructors on staff.

University of Cape Town's jazz department was founded in 1989 by Mike Campbell after he had graduated with a jazz degree from the University of North Texas. UCT has spawned a host of accomplished players, who, with dedication and good fortune, have risen to fame.

The political isolation of country during apartheid resulted in a hunger to see international



Trombone Shorty is among the hundreds of international stars who have performed at the Cape Town International Jazz Festival in South Africa.

musicians perform in a festival setting that would bring a diverse array of people together, according to Rashid Lombard, who helped found the Cape Town International Jazz Festival, which began in 2000. The annual fest provides a major boost to the economy and contributes to jazz education, training and professional development.

"Every year people depend on us for their livelihood," said Billy Domingo, festival director. "We have a moral obligation to maintain this event, if not expand it."

There are numerous inner-city and suburban venues nowadays presenting African music and jazz. The music initiative Jazz in the Native Yards—organized by Koko Nkalashe and Luvuyo Kakaza—brings jazz to the backyards, cultural centers and informal spaces in the townships where people gather. These events offer a full African jazz experience for attendees, combining music and food with a strong sense of community and freedom. —Struan Douglas