

Monty Alexander Jazz Festival to ramp up the volume

EASTON — Labor Day Weekend will get off to a roaring start with the 2013 Monty Alexander Jazz Festival at the Avalon Theatre.

At 8 p.m. Friday, Aug. 30, saxophonist Sharel Cassidy and her quartet will energize the audience with her straight-ahead jazz. Cassidy tours the world performing jazz and original music, and is making waves on the New York jazz scene, including entertaining audiences at Dizzy's Club Coca Cola, Blue Note, NBC's Rainbow Room and the West Village boogie stop Smalls.

According to J. Hunter of All About Jazz, "Sharel Cassidy has the potential to be one of the leaders of this genre's next generation."

The tempo will continue at 3 p.m. Saturday as the festival salutes John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie — one of the great American jazz trumpeters of all time, bandleader, composer and arranger. The concert will include performances by bassist John Lee, who played with Gillespie, and returning percussionist Chuck Redd, who toured with him in Africa, as well as jazz artist Greg Gisbert, who will take the master's turn on the trumpet.

Jazz pianist Monty Alexander, the festival's artistic director and namesake, will headline the festival at 8 p.m. Saturday with his music that crisscrosses and fuses jazz roots, the American Songbook and the sounds of his native Jamaica.

Alexander has performed and recorded with artists from every corner of the musical universe and entertainment world, including Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Ray Brown, Dizzy Gillespie, Sonny Rollins, Quincy Jones and



Jazz pianist Monty Alexander, artistic director and namesake of the Monty Alexander Jazz Festival, will perform Saturday, Aug. 31, at the Avalon Theatre.

Bobby McFerrin.

"You won't want to miss this year's festival," Alexander said. "It will celebrate life and music, and will uplift the audience."

He added, "You will have to wait and see — my concert

will have a few unique surprises, too."

Wrapping up the Monty Alexander Jazz Festival is returning jazz/gospel vocalist Dee Daniels, who will be joined by a local vocal ensemble

at 2 p.m. Sunday.

Daniels, whose international presence is growing, transcends musical borders when she brings her jazz styling, infused with gospel and blues flavoring, to the stage. This year, she will perform with an ensemble put together by Jana Leslie, contemporary music minister at Christ Church in Easton, performing two of her own choral arrangements — one of which she co-wrote with her mother. The ensemble features Ter-

ron Quails, Terri Key, Sam Martin, Matthew Sevon, Laura Spies, Earle Kirkley, Brenda Wood and Jana Leslie. Churches represented in the ensemble include the Greater New Hope Church and Ministries in Preston, Christ Church in Easton and the Redemption Church in Owings Mills.

Jazz on the Chesapeake, a program of Chesapeake Chamber Music, presents the festival.

Weekend packages are

available at the Tidewater Inn, which once again is joining in the festivities by offering a "Jazz Brunch" at 11 a.m. Saturday. The brunch will feature jazz percussionist Isabelle DeLeon and her trio.

For more information or to purchase tickets for the festival, visit www.chesapeakejazz.org or call 410-819-0380.

ON THE COVER

Saxophonist Sharel Cassidy will perform at 8 p.m. Friday, Aug. 30, at the Avalon Theatre.

AVALON
THEATRE

40 E Dover St. Easton
www.avalontheatre.com

410-822-7299

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THE MONTY ALEXANDER JAZZ FESTIVAL
All Weekend

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New Orleans eclectic

9/5 - **ALEX & SHILOH**
Joined by bassist Terrell Dennis

9/7 - **THE SEAN FLEMING**



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Sept. 27th

An Intimate Evening w/ Dave Mason
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Oct. 5th

