

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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Charlie Christian International Music Festival Features Great Music, Fine Dining and Dance!

Tuesday, May 30th, at 8:00 a.m., the Council Chambers of the City of Oklahoma City will be filled with the sweet sounds of jazz music performed by the Morris McCraven trio as citizens convene for the Council Meeting. McCraven is a legend at City Hall because he and his group established a tradition for the *Charlie Christian Festival* that spans the 32 years that Black Liberated Arts Center (BLAC), Inc. has presented the festival in celebration of local legend and icon, Charlie Christian. Joining McCraven are Keyboardist Earl Day and guitarist Jo Bob Nelson. As part of the agenda for the City Council, Mayor Mick Cornett will present a proclamation designating June 2nd and 3rd as Charlie Christian weekend.

TaylorMade Jazz under the direction of Walter Taylor III with guest saxophonist Eldredge Jackson will open the *Charlie Christian International Music Festival* with a Jam Session full of pizzazz and fun on June 2nd at 7:00 p.m. at the Untitled Arts Gallery, 1 NE 3rd Street in the Deep Deuce Area, the historic area of the Oklahoma City's African Americans and was known as a "hotbed" of music. The event is free to participating musicians and vocalists who will be joining the band. Admission for all others is \$10 for the evening. Tickets may be purchased in advance by calling (405) 524-3800 or emailing blac37inc@yahoo.com.

Walter Taylor, an Oklahoma City native, began playing the drums at age 11. At 60 years old, he has traveled extensively following music wherever it takes him. He toured nationally with *Uptown Syndicate*, a soul and funk band. in the 1970s but held onto his Oklahoma roots, making Oklahoma City his home. As a founding member of the "hot" *After Five* trio, in the 1990s Taylor found himself on the road again and in the recording studio laying down tracks for the wildly successful, "Expressions", album that consisted of an original collection of songs of rhythmically romantic ballads, jazz fusion and funky get-down rhythm and blues. Today Walter is involved in a musical movement to bring blues and funk to the center of music. He calls it Blu Fonk. Under his TaylorMade Jazz umbrella, he has flexibility to create and mold the sound to fit the occasion. He does not travel as much as he once did but can be found wherever good music is played, often in the midst of the fun!

Tulsa Jazz Saxophonist, Eldredge Jackson is no stranger to Oklahoma City. In fact, he came to Oklahoma City by way of the *Charlie Christian International Music Festival* about half way the 32 years that the event celebrates. The New Orleans born musician compares his sounds to a simmering pot of hot, spicy gumbo when performing. There is no doubt about his popularity in OKC. "El-Jack." as he is called by his fans, has extensive experience playing around the country, from OK City's Jazz Lab to places like Red Cat Jazz Café in Houston to Brooklyn Jazz Café in Dallas. He seems to have done it all...including jazz cruises. The recording artist cites Wayman Tisdale as being a major influence on him. Jackson has opened or shared stages with artists of national renown including Al Jareau, Najee, Charlie Wilson and the GAP Band to name a few. He performs in many festivals including Tulsa's Mayfest and is well known on the casino

circuit. According to Anita Arnold, Executive Director of BLAC, Inc. Jackson and Taylor are both recipients of the coveted Charlie Christian Jazz Music Award. Arnold has managed the festival and other related projects since 1991.

Saturday, June 3rd the *Charlie Christian International Music Festival* plays it forward at the Embassy Suites Hotel, 741 N. Phillips, Oklahoma City, OK at 6:00 p.m. According to Mark Temple, Festival Chairman, "As a perfect ending to a year long centennial celebration, the festival picks up where Benny Goodman meets Charlie Christian at Victor Hugo's Supper Club in Beverly Hills, CA. The dinner dance show will feature jazz dancers from the Metropolitan Dance Company under the direction of Frances Pitts, founding member of the organization. There will be two music sets. The first set will feature Dr. Wayne Goins, Guitarist and Author with his band from Kansas. The set will actually conclude with Goins and members of his band joining TaylorMade Jazz in providing music for many of today's generation an opportunity to show off their dancing skills." Those wanting to do dances such as the "Electric Slide" will be thrilled with the music.

Goins was the headliner for the 2016 Charlie Christian outdoor festival held on Broadway between NE 3rd and 4th streets. Festival attendees begged for more music as he ended his performance. Many wanted to know when he was coming back to Oklahoma City. Temple concluded his remarks with "He's Back!"

Dr. Goins is Director of Jazz Studies at Kansas State University and previously taught guitar music at Moorehouse College, Emory University, and Kennesaw State University. Goins authored the award-winning book, *A Biography of Charlie Christian* (2005), *The Jazz Band Director's Handbook* (2003) and *Emotional Response to Music:: Pat Metheny's Secret Story* (2001). In 2006, he published *The Wise Improvisor*, a college textbook on jazz improvisation. Goins founded Little Apple Records, his own record label, and released *West Coast Swing*, *Standard Fare*, *Smokin' at The Oak Bar*, *Bluesin With the B3*, *Home....Cookin!*, *Chronicles of Carmella* released in early 2011. Goins writes for *Jazz Ambassador* and *Jazz Inside Magazines*. Goins' fifth book, *That's All Right: The Jimmy Roger's Story* will be published by the University of Illinois Press soon.

Anita Arnold said festival attendees may, also, browse products from many non-food vendors participating in the events. BLAC, Inc. will have copies of books about Charlie Christian. Though Charlie Christian died at the age of twenty six, many books and magazine articles have been written about him world wide. Christian has been inducted into every major music hall of fame. Many colleges and universities teach Charlie Christian Music Courses around the world.

Tickets for the dinner/dance show are on sale now for \$45 and may be purchased by calling (405)524-3800 using any major credit card or through PayPal. This event is open to the public. Invitations with response cards were mailed earlier and mailed responses are due by May 20th. For more information email blac37inc@yahoo.com or check Facebook at charliechristianmusicfestival.com.

This event is sponsored in part by BancFirst, Oklahoma Arts Council, Oklahoma City/County Historical Society and Untitled Art Gallery.