Tonight's Artists: *Oscar, With Love*

Thank you for attending *Oscar, With Love* tonight at Bing Concert Hall. We hope you had a wonderful night! Please find photos and biographies for tonight's performers below.
Benny Green, piano

Benny Green possesses the history of jazz at his fingertips. Combine mastery of keyboard technique with decades of real world experience playing with no one less than the most celebrated artists of the last half century, and it's no wonder Green has been hailed as perhaps the most exciting hard-swinging, hard-bop pianist to ever emerge from Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. Benny Green, unconditionally, is the bearer of the torch and guardian of a legacy handed down to him, personally, by his musical mentors. His most recent recordings, Live in Santa Cruz (2015) and Magic Beans (2012) (Sunnyside) are shining examples of his brilliance. Since emerging under the tutelage of Betty Carter, Art Blakey, Freddie Hubbard and Ray Brown in the early 1980s, Benny Green has become a highly regarded pianist and bandleader. His efforts to expand upon the language of the classical jazz canon have placed him not only among the best interpreters but also among the vanguard of musicians keeping jazz’s evolution going.
Bill Charlap, piano

Grammy award winning pianist Bill Charlap has performed with many of the leading artists of our time including Phil Woods, Tony Bennett, Gerry Mulligan, Wynton Marsalis, Freddy Cole and Houston Person. Born in New York City, Charlap began playing the piano at age three. His father was Broadway composer Moose Charlap, whose credits include Peter Pan, and his mother is singer Sandy Stewart, who toured with Benny Goodman, and was a regular on the Perry Como show. She earned a 1963 Grammy nomination for her recording of “My Coloring Book.” In 2005, Charlap and Stewart released the acclaimed CD, Love Is Here To Stay (Blue Note). In 1997 Charlap formed his trio with bassist Peter Washington and drummer Kenny Washington, now recognized as one of the leading groups in jazz. In 2000, he was signed to Blue Note Records and received two Grammy Award nominations, for Somewhere: The Songs of Leonard Bernstein and The Bill Charlap Trio: Live at the Village Vanguard.
Renee Rosnes, piano

Renee Rosnes is one of the premier jazz pianists and composers of her generation. Upon moving to New York City from Vancouver, Canada, she quickly established a reputation of high regard, touring and recording with such masters as Joe Henderson, Wayne Shorter, Bobby Hutcherson, J.J. Johnson, James Moody, and legendary bassist Ron Carter. She was a charter member of the all-star ensemble, the SFJAZZ Collective, with whom she toured for six years. Ms. Rosnes has released 17 recordings, and has appeared on many others as a sideman. In 2016, Written in the Rocks (Smoke Sessions) was named one of ten Best Jazz Albums of the Year by The Chicago Tribune, one of the Best Albums in all genres of music by The Nation, and was awarded a 2017 Canadian Juno (her fifth Juno award). JazzTimes wrote, “Ms. Rosnes delivers conceptual heft, suspenseful compositions and mesmerizing performances,” and DownBeat praised it as “an exceptional achievement” stating “Rosnes is a virtuoso composer.” The band’s most recent session, Beloved of the Sky (2018) draws inspiration for the title track from Canadian painter Emily Carr, and features master musicians Chris Potter, Steve Nelson, Peter Washington and Lenny White.
Gerald Clayton, piano

Gerald Clayton searches for honest expression in every note he plays. With harmonic curiosity and critical awareness, he develops musical narratives that unfold as a result of both deliberate searching and chance uncovering. The four-time GRAMMY-nominated pianist/composer formally began his musical journey at the prestigious Los Angeles County High School for the Arts, where he received the 2002 Presidential Scholar of the Arts Award. Continuing his scholarly pursuits, he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Piano Performance at USC’s Thornton School of Music under the instruction of piano icon Billy Childs, after a year of intensive study with NEA Jazz Master Kenny Barron at The Manhattan School of Music. Clayton won second place in the 2006 Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Piano Competition.

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Justin Kauflin, piano

Born March 10, 1986 in Silver Spring, MD, Justin Kauflin began music at age 4 with Suzuki violin. After losing total vision by age 11 and a decade of classical violin and piano, he switched to jazz piano in high school at the Governor's School for Performing Arts studying with Liz Barnes and Old Dominion University's John Toomey. He attended the Vail Jazz Workshop, Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead Residency, and received top honors in jazz festivals across the U.S. He began performing jazz professionally at age 15, most notably with the Jae Sinnett Trio. In 2004, Justin attended William Paterson University in New Jersey where he was taken under the wings of legendary trumpeter, Clark Terry and became a member of the Clark Terry Ensemble. He also studied with his hero, the late Mulgrew Miller as well as Harold Mabern. He graduated summa cum laude, moved to NYC, and at age 23 produced, led, composed and performed on his debut CD, Introducing Justin Kauflin. In 2012, he was the House Pianist at Havana Nights Jazz Club in Virginia Beach where his trio headlined regularly. He won the VSA International Young Soloist Award, was voted VEER's "Jazz Artist of the Year" and was selected as semifinalist in the prestigious Thelonious Monk Int'l Jazz Piano Competition. During this time, Justin's relationship with mentor Clark Terry was being chronicled by friend and fellow musician, Al Hicks. Five years in the making, the resultant documentary, Keep On Keepin' On, won numerous awards and made the Oscar's Short List. Justin composed the film score and was subsequently signed for management by legendary producer and music icon, Quincy Jones.
Robi Botos, piano

Robi Botos has been hailed as one of the most diverse multi-instrumentalists of this generation. From the hard-bop style of Bill Evans and Herbie Hancock, to the swing of Oscar Peterson and the heartfelt melodic expression of Mulgrew Miller and Cedar Walton, Robi has managed to master the technique of his idols, all while showcasing his musical expressions in a voice that is purely his own. While Robi is known for being a strong player in the traditional jazz and funk fields, he always incorporates an element of the music he grew up listening to into his playing. Says organist, trumpeter and pianist Joey Defrancesco: “Robi is one of the most swingin’, soulful, funky, world class players I’ve ever heard, and he has a technique like you can’t believe. Definitely one of my very favorite players!!!” Born of Romani descent in Hungary, Robi taught himself first to play drums as a young child, and got his first taste of being a professional musician working throughout Budapest. Robi was first introduced to the piano when he was 7 years old, and never looked back. He continued to perform throughout Hungary and when he turned 20, decided to move his wife and children to Canada, to further pursue the career he was born for. Now 20 years later, Robi has solidified himself as one of the most sought-after pianists in the country.
John Clayton, bass

John Clayton is a natural born multitasker. The multiple roles in which he excels -- composer, arranger, conductor, producer, educator, and yes, extraordinary bassist -- garner him a number of challenging assignments and commissions. With a Grammy on his shelf and eight additional nominations, artists such as Diana Krall, Paul McCartney, Regina Carter, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Gladys Knight, Queen Latifah, and Charles Aznavour vie for a spot on his crowded calendar. He began his bass career in elementary school playing in strings class, junior orchestra, high school jazz band, orchestra, and soul/R&B groups. In 1969, at the age of 16, he enrolled in bassist Ray Brown's jazz class at UCLA, beginning a close relationship that lasted more than three decades. After graduating from Indiana University's School of Music with a degree in bass performance in 1975, he toured with the Monty Alexander Trio (1975-77), the Count Basie Orchestra (1977-79), and settled in as principal bassist with the Amsterdam Philharmonic Orchestra in Amsterdam, Netherlands (1980-85). He was also a bass instructor at The Royal Conservatory, The Hague, Holland from 1980-83.