Kind of Brilliant
Jazz ensemble pays homage to Miles Davis

The renowned “Intentional Jazz” quintet will kick off the Spencertown Academy’s 2017 concert season on April 8 at 7:30 pm with a celebration of Miles Davis’ legendary album, Kind of Blue.

Recorded in 1959, Kind of Blue became an overnight classic and remains the best-selling jazz album ever. It’s not hard to understand why, notes Intentional Jazz founder Rob Fisch, who joined forces with Craig Bender to bring music back to the Academy last year.

Genius at work
“The recorded performance was effervescent,” Rob says. “Several of the selections, such as All Blues and Blue in Green, are still commonly performed by jazz musicians everywhere. But the real genius, perhaps, was in Miles Davis’ ability to bring together artists like Bill Evans, Jimmy Cobb, Paul Chambers, John Coltrane, Cannonball Adderly, and Wynton Kelly.” Writes music critic Fred Kaplan, “Even people who say they don’t like jazz like Kind of Blue. It’s cool, romantic, melancholic, and gorgeously melodic.”

The idea of using “Intentional Jazz” as a brand “is meant to convey the absolute passion and commitment to an art form—jazz—that takes many years, even a lifetime, to understand and perform,” Rob explains. “In other words, play it like you really mean it! It’s that simple.”

Last year, Intentional Jazz opened a new music series at the Academy featuring music of the “Blue Note” era, with sextet arrangements typified by such jazz luminaries as John Coltrane and Art Blakey. In addition to Rob on trumpet, the April 8 concert will feature Charlie Tokarz (saxophone, clarinet and flute), John Esposito (piano), Rich Syracuse (bass), and Jeff McRae (drums).

General admission tickets ($20/$10 for students) may be purchased in advance at spencertownacademy.org and at the door.
The Spirit Is Willing, But the Roof Is Weak

Our treasured building needs help

Spend any amount of time at the Spencertown Academy these days and you’ll likely notice two things: (1) The spirit of the Academy is in great shape. (2) Its physical condition, not so much.

The fact is, the need for restoration and repair is visible and urgent. In particular, the entire roof—bell tower, cornice and chimney included—must be replaced. Wood rot is spreading through the columns, siding and trim. The parking lot and walkways need to be improved and brought up to safety standards. And the electrical system is overdue for an upgrade.

These are not optional enhancements. They are steps that must be taken to save our priceless building. It’s an ambitious undertaking and we will be looking to raise $600,000 to fund it and maintain the improvements.

So here’s where we are now: We’re anticipating having the work done in three phases—beginning with the roof—in order to give us time to raise all of the money. Based on the architectural drawings and specs we’ve commissioned, we will bid out phase one in the next few weeks. I’m pleased to report that, to date, we’ve raised nearly $100,000. But obviously, we aren’t where we need to be.

In the weeks to come, you’ll be hearing more about our fundraising efforts and how you can help. In the meantime, we welcome and value your ideas, suggestions and input. Please—contact me or any board member with your thoughts.

I can’t overstate the Academy’s value to all of us in the community—weekenders and full-time residents, those who’ve moved here from other places and those who have lived here all their lives. It’s impossible to imagine Spencertown without the Spencertown Academy. Please help us save it.

Embracing the Future

A panel asks: Where is the Hudson Valley headed?

A panel of regional experts and activists shared their views on the state of the Hudson Valley economy at the Spencertown Academy on March 4. The discussion—“Helping the Hudson Valley: Where Are We Headed?”—was the latest in the Academy’s Conversations with Neighbors series.

“Now, perhaps more than ever, we need to rally together to protect our beautiful region and ensure a basic level of prosperity for all,” Lisa Bouchard Hoe, who chairs the Conversations with Neighbors Committee, noted in her introductory remarks. “Our panel today approaches the problems from three distinct perspectives: running a for-profit business, managing regional government programs, and guiding a foundation for local charitable giving.”

The panelists included Sarah Sterling, a county supervisor representing Hudson First Ward as well as a board member of both the Columbia Economic Development Corporation and the Columbia County Industrial Development Agency; Peter Taylor, president of the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, which manages more than $130 million in charitable assets; and Pierce Sioussat, CEO and founder of Bioforce USA, a Ghent-based sales and marketing company that supports brand development for European companies in the U.S. Ghent resident and award-winning author, journalist and producer David Black was the moderator.

“We had a great audience and I feel that I made some new connections,” says Sarah Sterling. “I came away energized, confident that in our small corner of the world we are doing what we can to make it a better place.”

Winter at Its Warmest

Revelers revel in revelry!

Winter seemed a bit less wintry and Spring a step closer for those who took part in the Academy’s annual Revels on January 28.

Since its premiere nearly three decades ago, this midwinter moveable feast has become one of the Academy’s most eagerly anticipated events. As always, this year’s Revels began with cocktails and hors d’oeuvres at the Academy followed by an array of elegant and intimate dinner parties hosted by friends of the Academy.

In welcoming guests at the cocktail reception, Spencertown Academy president Nick Van Alstine thanked Revels committee co-chairs Anita Fiorillo and Judith Choate and members Jan Moseman, and Charlotte, Rupert and Simon Fennell, “and, of course, all of our hosts for opening up their homes for this much loved event.”

Revels always brings a special spirit—a shared sense of hospitality, friendship and fun that keeps winter’s chill at bay. “It seems to get better and better each year,” says Judith. Adds Anita, “It’s a wonderful way to connect with neighbors and friends over a great meal and support the Academy.”
It's a Great Time to Join the Academy

And membership rolls are growing

You probably know that the Spencertown Academy urgently needs a new roof. The good news is that membership is going through it! Since the launch of an enrollment drive last year, membership has swelled to over 200. “We’re thrilled,” says Academy president Nick Van Alstine. “The Academy has been a presence here for many, many years—originally as a school, and today as a cultural center and treasured resource. A large and growing membership is crucial as we continue to expand and enrich our program offerings and to seek grant opportunities toward restoring the building.”

Four ways to join

The Academy offers four annual membership levels—Student ($20), Individual ($45), Couple ($80) and Household ($100).

Members are entitled to discounts on tickets to Academy-produced programs, the opportunity to show their work in an annual members-only art exhibit, and other benefits throughout the year. You’ll find details on the membership levels and a convenient application form at spencertownacademy.org.

Of all the benefits of membership, perhaps the most rewarding is that it makes possible an ever-growing schedule of concerts, lectures, readings, gallery shows, and workshops, not to mention the Academy’s signature events—Festival of Books, Hidden Gardens and Revels.

“If you haven’t yet signed up, we warmly welcome you to do so,” says Charlotte Fennell, Chair of the Membership Committee. “Meanwhile, our heartfelt thanks to our current members.”

Mary Ann Aiello & Raymond Lammens
Anamyn & Eddie Allen
Fern Apfel
Cindy & Carl Atkins
Rockelle Bartolo
Richard Bazelow
Betzie Bendis
Jill Berman & Lynda Cury
Brenda Bertin
Mary Gail Biebel
Jo-Anne & Richard Bilotti
Peter Blandori
Arlene Boehm & Jack Harrell
Damaris Botwick
Berta Burr
Amanda & Craig Campbell
Meg Cashen
Thalia Cassuto
Kay Castelle
Meg Castin
Judith Choate
Jennifer Clark
Norma & Allen Cohen
Barbara Conkling
Phyllis Considine
John Cooley
Jean Cottigiano & Penny Rubin
Regina Cortina & Thomas James
James Crogan & Louis B. Hedgecock
Mary Margaret Cronin
Reno Dakota
Susan Daniels
Susan Davies
Elizabeth Diggs & Emily McCulley
Carol & Henry Esert
Diane Fader
Stuart Farmery
Frank Faulkner & Philip Kesinger
Judith & Bruce Felton
Charlotte & Rupert Fennell
Robert & Lori Fisch
Judith & Alan Fishman
Fern L. Fleckman
Joe Charles Friedman
Eileen & Cono Fusco
Lisa Puttner & Jere Wrightsman
Leslie & Karl Gabosh
Frances & Raul Gaddiputi
Elizabeth Garner & Christian Dewainly
Marjorie Geiger
Monique & Richard Gershon
Page & Bryan Ginz
Marilyn & Allan Glick
Anne & Michael Golden
Ellen & Alan Goldner
Stanley Gottlin & Barry Waldorf
Sheri Gottlieb
Patricia Gravett
Ingrid & Byron Greenfield
Rebecca Greer
Marilyn & Lawrence Greitzer
Sharon Grubin
Judy Grunberg
Tussy Korybas
Joanne & Richard Hahn
Estelle Hawkins
Frances Heaney
Robert Herron
Diane Hersey & David Cudaback
Elizabeth Hess & Peter Biskind
Lauree & Gregory Hickok
David Highfill & Gregory Vogler
Lisa & Edward Hoe
Valerie Hoffmann
Linda Horn & Allan Davidson
Joy Howe
Karen Hummel
Beverly & Gary Igleburger
Barbara & Richard Ivenson
George Jahn
Karen Kaczmar
Joan & Tom Kadin
Maj Kalfus
Jill Kalotay
Amy Kaufman & Robert Boyd
Mary Kolodziej-Zinco
Barbara Lax Kranz & Kenneth Kranz
Ellen Kulisek
Sally Laing
Lisa Lavin & Steve Bakunas
Kaarin & Bob Lemstrom-Sheddy
Joan Blazis Levitt
Leah & James Lieber
Mimi Lieber
Nina & John Lipkowitz
Marlee Lobdell
Helen & Steve Lobel
Lael Locke
Linda Macaione
Jane Magee & Paul Bernstein
Rick Mallette & Benjamin Beaton
Pat McKenna
Jacqueline McKeon
Kate McLeod
Sara & Barry McWilliams
Jack Millard
Elizabeth & Paul Miller
Teresa & Martin Monas
Constance & Joseph Mondel
Victoria DiNardo Montifiore &
Stephan Montifiore
Olga & Thomas Moreland
Hanna & Jeffrey Moskin
Catherine Mosley
Wendy Moss
Howland Murphy
Joanne & Tom Murphy
Bob Newman
Susan & Harry Newton
Ginny Nightingale
Lynne O’Connell
Moira O’Grady
Deidre & Gregory Olsen
Ria & Clarke Olsen
Philip Palladino
Emmy & David Patterson
Pam & Doug Paul
James Pavlovic
Stephen Poppele
Margo & Robert Potrzeba
Cindy & Ben Puccio
Telisport Putsavage
Gina Qualliotine & Richard Green
Brin Quell
Michele Quigley & James Merrigan
Chip Rae
Georgia Ranney
Gerald Ranson & Joan Schmitz
Maxine Rapoport
Reinhard Reinman
Gunnel & Howard Reznikoff
Valerie Richmond
Penna Rose & John Alicea
Deborah Roth & Alan Kaufman
Trudi Roth
Julia Rothenberg
Lynn Rothenberg & Michael Roland
Helen Rothenstein & Henry Bertoni
Anita Schermerhorn
Joel Schiller
Jody Schoenfeld
Anne Schomaker
Leonard Seligman
Alice Sheddin & Theodore Feldman
Robert A. Siegel
Amy Silberkleit
Cecelia Sinclair
Carla Singer
Karen Selkton
Barbara Smith
John Smylie
Fran Snyder & David Vorembarg
Lucille Sparks
Madelaine Sparks & Wayne Greene
Eric Spiegel
Judy Staber
Olivia Stabins & David Hopkins
Michele Steckler
Janice & Lowell Steinbrenner
Christian Steiner & Frank Heller
Sarah Sterling
Meg & Bill Stratton
Pamela Strousse
Kathleen Sweeney & Manfred Kuechler
Laura & Mark Teague
Kay & Maynard Toll
Jesse Tran & Loren Brink
Suzanne & Robert Trevellany
Ryan Turley
Marion & Willard Ulmer
Nancy Van Alstine
Nancy Van Deren & James Burnett
Ann & John Vartanian
Marlene Vidibor
Albert Vinck
Karl Volk
Vivian & Edward Wachsbarger
Marion & Uel Wade
Brian Wagner
Judith Weissman
Joan Wetzner
Amy White
Carol Wilcox
Jacqueline Wilder
Steven & Judy Wilder
Barbara & Robert Willner
Eleanor I. Windman
Betsy Winters-Russell & Joel Russell
Mary Worcester
Michele & David Yokell
Eve Zatt & Edouard Vaval
Kathy & Mike Zoby
Linda & David Ziskind
Janet Zuckerman

Current members as of March 31, 2017

The Academy thanks you!

The Academy thanks you!
There’s No Thyme Like the Present
Plans take root for the Academy’s 13th annual kickoff to summer

Hard to believe, but summer is actually around the corner—and with it, Hidden Gardens weekend, beginning Friday, June 16 (appropriately known to James Joyce fans as Bloomsday). Plans are already starting to jell, and a featured speaker has been lined up—horticultural consultant, writer and lecturer Ron Kujawski.

Ron’s presentation—“Vegetable Gardening: It’s Never Too Late to Start”—is set for Saturday morning, June 17. “Mid-June may seem late for starting a garden—but it’s never too late,” he says. “It just requires a little more forethought.

Ron will offer basic information on preparing the garden for planting, planting tips, how to make up for lost time, and planning for fall harvests.

So mark your calendar—and watch for additional details about this year’s Hidden Gardens in the coming weeks.

Be a Joiner!
Reap the rewards of volunteering

One of the best things about volunteering at the Spencertown Academy is the variety of ways you can get involved. What would you like to do? Volunteer at an event? Serve on a committee? Brainstorm new program concepts—or develop one of your own? Whatever your interests or preferences, it’s likely there’s a job with your name on it.

The next major event, Hidden Gardens, takes place June 17 and there are many ways you can help—as a docent at the various gardens, or assisting at the Garden Market on the Green, for example. We are also looking for gallery attendants for art shows throughout the rest of the season—and, a bit further down the road, we’ll be starting to prepare for the Festival of Books. There are myriad ways you can help, from sorting donated books to serving as a greeter or book room attendant on the weekend of the Festival.

Volunteering provides a uniquely satisfying way to get to know your neighbors and give back to the community while having fun in the process. Let us hear from you.

Contact us at spencertownacademy.org/support/volunteer or 518-392-3693.