



The Strutter

VOLUME 36 NUMBER 7

Traditional Jazz in the Philadelphia Tri-State Area

FEBRUARY 2026

Our Next Concert:
Royce Martin – Pianist
Sunday, February 22, 2026
Haddonfield United Methodist Church



Photo credit – The Focal Point

Royce Martin is a pianist, composer and 2022 graduate of Berklee College of Music. Born in St. Louis, Royce taught himself to play the piano at the age of 14 on a small keyboard. He has a rich musical background and an affinity for a myriad of genres. He worked as the in-house pianist and lecturer at the **Scott Joplin State Historic Site** between semesters at Berklee. After graduation, Royce returned to St. Louis to record an album of a dozen Joplin classics, reinterpreted in his own eclectic style for his debut album **Memories on Morgan Street: Scott Joplin Reimagined**.

Royce has provided original music for **The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air Reunion** special on MAX, Hulu's **Mormon no More**, and most recently completed a full feature length score for MAX documentary **They Called Him Mostly Harmless**.

In October of 2024, The New York Times opinion columnist John McWhorter captured Royce's piano playing in three words: "...Sly, Relatable and Brilliant..."

Royce continues on his path of exploration and experimentation with innovations on his new genre creation that he has coined Swagtime. By combining the striding pianism of ragtime, with the melodic storytelling and lyricism of bebop and rap, Swagtime is the bridge between then, now, and tomorrow.



Made possible by funds from the Camden County Cultural & Heritage Commission, a partner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

Coming Soon
Manouche 5

March 15, 2026 – Wallingford Community Arts Center



Photo: M. Konop

Manouche 5 returns to Tri-State! This Philadelphia based quintet performs gypsy-jazz influenced standards and popular music similar to the original Hot Club of Paris. Manouche 5 premiered with Tri-State in 2022 and have become a fan favorite. We're pleased to have them return.

A North Carolina native, **Mollie Ducoste** recently relocated to Philadelphia to pursue a doctoral degree in criminal justice at Temple University. She hopes to one day become a criminal justice professor and influence criminal justice policy through empirical research - all while, of course, performing and playing her violin. Some of her greatest musical influences are Regina Carter, Stephane Grappelli, Stevie Wonder, and George Benson. Prior to coming to Philly, she spent several summers playing in New Orleans with many well-respected jazz artists, including Ellis Marsalis, Wendell Brunious, Carl LeBlanc, Charmaine Neville, and Tonya Boyd-Cannon.

Vocalist and Temple alumna **Sara Williams** idolizes R&B queen Etta James, in addition to pop goddesses Linda Ronstadt and Karen Carpenter.

Bassist **Jacob Wright**, a graduate of the Community College of Philadelphia, is a follower of the towering bass giants Charles Mingus and Norristown native Jaco Pastorius.

Guitarist and Kutztown University alumnus **Dylan Langscheweger** is a native of Boothwyn, PA. He is a solid rock musician whose models include Sir Paul McCartney and John Mayer.

Professional engineer **Tom Monari** is a singer-songwriter living in Swarthmore, PA. He has performed in local bands for over three decades. In the early 2000s, Tom began exploring an interest in writing and performing his own original material in the local bands the Storefront Hitchcocks and the Butter Guns. In 2011, he started PhillyLocalIMPACTLive! – a regional organization with the purpose of providing a forum for local musicians to meet and collaborate through open mics. Since 2012 PhillyLocalIMPACTlive has initiated more than 10 open mics with the longest-running events at McGillin's in Philadelphia (since 2012) and Raven Lounge (since 2014). Focusing on development of artist talent and performance, PhillyLocalIMPACTlive! has provided a space and environment where many local musicians have honed their craft and moved on to fulltime careers as musicians.

Some Notes on **Danny Tobias and Friends**, scheduled for January

We cancelled last month's concert with regret, but the weather would not cooperate. Better safe than sorry. We hope to re-schedule Danny and friends in the future. In the meantime, here is some background on this excellent band of musicians:



Danny Tobias, a much sought-after musician, is frequently heard leading or performing with many traditional jazz and swing groups. He has worked with such jazz luminaries as Warren and Allan Vache, Harry Allen, Howard Alden, and many other jazz legends. Recently, Danny has been a leader (at Winnie's Jazz Bar in NYC), a featured artist (at Birdland in NYC with David Ostwald's Louis Armstrong Eternity Band), leader (at the Pennsylvania Jazz Society) and in Philadelphia, at Sassafras in Old City (appearing with Joe Plowman).

Randy Reinhart on trombone and (maybe) cornet is one of the most favored horn players in the early jazz tradition. He made jazz his profession at the age of 18 and became an ongoing substitute at Eddie Condon's on 54th street in 1973. He has played with some of the finest players on the New York scene. In the mid 1970's he began doubling on trombone while touring with Paul Lavalle's Band of America. Randy has played with Bucky Pizzarelli, Dan Barrett, Jake Hanna, Howard Alden, and Warren Vache; and right here at Tri-State we have seen Randy with Marty Grosz and Danny Tobias.



Jim Lawlor began playing drums after moving from Philadelphia to Atlantic City in 1979, just as the town was beginning its rise as the East Coast gambling mecca. Jim spent eight years in the Chris Sooy Swing Band, a very popular group that pre-dated the Neo-Swing movement by a decade. We could say he made his way to Tri-State Jazz when he was hired by Joe and Paul Midiri to play and sing in their small groups and big band. The rest is history – Jim makes frequent appearances before Tri-State audiences, with the Midiris, and with Danny Tobias.



Joe Plowman is a Philadelphia area bassist, with experience both broad and deep. As music director and bassist for Carsie Blanton, he has toured the country opening for acts such as Paul Simon, The Wood Brothers, The Weepies, and Joan Osborne. Joe has performed with Chelsea Reed and the Fair Weather Five, Marty Grosz (at the Mermaid in Chestnut Hill, among other venues), Milton, and the Grand Slam Trio; and with Danny at Sassafras in Old City, Philadelphia, as mentioned above.



Pat Mercuri – banjoist/guitarist – is one of the area's most active freelance jazz musicians. As a member of Jerry Rife's Rhythm Kings, the Midiri Brothers' and Ed Wise's bands, he plays for TSJS frequently. Pat has also performed with local big bands, including the ensemble of reed man/composer/arranger Andrew Neu. Along with his jazz concerts, travel, and recording with the Midiri Brothers, Pat engages in a wide range of performance activities, playing jazz, pop and classical music. Pat has been a regular with the Philadelphia Orchestra - now 53 years since his first engagement – called on to play a part for electric guitar in a new piece, "Leaves from Golden Notebook" by Stephen Albert. Much more followed; Pat has continued to perform in concerts and recordings under nearly 60 different conductors.

Other Jazz Happenings



PENNSYLVANIA JAZZ SOCIETY presents

Mardi Gras!

Sunday, February 15, 2026
2 – 4:30 pm

Congregation Brith Sholom
1190 W. Macada Road
Bethlehem PA 18017

\$15 admission
free admission for those who come to jam
More Information: 347-247-5214

Visit the Society's website at
<https://www.pajazzsociety.org/>



Potomac River Jazz Club Zoom Jazz Talk

The Palm Court Jazz Café Legacy w/Craig Klein
Monday, February 23, 2026 – 7:00 pm to 8:15 pm EST

The Palm Court Jazz Café was a New Orleans fine dining and traditional jazz institution for 35 years, and its heart lives on! It was one of the few New Orleans traditional jazz institutions that also offered fine dining. It offered live jazz 5 nights a week featuring the city's finest musicians. Learn more about the restaurant and jazz club and about the band that continues to honor the club's legacy - **The Palm Court Jazz Band**.

This on-line presentation is free (donations to defray production costs are appreciated) but you must advance register by 5pm EST the night of the talk. -- [Registration Link](#) -- Then, you'll get the Zoom link by email shortly before start time.



Concert Schedule

All Concerts on Sunday afternoon, 2:00 pm to 4:30 pm (unless otherwise noted)

2/22/2026 Haddonfield	Royce Martin – Piano Royce Martin – pianist, composer – has a rich musical background and an affinity for a myriad of genres. He worked as the in-house pianist and lecturer at the Scott Joplin State Historic Site between semesters at Berklee College of Music. And Royce has recorded an album of a dozen Joplin classics, reinterpreted in his own eclectic style. Royce also has composed original music for streaming documentaries.
3/15/2026 Wallingford	Manouche 5 Manouche 5, the Philadelphia based quintet, performs gypsy-jazz influenced standards and popular music similar to the original Hot Club of Paris. They've become a Tri-State favorite!
4/12/2026 Haddonfield	The Orleans Kids The Orleans Kids has evolved from a band that originated in the early 2010's in New Orleans. The band later relocated and formed anew; the Orleans Kids began to play at venues like the Boston Swing Central events, and the annual Roaring Twenties Lawn Party in Ipswich. And today, Tri-State Jazz presents the band for your enjoyment, under the leadership of Alex Owen.
5/31/2026 Wallingford	Rossano Sportiello Award-winning Italian jazz pianist Rossano Sportiello returns to Tri-State! He last appeared in September 2022. He brings his eclectic style of pianism that blends classical training with jazz and stride.
6/14/2026 Haddonfield	Larry Toft's Red Hot Ramblers The Red Hot Ramblers are an authentic 1920s jazz ensemble in every way. They exemplify red-hot syncopation, stompin' rhythms, and lyrical melodies associated with the Jazz Age. The repertoire can extend before and after the 1920s from the early years in Jazz, such as New Orleans Style and Ragtime, up to the swing era of the 1930s and 40s and even into the modern Second Line New Orleans parade style.
7/12/2026 Wallingford	The Tri-State All-Stars Jam The Tri-State All-Stars return! Our annual tradition offers a core band of top performers jamming together with guest musicians, on familiar trad jazz tunes. Guest musicians can pre-register, and even last-minute walk-ins may be accommodated, checking in the day of the concert.
8/23/2026 Haddonfield	Neville Dickie with Joe and Paul Midiri This Tri-State tradition continues! World-class British pianist Neville Dickie rejoins TSJS veterans Joe and Paul Midiri. Neville is among the most accomplished stride and boogie-woogie pianists on either side of the Atlantic. Joe and Paul Midiri, well-known to Tri-State audiences, have recorded with everything from trios to big bands.
9/27/2026 Wallingford	The Blackbird Society Orchestra The 11 to 12-piece Blackbird Society Orchestra has become one of Tri-State's favorites. The Tri-state area's Premier Authentic 1920's/1930's Jazz Band plays original arrangements of bands of the 1920s – 1930s.
10/18/2026 Haddonfield	Pete & Will Anderson with Adam Moezina Twin brothers Peter and Will Anderson have wowed TSJS audiences before with their reed mastery. This time they're bringing a friend – guitarist Adam Moezinia – with whom they've played a series of concerts around New York and beyond.
11/15/2026 Wallingford	Kris Tokarski – Piano New Orleans pianist Kris Tokarski offers a solo performance that is sure to feature legendary NOLA composers like Jelly Roll Morton and King Oliver.

THANK YOU TO OUR PREMIUM MEMBERS AND DONORS

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Tri-State Jazz Society depends on the generous contributions of members because basic membership dues and concert admission charges do not cover all costs. The board asks members to consider renewing their memberships at the Sponsor, Patron, or Sustainer level if they are able to do so.



*Features Now **ONLINE** on the
Tri-State Jazz Website*

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[CONCERT SCHEDULE](#)

Sundays from 2:00 to 4:30 pm

Visit our [Tri-State Jazz Society website](#) for up-to-the-minute news about schedule and concert changes

Our Hotline number is (908) 349-0162

Member admission is \$10; general admission is \$20.

Introductory offer — start a ***new, first-time*** TSJS annual membership (\$20) at the door and receive free admission to this concert (*not applicable to renewal or re-activation*)

Full-time students with ID, or children accompanied by a paying adult, are free.

Tri-State Jazz Society, formed in 1988, is dedicated to the preservation and live performance of traditional jazz. Concerts featuring leading professional soloists and bands are presented throughout the year. Events are open to the public and all who enjoy traditional jazz are invited to join. The society is a non-profit educational corporation supported by its members.

Membership

Basic dues are \$20 per person. New and renewal memberships can be started in any month and run for one year. In addition to half-price concert admissions, members receive ***The Strutter*** newsletter by email.

Premium memberships help sustain and expand the work of Tri-State Jazz Society. Individual Sponsors contribute at the \$50 level (\$70 for couples); Patrons, \$100 (\$120 for couples); Sustainers \$200 or more (\$220 or more for couples). Premium level members are eligible to attend an annual reception for Sponsors, Patrons and Sustainers.

*Visit our website for more details:
[New Member application](#)*

[Renew your membership](#) at the Sustainer, Patron, or Sponsor level. Dues and donations may be tax deductible under IRS Section 501(c)(3).

ADA compliance — access to our concert venues is available at grade level.

Restroom facilities are available at grade level.

Elevator access is available for the HUMC auditorium level.

Restroom facilities are available at the HUMC auditorium level.



Membership Form

Basic Dues:

Individual \$20

Couple \$40

Sponsor Dues:

Individual \$50

Couple \$70

Patron Dues:

Individual \$100

Couple \$120

Sustainer Dues:

Individual \$200 or more

Couple \$220 or more

Amount Enclosed \$ _____ **Date** _____ **Check No.** _____

Members are admitted to all regular concerts at half price. Memberships renewed prior to expiration start at the end of current membership; expired memberships start on receipt of payment. All memberships run for 12 months.

First and Last Name(s) _____

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Mail with check payable to Tri-State Jazz Society, Inc., P.O. Box 896, Mount Laurel, NJ 08054

TRI-STATE JAZZ SOCIETY, INC.

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