TRI-STATE JAZZ SOCIETY

The Strutter

VOLUME 37 NUMBER 5 | *Traditional Jazz in the Philadelphia Tri-State Area* | November 2026

Our Next Concert:

Kris Tokarski – Piano

November 15, 2026, Wallingford Community Arts Center



Photo credit: ***Drop Me Off In Harlem*** CD release

New Orleans pianist Kris Tokarski appears in a solo performance that is sure to feature legendary NOLA composers like Jelly Roll Morton and King Oliver. Originally from North Jersey, Kris has been a go-to pianist in the Crescent City for many years. He has appeared at many festivals and jazz cruises.

“He knows how to swing and stride — with both hands — and his playing is fluid, supple — never stiff. His accompaniment is the very definition of sweet teamwork, and his solos are full of surprises: you can’t tell where he is about to land, but it’s graceful and satisfying when he does.” – *Michael Steinman (Jazz Lives)*

Living in New Orleans, the "Cradle of Jazz" he embraced the early piano traditions of the city as well as those of the early New York and Chicago masters. A keen interest in the music of Jelly Roll Morton, James P. Johnson, Earl Hines and Teddy Wilson; combined with his bebop roots allowed Tokarski to develop an all-encompassing voice of his own, deeply rooted in the jazz piano tradition.

Tokarski also manages a busy schedule outside of New Orleans. He has performed at a number of major national and international festivals including the Umbria Winter Jazz Festival, The Montreal Jazz Fest, The New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, the French Quarter Fest, San Diego Jazz Fest, etc. He’s performed at world class venues such as Snug Harbor, Preservation Hall, The Green Mill, and The Jazz Corner. Kris has shared the stage and performed with Jason Marsalis, Duke Heitger, Evan Christopher, Tim Laughlin, Andy Schumm, Connie Jones, Hal Smith, and many others.

He has recorded on a number of records as a sideman and as a leader. While he is recognized largely by traditional jazz lovers, he has also recorded and toured in the realm of popular music with the “Squirrel Nut Zippers”.

Coming Soon:
The Midiri Brothers Sextet
January 10, 2026, Wallingford Community Arts Center



Photo credit: Marian Konop

TSJS veterans Joe and Paul Midiri present Joe Holt on piano, in addition to guitarist Pat Mercuri, bassist Jack Hegyi, and drummer Jim Lawlor for an afternoon of mostly swing. The Midiri Brothers draw largely on the music of Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, and the Dorsey Brothers, while Holt is inspired by such Swing Era keyboard legends as Teddy Wilson, Thomas "Fats" Waller, Art Tatum, and Jess Stacy.
Band Personnel: Joe Midiri – Reeds; Paul Midiri – Vibes; Joe Holt – Piano; Pat Mercuri – Guitar; Jack Hegyi – Bass; Jim Lawlor – Drums

Joe and Paul Midiri have made both jazz and classical music the focus of their lives since they graduated from Glassboro State College (now Rowan University) in the mid-1980s. With Joe on clarinet and saxophone, and Paul on vibraphone, xylophone, marimba, drums and trombone, they have recorded with everything from trios to big bands featuring the arrangements of Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw and the Dorsey Brothers, as well as Paul's original arrangements and compositions.

TSJS audience regulars will recall that the Midiris accompany the celebrated British pianist Neville Dickie in their TSJS annual trio concerts. After nearly a decade of Philadelphia, New York, and Atlantic City gigs, the Midiris also have been featured at many California and West Coast festivals including the Mammoth Lakes Jazz Festival, the Monterey Jazz Festival, the Pismo Jubilee By The Sea Jazz Fest, the Redwood Coast Music Fest, and the Sun Valley Swing-n-Dixie Jazz Jubilee. They have also performed at the Great Connecticut Jazz Festival and the North Carolina Jazz Festival, as well as at countless jazz clubs coast-to-coast. They are crowd favorites at the Bickford Theatre in Morristown, at Ocean County College and at venues throughout the Philadelphia area.

Best known for his imaginative improvisations and a joy of performing, pianist Joe Holt is another TSJS favorite, employing his artistry for the connections that music makes and a shared experience with his audiences. Joe's performances reflect the influences of both the classical and jazz worlds and the joy in the moment. He performs extensively in the Mid-Atlantic region of the U.S. as a soloist, as well as with established vocalists and jazz groups, and his own trio.

Banjoist/guitarist Pat Mercuri 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, including TSJS All-Stars Concerts. Pat has also performed with local big bands, including the ensemble of reed man/composer/arranger Andrew Neu.

Jack Hegyi's career on both electric and upright acoustic bass has taken him throughout the globe and included three decades on the Atlantic City scene. He has also been a member of pianist Eric Mintel's quartet for the last decade.

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. His primary teacher was Chris Columbo, former drummer with Louis Jordan's Tympani Five and father of Count Basie drumming legend Sonny Payne. Jim spent eight years in the Chris Sooy Swing Band, a very popular group that pre-dated the Neo-Swing movement by a decade. He was then hired by Joe and Paul Midiri to play and sing in their small groups and big band. When the Midiri ensemble landed on the festival circuit, it gave Jim a chance to travel and perform around the USA.

The Anderson Brothers Play George Gershwin - with Adam Moezinia

October 18, 2026 at the Haddonfield United Methodist Church

Review by Bill Hoffman - Photos: TSJS video



There's an adage in show business, "Always leave 'em wanting more." That certainly applied to our October 18 concert with reed men Will and Peter Anderson and guitarist Adam Moezinia. And not just because it ended a few minutes early.

The twin brothers have played for us before with their own larger group—in 2015 and 2019—as well as individually as sidemen in other bands. But this was their first time with guitarist Adam Moezinia rounding out their trio. I first heard this group about two years ago at the New Jersey Jazz Society and knew then I wanted to bring them to Tri-State. Their being in great demand, I basically had to take a ticket and get in line.



About Adam: he is fluent in a variety of genres, leads the Folk Element Trio, and has played with Nat King Cole's brother Freddy. Like the twins, he is a graduate of Juilliard and has been in New York for about a dozen years.

The brothers have created several shows featuring great American composers. George Gershwin was their choice this time, a composer whose work lends itself well to a trio. They also have done shows highlighting Irving Berlin's and Cole Porter's music and that of clarinetists Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw. By the time you read this (I hope you're reading it!), I will have seen their tribute to both of these reed men and others at New York City venues such as Birdland, Symphony Space and 59E59



The concert opened with "I Got Rhythm" that featured an extended solo by Adam, who was making his first TSJS appearance. You only get one chance to make a first impression, and Adam made the grade. His second, third, and later impressions were equally great.

Before going further, I should identify the instruments the brothers played. Will was on clarinet, alto sax and flute, while Peter held down the clarinet and tenor and soprano saxes. His soprano was a straight instrument; there are others shaped like an alto sax but smaller, such as played by Bob Rawlins. Both brothers' saxes date from the 50s, as does Adam's guitar. Apparently, saxes, and perhaps other reeds, horns and strings, are like fine wine—their sound improves with age. Therefore, it's no surprise that many top musicians play vintage instruments, and not because they can't afford new ones.



The first set continued with "It Ain't Necessarily So" with a virtuosic clarinet solo by Will. Other tunes in that set were "Oh, Lady Be Good," "Someone to Watch Over Me," "They Can't Take That Away From Me," a condensed version of "Rhapsody in Blue" with Will taking the opening clarinet glissando, a hauntingly beautiful "Summertime," and finally, "Strike Up the Band."

In the slightly shortened second set we were treated to “Love Walked In,” “But Not for Me” featuring a bossa nova tinge from Adam, “I Loves You Porgy” from Porgy and Bess, “Fascinatin’ Rhythm, one of George’s earliest works from about 1922, “A Foggy Day” (introduced by Fred Astaire in Damsel in Distress), Gershwin’s last piece, with posthumous lyrics added by brother Ira “Love Is Here to Stay,” and the finale, an extended “S’Wonderful.”

Throughout the concert, it was interesting to watch how subtle body language was their communication tool between and among each other. The slightest glance or nod was the only cue one of the three needed to take a solo, change key, and whatever else they do to keep the music lively. I have known Will and Peter since their days at Juilliard (they graduated around 2009) and have watched their careers grow. Despite their musical mastery, they remain personable and humble. I am always proud to hire them at Tri-State.

Watch the concert! Click HERE for our YouTube channel post!

Other Jazz Happenings



PENNSYLVANIA JAZZ SOCIETY PRESENTS

Coming in November

JAM SESSION
With the PJS Core Band
Sunday, November 8, 2026, 2 - 4:30 pm

Congregation Brith Sholom
1190 W. Macada Road
Bethlehem PA 18017

Snacks and beverages available by donation,
Please do not bring food or beverage with you

Admission Fee: $15
FREE ADMISSION FOR THOSE WHO COME TO JAM
Students Admitted Free
Pay at the Door –
No advance sales; Cash or Check Only

All Jazz Musicians and Vocalists are Invited
to sit in with the Core Band
A Steinway Grand piano, electric bass and sheet music available to jammers

More Information: 347-247-5214
Visit the Society’s website at
https://www.pajazzsociety.org/





Potomac River Jazz Club Zoom Jazz Talk
Cradles of Jazz
with John McCusker
November 16, 2026 – 7 pm – 8:30 pm

Combining photography with evocative narrative, this project documents the places where early jazz took shape. It explores surviving sites associated with pioneering musicians, including Buddy Bolden, Kid Ory, Jelly Roll Morton, King Oliver, and Louis Armstrong. John McCusker’s photographs are accompanied with essays by Lolis Eric Elie.

Register by 5:00 p.m. the day of the talk
to receive the Zoom link.
Although all of our Jazz Talks are FREE, we appreciate donations to offset the cost of the program.

click
Registration

Or click this link
https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2003862134587

Or, go to the PRJC website at https://prjc.org/ for more information.

Concert Schedule

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

11/15/2026 Wallingford	**Kris Tokarski – Piano** Living in New Orleans, the "Cradle of Jazz", Kris embraced the early piano traditions of the city as well as those of the early New York and Chicago masters. A keen interest in the music of Jelly Roll Morton, James P. Johnson, Earl Hines and Teddy Wilson – combined with his bebop roots – allowed Tokarski to develop an all-encompassing voice of his own, deeply rooted in the jazz piano tradition.
1/10/2027 Wallingford	**The Midiri Brothers Sextet** The Midiri Brothers return with their sextet to Wallingford today. The Midiris have delighted swing dancers and been acclaimed by critics at jazz festivals throughout the country for many years. They have recorded with groups ranging from trios to big bands – featuring the arrangements of Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw and the Dorsey Brothers.
2/21/2027 Haddonfield	**Miss Maybell and her Ragtime Romeos** Miss Maybell (Lauren Sansaricq) and Charlie Judkins – with the Ragtime Romeos – play a large repertoire of early Jazz, Ragtime and Blues from the 1890's - 1920's. They source their tunes from dusty old 78 records and antique sheet music, giving new life to songs created over 100 years ago!
3/14/2027 Wallingford	**Danny Tobias and Friends** Get ready for "an oasis of joy!" (in the words of our reviewer after Dan's last appearance). Dan last brought his friends to Tri-State in June 2024; today we see the return of Dan leading and playing trumpet, with Dan Block on reeds, Pat Mercuri on guitar and banjo, Joe Plowman on bass and Jim Lawlor on drums.
4/18/2027 Haddonfield	**The Sleep Chasers** Gavin Rice has assembled this great band, with some of New York's finest trad-jazz (or any kind of jazz!) performers in this premier appearance for our Tri-State audience.
5/23/2027 Wallingford	**Glenn Crytzer Quartet** Glenn Crytzer returns with his Quartet to Tri-State, playing music from the Jazz Age and the Swing Era - "Vintage American Jazz". Glenn draws on the broad repertoire of styles of jazz that were performed prior to World War II. This includes the earliest jazz from New Orleans around the turn of the 20th century, and the styles that were part of the gradual morphing into the "hot jazz" style played by the dance orchestras (early big bands) and combos of the 1920s.
6/13/2027 Haddonfield	**Neville Dickie with Danny Coots and Dan Levinson** Neville Dickie, top stride/boogie-woogie pianist from Surrey England is joined by Danny Coots, Grammy award winning drummer, and Tri-State favorite Dan Levinson on reeds, for a concert of traditional jazz. Think Fats Waller, James P. Johnson, Louis Armstrong, Art Tatum, Earl Hines, and more!!
7/11/2027 Wallingford	**The Lovestruck Balladeers** **The Lovestruck Balladeers** enchant audiences with their masterful performances and inspired repertoire of ragtime, jazz and beautiful songs from around the world. Their repertoire is a rare collection of American and international music seldom heard beyond the walls of low-lit dance halls at the edge of the known world.
8/15/2027 Haddonfield	**The Tri-State Jazz All-Stars traditional jazz jam** A beloved Tri-State tradition returns with the All-Stars Jam! Amateur or professional musicians from our community are invited to sit in for a song or two with our core band.

THANK YOU TO OUR PREMIUM MEMBERS AND DONORS

SUSTAINERS **$200 for individuals $220 for couples**

Sanford Catz
William N. Hoffman
Richard & Peggy Hughlett
Amy Galer & Chris Jones
Robert and Sandra Lowe
DeWitt Peterson
Jazz Bo Jay & Orinda Lou Schultz
Natalie Sturr
Elizabeth Hazard & Ken Wright

PATRONS **$100 for individuals $120 for couples**

Gary Coller
Michael G. Galan
Bruce Gast
Bob Kreitz
Arnhard Kuhk
Sheila Larson
Michael & Katherine Perloff
Sharon Cottrell & Andrew Pleninger
Mark Raymond
Peter & Susan Reichlin
Scott Ricketts
Adam Rogers
Sylvia Rosenberg
Adam & Vivien Seyhan
Constance & Donald Windus

SPONSORS **$50 for individuals $70 for couples**

Joel Albert
Charles Haggerty & Sarah Burke
Gim Burton
Gary Cornelius
Joe M.T.Glass
Estherose Heyman
Roger W. Jacobs
Evgueni Kadossov
Peggy de Prophetis & Louis Kaplan
Susan Miller
Michael Olderman
Nancy Pontone & Steve Peitzman
Scott & Gail Ruehr

SPECIAL MENTION — DONATIONS — High Value, Frequent Donations, Recurring Donations

Gary Coller
Scott Ruehr

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.

The Tri-State Jazz Society Officers and Board of Directors – effective July 1 2026 to June 30 2027

Bill Hoffman (2029) – President
Chris Jones (2027) – Vice President
Bob Lowe (2028) – Treasurer
Joe Bullock (2027) – Secretary
Chic Bach (2028)
Ed Bohrer (2029)
Sandy Catz (2028)
Andy Pleninger (2027)
Mark Raymond (2029)
Robert Robbins (2027)

Features Now ONLINE on the Tri-State Jazz Website:

Tri-State Jazz Society Contact Information

Online Membership Enrollment and Renewal

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

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

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) _____

Street_____

City_____State_____Zip_____

Phone (_____)_____ E—mail _____

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

TRI-STATE JAZZ SOCIETY, INC.
P.O. BOX 896
MOUNT LAUREL, NJ 08054