## CHUCHO VALDÉS JOE LOVANO QUINTET

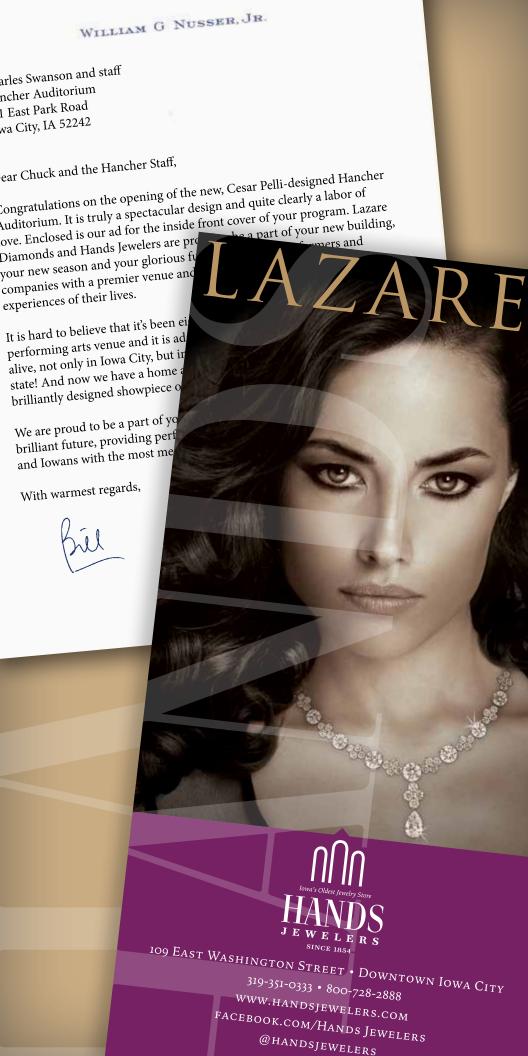
Friday, November 11, 2016, 7:30 pm



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### CHUCHO VALDÉS JOE LOVANO QUINTET

Chucho Valdés piano
Joe Lovano saxophone
Yaroldy Abreu Robles percussion
Gaston Joya bass
Francisco Mela drums

Program will be announced from the stage

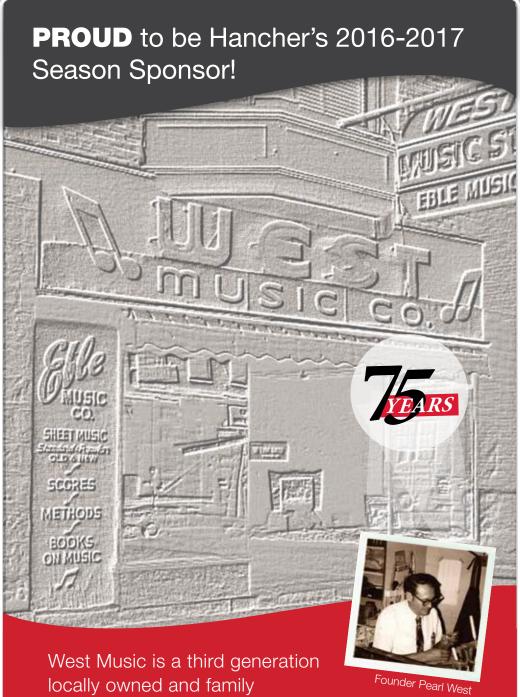
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### ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Two artists who exemplify the standards for creativity and exploration at the venerable Blue Note Records come together for the first time in the **Chucho Valdés Joe Lovano Quintet**. Pianist Chucho Valdés, who first appeared on Blue Note in 1985, has been a key figure in the evolution of Afro-Cuban jazz for the past 50 years while saxophonist Joe Lovano, who started at that label in 1990, has recorded more albums on Blue Note than any other artist. Both fearless innovators at the forefront of artistic expression, this collaboration expands their shared quest for the leading edge in jazz expression. The promise of combined greatness, anticipated for over twenty years, will deliver beyond expectations in a quintet backed by a bassist, drummer, and percussionist who rank among Cuba's hottest and most seasoned instrumentalists.

### CHUCHO VALDÉS

Winner of five Grammy Awards and three Latin Grammy Awards, the Cuban pianist, composer, arranger, and bandleader **Chucho Valdés** has been a key figure in the evolution of Afro-Cuban jazz for the past 50 years. His musical education included formal studies and countless nights on the best stages in Cuba as the pianist with his father, Bebo Valdés, and his orchestra



Photo: Rick Swig

Sabor de Cuba, and also the seminal Orquesta Cubana de Música Moderna.

At the age of three, Chucho already played at the piano, using both hands, in any key, melodies he heard on the radio. In fact, there is a famous anecdote that tells the story of Bebo tricking his friend, the late Israel "Cachao" López, about checking out, with his back to the player, "a young North American pianist." Chucho was then four years old.

At the age of five, Chucho began to take lessons on piano, theory, and solfege with maestro Oscar Muñoz Bouffartique. He continued his studies at the Conservatorio Municipal de Música de la Habana, from which he graduated at 14. At home Chucho listened to the music of Ellington, Count Basie, and Glenn Miller. Because Bebo was the piano player at the Tropicana, Chucho could see live jazz performances by Nat King Cole, Erroll Garner, and Sarah Vaughan when he was a child studying music.

Chucho's family and professional life took a dramatic turn in 1960 when his father left to work in Mexico and from there moved to Europe, where he eventually settled. Bebo Valdés never returned to Cuba. Father and son saw each other again 18 years later at Carnegie Hall, where Chucho was debuting in the United States with his group Irakere. The relationship was fully restored in 2000 when they met again to play a duet on Calle 54, a film about Latin jazz by Oscar winning Spanish director Fernando Trueba. The father and son reunion culminated, musically, in *Juntos Para Siempre*, a 2007 duet recording that won both a Grammy and a Latin Grammy.

In the early 1970s, Chucho distilled his childhood musical experiences and influences into the foundation of Irakere, an ensemble that marked a before and after in Afro-Cuban jazz. Irakere first made its mark internationally in

Finland in 1976, and the following year the band was discovered by Dizzy Gillespie in a visit to Havana on a jazz cruise. In 1978, the producer Bruce Lundvall, then president of CBS, signed the band to the CBS label. Irakere debuted, unannounced, as "surprise guests," at Carnegie Hall as part of the Newport Jazz Festival. As fate would have it, the program that night also featured pianists Bill Evans and McCoy Tyner, two of Chucho's main influences. Selections from Irakere's performances at Carnegie Hall and at the Montreux Jazz Festival composed the repertory of *Irakere* (CBS) their debut recording in the United States. The album won a Grammy as Best Latin Recording in 1979. The group went on to create an extraordinary body of work, and though Irakere's lineup went through many changes over the years, Chucho—as director, pianist, main composer, and arranger—remained as the one great constant for more than 30 years.

Since 2005, Chucho has focused on his personal career, highlighting his work as a pianist and leading small ensembles. His most recent recording, Border-Free, finds Chucho at the top of his game, leading his Afro-Cuban Messengers, a spectacular quintet composed of yet another generation of young brilliant Cuban musicians, in a search that transcends styles and traditions.

imnworld.com/chuchovaldes chucho-valdes.com

#### JOE LOVANO

From his Grammy-nominated symphonic work to his role as Gary Burton Chair of Jazz Performance at Berklee College of Music, **Joe Lovano** fearlessly challenges and pushes his conceptual and thematic ventures in a quest for new modes of artistic expression and new ways to define the jazz idiom. In 2014, Lovano won awards for Multi-reeds Player and



Photo: Jimmy Katz

Tenor Saxophonist of the Year from the Jazz Journalists Association and Tenor Saxophonist of the Year from *Down Beat Magazine*. He has released 23 celebrated albums on the Blue Note label, with the last three focusing on his quintet, Us Five.

Lovano was born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1952, and began playing alto saxophone as a child. A prophetic infant photo of Lovano shows him cradled in his mother's arms along with a saxophone. His father, tenor saxophonist Tony "Big T" Lovano, schooled Lovano not only in the basics, but in dynamics and interpretation, and regularly exposed him to live performances of international jazz artists such as Sonny Stitt, James Moody, Dizzy Gillespie, Gene Ammons, and Rahsaan Roland Kirk.

Upon graduation from high school, he attended the famed Berklee College of Music in Boston. Lovano's early professional gigs were as a sideman with organists Lonnie Smith and Brother Jack McDuff as well as a three-year tour with the Woody Herman Thundering Herd from 1976 to 1979.

After leaving Herman's band, Lovano settled in New York City where he eventually joined the Mel Lewis Orchestra for its regular Monday night concert at the Village Vanguard, playing from 1980 to 1992 and recording six albums with the orchestra.

Lovano joined the Paul Motian band in 1981 and has since worked and collaborated with John Scofield, Herbie Hancock, Elvin Jones, Charlie Haden, Carla Bley, Bobby Hutcherson, Billy Higgins, Dave Holland, Ed Blackwell, Michel Petrucciani, Lee Konitz, Abbey Lincoln, Tom Harrell, McCoy Tyner, Ornette Coleman, Jim Hall, Bob Brookmeyer, and many more.

Lovano has spent a good deal of time collaborating with two other premier tenor saxophonists of his generation, Dave Liebman and the late Michael Brecker, in the collective Saxophone Summit. In 2008, Lovano assumed the tenor saxophone chair of the touring and studio ensemble known as the SFJazz Collective. Also in the band were trumpeter Dave Douglas, trombonist Robin Eubanks, and fellow Blue Note Recording Artist vibraphonist Stefon Harris. They joined Miguel Zenón, Renee Rosnes, Matt Penman, and Eric Harland in this popular ensemble of some of today's most exciting jazz players.

Lovano's Grammy-nominated 2008 release *Symphonica* placed him in front of the world-renowned WDR Big Band and WDR Rundfunkorchester performing some of the saxophonist's most acclaimed and cherished compositions as arranged and conducted by Michael Abene.

As Ben Ratliff opined in the New York Times, "It's fair to say that [Lovano is] one of the greatest musicians in jazz history."

imnworld.com/joelovano joelovano.com





Setty Woodman (American, 1930–), Pillow Pitcher, 1989, Porcelain, 22 x 20 1/2 x 18 in. Gift of Joan E. Mannheimer, 1981, 223, ©Betty Woodman

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Funding for this exhibition was provided by the Gerald Eskin Ceramics Art Initiative



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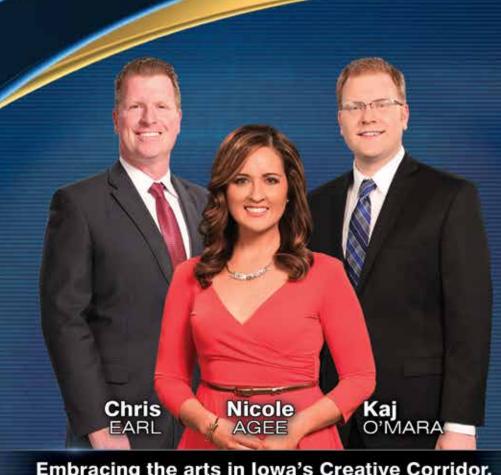
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