

# Timing is right for JazzFest

BY ROB VANSTONE, THE LEADER-POST APRIL 23, 2009

When asked about JazzFest Regina, Peter Champagne's response was emphatic and succinct.

"It's just time," Champagne, the Regina Jazz Society's artistic director, said of the Queen City's inaugural jazz festival.

JazzFest, which was announced at a media conference on Friday, is to be held June 26 to 28 in the downtown area.

The major acts will perform at the Regina Inn. There will also be free concerts onstage at the F.W. Hill Mall. Overall, JazzFest is to offer about 15 shows during the weekend.

"JazzFest Regina is intended to provide access to jazz music in a summer festival setting for those in the greater Regina area who are unable to travel to some of the great jazz festivals held in other locales throughout Canada," Champagne said in a prepared statement.

JazzFest Regina is being held independently of, but during, the 23rd annual SaskTel Saskatchewan Jazz Festival, which runs from June 26 to July 5.

"JazzFest Regina is not intended to compete in any way with the SaskTel Saskatchewan Jazz Festival held each year in Saskatoon," Champagne said. "In fact, we hope to be able to contribute to the success of all of our sister festivals in Western Canada by ensuring that JazzFest Regina will be one more annual festival on the Trans-Canada Highway that can help defray transportation expenses for all festivals."

The Saskatchewan Jazz Festival will stage concerts in Regina this year, as in the past. The Robin Nolan Trio, for example, is to perform June 29 at The Bushwakker.

An information sheet released by the Jazz Society indicates that an October meeting with a Saskatchewan Jazz Festival representative led to discussion about a Regina-based event. After the RJS requested more acts and a more active role in organizing Regina-based concerts, the representative of the provincial festival suggested that Regina consider staging its own festival.

Saskatchewan Jazz Festival data shows that only 15 per cent of its audience participation is from outside Saskatoon. As a result, the Saskatchewan festival is unlikely to be adversely affected by JazzFest Regina.

Thanks to an anonymous donation of \$15,000, JazzFest Regina has been able to book some headline acts in recent weeks. Mose Allison is to be the opening-night headliner. Hugh Fraser and the Vancouver Ensemble of Improvisation are to perform on June 28.

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Two Regina-born musicians are nominated for the National Jazz Awards. Ted Warren is up for best

drummer. Kelly Jefferson is among the choices for top saxophonist.

As well, Jodi Proznick -- who is married to Regina-born pianist Tilden Webb -- would be an excellent pick for top bassist. Proznick's father, David, is from Wynyard and the bassist's mother, Pat, is from Glenavon.

Until April 30, you can register to vote at [www.nationaljazzawards.com](http://www.nationaljazzawards.com). The awards are to be presented May 14 in Toronto. There is also a National Jazz Awards site on Facebook.

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BLUE NOTES: The Jazz Society's next concert is May 8, when vocalist Kate Hammett-Vaughan and guitarist Bill Coon will collaborate. Show time is 8:30 p.m., at Le Bistro (Ecole Monseigneur de Laval; 3850 Hillsdale St.). Tickets are \$15 (Jazz Society members) and \$20 (non-members). Students are admitted for half-price ... A gig by the Regina Jazz Society Student Big Band, originally scheduled for May 22, has been moved to June 5 ... The Bushwakker (2206 Dewdney Ave.) has live jazz Mondays, from 8 until 10:30 p.m. Admission is free.

- All That's Jazz appears every second Thursday. If you have a comment or information about a performance, contact Rob Vanstone by telephone (781-5216) or e-mail ([rvanstone@leaderpost.canwest.com](mailto:rvanstone@leaderpost.canwest.com))

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