



GO

DESTINATIONS

- ARTIST PROFILE
- FEATURE
- HOLE/WALL
- LOCAL MUSIC
- NEXT
- NIGHTLIFE
- PEOPLE/SCENE
- THEATER
- TWEETED/OVERHEARD
- ARCHIVES
- HOME

DESTINATIONS

A Day For Jazz



Music Meets Community at This Year's Lake Arbor Jazz Festival

By Tiffany Ellis Hudson

Kevin Alexander has lived and worked in Lake Arbor for 24 years. From his passion for the arts—jazz in particular—he formed the Prince George's Cultural Arts Foundation. Its primary purpose is to support, promote and develop the Lake Arbor Jazz Festival.

This year marks the second hosting for the 2011 Lake Arbor Jazz Festival (July 16) on the Lake Arbor Community Center Grounds in Mitchellville. Over 2,000 are expected to attend.

Artists such as Saxophonist Marcus Mitchell, Saborsa, The Groove Skool Band, violinist **Chelsey Green**, solo improvisational flautist Althea Reneé, Brian Lenair and a score of others. Although the festival is a day-long affair, the events start off with the Prince Georges County Jazz Youth Orchestra at 3 p.m. and performances will run through 10 p.m.

An avid jazz lover, Alexander solicited artists from local musician networks and larger jazz festivals such as the Capital Jazz Festival. The response was overwhelming.

The festival's main focus is to showcase local Prince George's talent.

"This county has a lot of talented local musicians," he said. "We wanted to establish a platform to showcase local talent in a community-type setting."

One exception to the rule is Houston-native flautist Althea Renee. Although, she's not from Prince George's, but attended college in the D.C. metro area.

The festival will also include food vendors, non-alcoholic beverages, moon bounce, skate mobile, face painting and will have various types of merchandisers.

One missing element of last year's festival, according to Alexander, included activities for teens. He initially planned to have a second stage for youth, but efforts fell through.

To remedy that, this year as part of the Department of Parks and Recreation Safe Summer program, this festival will

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host a poetry slam competition as well as other activities. The department is a major sponsor of the festival.

For those who desire a more intimate setting, "A Jazzy Evening with Marcus Johnson and Art Sherrod" VIP Reception and Performance will take place July 15 at the Radisson Hotel Largo in D.C.

"We picked musicians that we felt would go well with an intimate type of reception," he said.

The Prince George's Cultural Arts Foundation is a newly formed nonprofit. Alexander serves as the executive producer of the festival. Other members are Lisa Brown, Eric Liley, Eric Jackson, Kevin Harper, Charles Drain and Nadine Cid.

"Putting together this festival cannot be done by one or two people," Alexander said.

"We're not trying to compete with the larger festivals in the area. We want to showcase local talent and we want to have a place for Prince Georgians and the DC metro area to enjoy the jazz festival."

For more information about this year's festival, visit www.lakearborjazz.com or email info@lakearborjazz.com. Those interested in performing in future festivals, contact talent@lakearborjazz.com.

