HopePHL News

Lancaster Avenue Jazz & Arts Festival 20th Anniversary Edition

July 18, 2026



Lancaster Avenue Jazz & Arts Festival CELEBRATES 20TH SEASON by Honoring the Legacy of John Coltrane

The Lancaster Avenue Jazz & Arts Festival celebrates the legacy of John Coltane this year, as we near the 100th anniversary of his birthday. The event features West Philadelphia and jazz musicians with spectacular live performances, local vendors, fun children's activities, and delectable treats from food trucks on July 18 this year. The all-day event is free and open to the public, organized by HopePHL's community-based programs, The Producer's Guild of Philadelphia, Penn Presbyterian Medical Center, and a committee of community members, with technical assistance from Nu Millenium Productions.

"We are very excited to celebrate our 20th Jazz Festival by honoring jazz legend John Coltrane," said Kathy Desmond, HopePHL's President, "It's guaranteed to be the best festival yet, and an incredible day out for anyone in or near West Philadelphia."

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John Coltrane transformed jazz through his groundbreaking innovations in improvisation, harmony, and spiritual expression, creating a body of work that continues to influence generations of musicians and remains central to the jazz canon. For Philadelphia, Coltrane's legacy is deeply rooted in the city where he lived, studied, and developed his artistic voice; his Strawberry Mansion home is now being preserved as a cultural landmark celebrating Philadelphia's enduring impact on jazz history. HopePHL will continue the celebration of Coltrane there on September 18, with a "Birthday Jam," in partnership with The Yard at the Coltrane House and Strawberry Mansion CDC. HopePHL's Neighborhood Advisory Committee book club is featuring **Coltrane on Coltrane** this summer.





This year's headline act is Camille Thurman with the Darrell Green Quartet. Camille is an acclaimed jazz saxophonist, vocalist, composer, and musician (including the bass clarinet, flute, and piccolo) whose dynamic artistry blends virtuosic tenor saxophone playing with inventive vocals, earning recognition as one of the leading voices of contemporary jazz. Joined by drummer Darrell Green and his quartet, Thurman delivers powerful, tradition-rooted performances that showcase both artists' international experience, technical excellence, and commitment to advancing the legacy of jazz.



Crowd favorite Glenn Bryan & Friends will be joining us once again for this year's festival. Also joining us on stage will be Justin Bowden, Black Tie Entertainment: Equinox and Hines Creative Arts Initiative. All three of these acts will feature incredible youth jazz performers.

A special activity this year is **1776 Seconds: Philadelphia Illuminated**, a citywide storytelling and public engagement initiative presented by Creative Philadelphia as part of the nation's 250th anniversary. West Philadelphia residents are invited to reflect on their experience of the city and on Philadelphia's past, present, and future through the theme "Looking Back, Looking Ahead". Video interviews will take place in the Creative Philadelphia zone from 12pm to 2pm. The project culminates on August 4, 2026, with **Philadelphia Illuminated**, a citywide celebration and public gathering at City Hall featuring interviews that were taped over the summer.



"Celebrating the community with this festival is a high point of our calendar every year," said Bernadine Hawes, HopePHL Community Development Corporation Board Chair, "We are grateful to our planning committee, partners, and sponsors for all of their support."



This year's sponsors include: Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Creative Philadelphia, Vanguard, Xfinity, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, Plenary Infrastructure Philadelphia, Iron Stone Real Estate Partners, Penn Live Arts, Aramark, North American Medical Associates, Lincoln Financial, Ballard Spahr LLP, Mill Creek Community Partnership, Brown & Brown, Jefferson Health Plans, and Sunshine Food Market. This project was financed in part by a grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Community and Economic Development.

Stay informed about exciting activities happening at the Festival and upcoming events by visiting www.bit.ly/LancAveJazz, and following us on social media!



Freedom Now Fest Celebrates The Anniversary of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Inspiring 1965 Freedom Now Rally Speech at 40th and Lancaster in Philadelphia

38TH T0 40TH & LANCASTER AVE. PHILA PA Sunday August 2 2026 1:OOPM To 6:00PM

Free and Open to the Public

The Freedom Now Fest, now in its second year, is rooted in one of the most significant civil rights moments in Philadelphia and United States history. On August 3, 1965, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. stood at the intersection of 40th Street and Lancaster Avenue and addressed a crowd of more than 10,000 people as part of his national "Freedom Now" tour. The rally brought King's message of justice, voting rights, and economic opportunity directly into Northern Black communities, helping unite local and national civil rights efforts at a pivotal moment just days before the signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Today, the site is commemorated with a historical marker, public art, and community remembrance activities that preserve its enduring legacy.

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What began as a grassroots wreath-laying commemoration, rally, and march has evolved into Freedom Now Fest, an annual celebration of Black history, culture, resilience, and community on the very avenue where history was made more than 60 years ago. Hosted along Lancaster Avenue between 38th and 40th Streets in West Philadelphia, the festival honors King's historic speech while amplifying the voices, creativity, and entrepreneurship that continue to shape the neighborhood. Organizers describe the event as both a tribute to the past and a call to continue the ongoing work of freedom, justice, and community empowerment. The planning committee includes community members and representatives from La Pearl Beauty Emporium, The Silk Tent-Ultra Silk Gallery, Plant & People, Kanvas Event Center, LA21 Community Development Corporation, and HopePHL. The project's sponsors include Northmarq, Penn Community Bank, and Plant & People (as of this writing 7/2/26).

The 2026 Freedom Now Fest promises to transform Lancaster Avenue into a vibrant corridor of music, movement, art, food, and collective remembrance. Festivalgoers can look forward to live performances by musicians, DJs, and spoken-word artists; a curated marketplace featuring Black-owned businesses and community organizations; diverse food vendors; public art installations and gallery experiences; children's activity area; film screenings; oral history activations; and wellness-centered programming designed to foster connection and healing.

Families, students, history enthusiasts, and longtime residents alike will find opportunities to engage with both the neighborhood's rich heritage and its dynamic future. Youth activities, intergenerational programming, the Freedom Now Rally historical marker, and the Lancaster Avenue Living Legacy Bell exhibition will further connect visitors to the stories that shaped West Philadelphia and the United States. As America continues to reflect on the legacy of the civil rights movement, Freedom Now Fest 2026 stands poised to be one of Philadelphia's most meaningful and inspiring cultural gatherings—a place where history is remembered, community is celebrated, and the spirit of freedom continues to thrive.

For more information visit www.freedomnowfest.com

We've Been Nominated!!

WE'VE BEEN NOMINATED
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2026

We are so excited to be nominated in Metro Philly's Best 2026 contest! Our Lancaster Avenue Jazz & Arts Festival has been nominated for Best Annual Event/Festival.

You can vote once a day until August 31st! Thank you for being part of our community and for your support!

Scan to VOTE

Vote at bit.ly/BestPhillyFest

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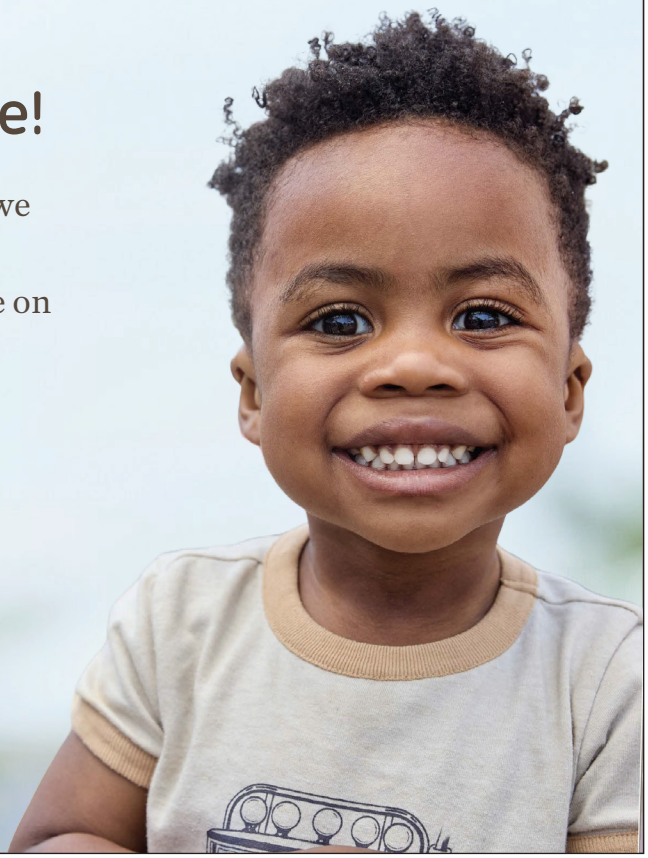
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Here's to fun festivals and futures full of hope!

Living in a community is a lot like jazz. When we all come together and play our part, we make something beautiful that we could never make on our own. We are proud to support this year's HopePHL Jazz & Arts Festival. Thank you for playing your part for kids like Vincent!

Vincent, 2, is all smiles at a CHOP event



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★ 1776 SECONDS ★

PHILADELPHIA ILLUMINATED

LOOKING BACK. LOOKING AHEAD.

A citywide public art and storytelling initiative celebrating the 250th anniversary of the United States and Philadelphia's historic role.

WHAT IS 1776 SECONDS?

Throughout June and July, artists, cultural organizations, and community groups are presenting creative activations across all ten Philadelphia City Council districts.

These activations invite residents to reflect on Philadelphia's past, celebrate the city today, and imagine its future.

WHY 1776 SECONDS?

Each Philadelphia Illuminated activation lasts exactly 1,776 seconds — 29 minutes and 36 seconds — in recognition of the year 1776.

1,776 SECONDS = 29 MINUTES 36 SECONDS

To allow more community members to participate, each activation is presented twice within a two-hour period.

If you miss the first presentation, you'll have another chance to experience it later.

LOOKING BACK. LOOKING AHEAD.

Artists and community members are exploring questions such as:

- What stories about Philadelphia should we remember?
- What does freedom mean in Philadelphia today?
- What do we hope future generations inherit from our city?

Stories, images, and creative contributions collected throughout the summer will become part of a citywide celebration.

EXPLORE PHILADELPHIA

Discover art, performances, exhibitions, installations, and community experiences happening across the city all summer long.

Visit activations in all ten Council districts | Explore public art and featured locations | Learn about participating artists and organizations | Take the Philadelphia Illuminated Challenge and discover more of our city | Follow the citywide journey and share your story

AUGUST 4, 2026 | 7:30 PM – 9:30 PM

★ PHILADELPHIA CITY HALL ★

Philadelphia Illuminated brings together voices, stories, images, and artistic contributions gathered from neighborhoods across the city.

THE COMMUNITY HELPS LIGHT UP CITY HALL.

COMMUNITY STORYTELLING | LIVE PERFORMANCES | PROJECTIONS & VISUAL EXPERIENCES | PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

GET INVOLVED

Sign up at today's booth to receive project updates and event information!

Learn more at phila.gov/arts

Creative Philadelphia | PHILADELPHIA 250 | 1776 SECONDS: PHILADELPHIA ILLUMINATED LOOKING BACK. LOOKING AHEAD.

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We are proud to sponsor the **Lancaster Avenue Jazz & Arts Festival**, hosted by HopePHL. Building healthier communities means celebrating the culture, creativity, and connections that help us thrive.

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JAZZ
26/27 SEASON

OCT 2	Michael Mayo
OCT 30	Arun Ramamurthy Trio & Rudresh Mahanthappa Hero Trio
NOV 22	Louis Cato
DEC 6	Isaiah J. Thompson A Guaraldi Holiday
FEB 5	Branford Marsalis & Dianne Reeves Celebrate John Coltrane
MAR 18	Endea Owens & The Cookout
APR 11	Sarah Elizabeth Charles

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20th Anniversary Edition

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