



13-YEAR-OLD JAZZ PIANO PRODIGY JOEY ALEXANDER PLAYS JORGENSEN

Thurs, Dec 1, 2016 at 7:30 pm

13-year old Bali-born piano prodigy Joey Alexander puts his astonishing keyboard talents and improvisational skills on display Thursday evening, December 1 when The Joey Alexander Trio visits UConn's Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts, part of the musician's 29-city tour in support of his newly released album, *Countdown*. The youngest artist to ever be nominated for a Grammy Award in the jazz category, Alexander and his sidemen will treat their Jorgensen audience to a mix of original compositions and reinvented classics from jazz legends like Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane, Billy Strayhorn, Wynton Marsalis, Herbie Hancock, and more. Doors open at 7:00 pm. Performance begins at 7:30 pm.

Born on June 25, 2003 on the island of Bali, pianist Joey Alexander originally learned about jazz from his dad, who exposed his son to a variety of classic albums from his extensive collection. At the age of six, Alexander began teaching himself to play piano using a mini electronic keyboard and was immediately able to pick out the melody of Monk's "Well, You Needn't".

"My father went to the piano and showed me some basic cords for the song. Then I went to the piano and followed Monk's tune note-by-note" says Alexander. "I listened to all of his songs and then played them. I never took lessons that much."

Alexander's musicianship and grasp of jazz fundamentals developed at a remarkable pace, and at age eight UNESCO invited him to play solo piano for an elated Herbie Hancock during the piano great's visit to Indonesia. Alexander later remarked to Hancock, "You told me that you believed in me, and that was the day I decided to dedicate my childhood to jazz."

At nine, Alexander won the grand prize at the first Master-Jam Fest, an all-ages competition in Ukraine which included 200 competitors from 17 countries. By 10, he was performing at jazz festivals in both Jakarta and Copenhagen. An invitation from Wynton Marsalis led to his U.S. debut appearance at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Rose Hall in 2014 where he amazed the audience with his musicality, followed by appearances before the Jazz Foundation of America at the Apollo and the Arthur Ashe Learning Center at Gotham Hall.

Wishing to encourage Alexander's continued development, his parents sold the family business in Jakarta and relocated to the United States. Success did not arrive overnight, however. At first skeptical that an 11 year-old could drive substantial ticket sales and captivate discerning jazz audiences, promoters soon recognized Alexander's ability to absolutely delight audiences, despite the challenges associated with learning a new language. Alexander experienced a major stroke of luck when he received an invitation from impresario George Wein to perform at the prestigious Newport Jazz Festival. Alexander took full advantage of the opportunity and brought audiences to their feet with his playful musicality and keen sense of swing.

Over the past two years Alexander has been paying his dues and honing his craft: learning what it means to be a bandleader, keeping material fresh after repeated performances,

Quick Reference

Jazz Event

Joey Alexander Trio

Date

Thurs, Dec 1, 7:30 pm

Place

Jorgensen Center
for the Performing Arts
2132 Hillside Road
UConn campus, Storrs, CT

Tickets

\$36, \$32

Box Office

860.486.4226
Mon-Fri, 10 am-5 pm

The Box Office window is also open for walk-up ticket sales 90 minutes before showtime.

For Immediate Release

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JOEY ALEXANDER, continued

and seeking out sidemen who are also collaborators. Along the way, The Joey Alexander Trio has performed at well-known venues and major festivals across the United States and around the globe.

Media interest in Alexander has resulted in appearances and interviews for *The Today Show*, *60 Minutes*, CNN, and *The New York Times*, fueling a rare level of public notoriety for Alexander as a jazz musician, entirely unheard of for one his age.

His 2015 debut album for Motema Music, *My Favorite Things*, garnered two Grammy Award nominations for “Best Jazz Instrumental Album” and “Best Improvised Solo” for his performance of John Coltrane’s “Giant Steps”, making him the youngest jazz artist ever nominated for a Grammy. His performances on the 58th Annual Grammy Awards broadcast received standing ovations and brought his talent to the attention of music lovers everywhere.

Through all this Alexander has remained humble, focused on developing as a player and pursuing his growing interest in composing. His highly-anticipated just-released sophomore album *Countdown* showcases Alexander’s remarkable development as a contemporary jazz bandleader and promise as a composer. The young artist develops fresh takes on well-known tunes, combining them seamlessly with his own original compositions in a way which invites both new and seasoned listeners in, and reflects the true emotional heart and soul of his musical personality.

This year Jorgensen was voted Best College or University Performing Arts Center in the *Hartford Courant’s* CTNow, as well as *Connecticut Magazine’s* Best of Performing Arts Venues (College) for 2016. Established in December of 1955, Jorgensen has grown to become the largest college-based presenting program in New England. Each season Jorgensen enriches the lives of students, faculty, staff, and area residents with 30 to 35 diverse performances from nationally and internationally acclaimed artists and ensembles ranging from classical music to world music and dance, classical ballet and contemporary dance, comedy, family programming, and contemporary entertainment. Dedicated to University of Connecticut president Albert N. Jorgensen, Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts continues to follow his vision of the University as the state’s educational and cultural leader.

Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts is located at 2132 Hillside Road on the UConn campus in Storrs. Tickets are available now online. Prices are: Floor - \$36; Mezzanine - \$32; Students & Youth under 18 - all seats \$15.

For tickets and information, call the Box Office at 860.486.4226, Monday through Friday, 10 am - 5 pm, and 90 minutes prior to events, or order online at jorgensen.uconn.edu. Convenient \$5 event parking is available in the North Garage. Free parking is available in Lots 9, F, and L. For a detailed parking map, go to park.uconn.edu.

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