

# News Release

## ***Bird's Blindfold Test: A Jazz Listening Party* in conjunction with The Fifth Annual Charlie Parker™ Celebration**

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## **The Celebration of "Bird" in Kansas City Continues with multi-partner collaboration to include The Kansas City Jazz Orchestra, MOKAN Record Collectors, Westport Coffee House and Midnight Blue Jazz, LLC**

**What:** *Bird's Blindfold Test: A Jazz Listening Party*

**When:** August 20, 2018 | Bird's Blindfold "Test:" 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm | Jazz Showcase: 8:00-10:00 pm

**Where:** Westport Coffee House | 4010 Pennsylvania, Kansas City, MO

**Tickets/Info:** \$10 – Includes admission + a special *Bird's Blindfold Sandwich!* | Visit [www.charlieparkercelebration.com](http://www.charlieparkercelebration.com) for tickets.

The 5th Annual Kansas City Charlie Parker Celebration will again explore and recognize the legacy of one the most influential saxophonists and jazz icons to ever perform. The Celebration, a comprehensive Charlie Parker tribute, is recognized as the largest celebration of its kind in the world.

Parker was born in 1920 in Kansas City, Kan., and moved in 1927 to Kansas City, Mo. -- where jazz was flourishing, and the city was one of several ports instrumental in ushering in the musical improvisation style of Bebop, which Parker is identified with.

The 2018 Charlie Parker Celebration includes a mix of jazz venue showcase performances throughout the city as well as education, public programs and special events.

In collaboration with The Kansas City Jazz Orchestra, MOKAN Record Collectors, Westport Coffee House and Midnight Blue Jazz, LLC, this year's celebration will include a new "edutainment" program entitled *Bird's Blindfold Test: A Jazz Listening Party*. As the title suggests, the event will be in two parts. An engaging host-driven discussion & listening "test" with stories from audience members and the hosts linked to selected seminal Charlie Parker recordings played on site. Kansas City Jazz Orchestra Artistic Director **Clint Ashlock** notes that "this fun and provocative listening format - modeled after the popular Downbeat Blindfold Tests, should provide a riveting experience for jazz listeners of all levels." MOKAN Record Collectors Club Founder **Elmer Jackson** says, "the session offers educational and entertaining opportunities for collectors and others to offer insight about their profound connections to the music." The second part is the jazz party, which will feature the **Midnight Blue Jazz Quartet** and Friends in a jazz CD release concert. Entitled *2+2*, the CD features a lite motif rendition on the Charlie Parker standard "*Now's the Time*," among other compositions that pay musical homage to Bird's genius with a keen sense of inspiration to project collaborators **Greg Carroll** and **Michael Pagan**. Of special note is what venue owner **Tom Ptacek** and family are planning....a very special Bird's Blindfold sandwich to enjoy with a cold beverage of choice.

To RSVP and learn more about the event, visit [www.charlieparkercelebration.com](http://www.charlieparkercelebration.com). Due to limited seating, patrons are encouraged to RSVP by August 8<sup>th</sup>.

\*Charles Parker™ is a trademark of the Estate of Charles C. Parker, Jr.

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### **MORE ABOUT PARKER...**

Parker's early music lessons occurred in the KC public schools. He began playing alto sax at age 13 and worked occasionally with semi-professional groups before leaving school at age 15 and becoming a full-time musician. For the next four years he would perform primarily in KC with a variety of local blues and jazz groups. His craft was developed mostly through practical experience and listening to older jazz performers. He began traveling to other cities in the late 1930s. He joined Jay McShann's band, began touring, performed solo in many of McShann's recordings and soon prominence followed.

As part of the Charlie Parker Celebration, organizers have assembled a series of events that offer performance, education and of course, tributes. Visit [www.charlieparkercelebration.com](http://www.charlieparkercelebration.com) for more details and a complete listing of the 2018 Charlie Parker Celebration.

### ***Bird's Blindfold Test: A Jazz Listening Party***

#### *Meet The Hosts...*



#### **Clint Ashlock**

Kansas City Jazz Orchestra

Trumpeter/ composer /bandleader / educator **Clint Ashlock** grew up in the Kansas City area. An in-demand musician across various genres, Clint is a dedicated and tireless contributor to the scene. Alongside of his position as the Artistic Director and Conductor of the esteemed Kansas City Jazz Orchestra, he has performed with such luminaries as Aretha Franklin, the Temptations, Nicholas Payton and Natalie Cole, as well as being a mainstay on the local Kansas City performing circuit, most notably with his own groups (the quintet Forward, his "other" big band, New Jazz Order, and the singer/ songwriter/ bandleader Jessica Paige.



#### **Elmer Jackson**

MOKAN Record Collectors

**Elmer C. Jackson, III**, a Kansas City, Kansas native, and retired General Motors executive, is a jazz fan. He was exposed to jazz by hearing, and later listening, to his parents' recordings by Lester Young, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Johnny Hodges, Ben Webster, Sarah Vaughn, Ella Fitzgerald, Lorez Alexandria, the Nat King Cole Trio and many others. Following his jazz initiation, Elmer became an avid fan of the music and a collector of jazz recordings. His preferred jazz styles are bebop, hard bop, modal, soul jazz (Hammond B-3), but to quote Louis Armstrong: "There's only two ways to sum up music; either it's good or it's bad. If it's good, you don't mess about it, you just enjoy it." So that's what he does, he enjoys it. Elmer was president of the Michigan Jazz Records Collectors Club in Metropolitan Detroit, is working in consort with KC Jazz ALIVE to form the MOKAN Record Collectors Club and served as a board director of the American Jazz Museum for nine years - three of which he served as chairman. In addition to Charlie Parker's music, Elmer's more personal connection to "Bird" is the social relationship he had with Leon Parker, Charlie's son, during the 1960's.

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## ***Bird's Blindfold Test: A Jazz Listening Party***

*Meet The Artists...*



### ***Greg Carroll, Vibes & Percussion – Midnight Blue Jazz Quartet***

**Gregory A. Carroll** is the President & Founder of *Midnight Blue Jazz, LLC* – a global jazz & executive consultancy providing creative, scholarly and strategic services. Previous positions include: CEO of the American Jazz Museum; Director of Education, International Association for Jazz Education, and; Director of Jazz Studies, University of Colorado – Boulder. He is highly active as an award-winning clinician, guest artist, scholar, and has more than 22 recording projects to his credit including his own celebrated project entitled, *Shavewo*.



### ***Michael Pagán, Piano – Midnight Blue Jazz Quartet***

**Dr. Michael Pagán** is currently an associate professor at Ottawa University in Ottawa, KS, where he directs *Bravo*, the Ottawa University Jazz Singers and teaches applied jazz piano. He also performs in the Ottawa University faculty jazz sextet. Previous posts include positions at the American Jazz Museum, Unity Village Chapel, University of Missouri Kansas City, University of Colorado at Boulder and the University of Minnesota, Duluth. Michael Pagán has led a distinguished career as a jazz ensemble conductor, clinician, and noted performer.



### ***Jeffery Utter, Bass – Midnight Blue Jazz Quartet***

**Dr. Jeffery Utter** is currently adjunct faculty at Washburn University and Kansas State Universities. Jeffery is active in the Topeka and Kansas City areas where he plays with various groups. Jeffery has had the fortune to perform with many great musicians including Darcy Hepner, Kurt Elling, Bob Mintzer, and others. He has held teaching positions at Doane College and Nebraska Wesleyan.



### ***Marty Morrison, Drums – Midnight Blue Jazz Quartet***

**Marty Morrison** is currently on the Jazz Studies faculty at Missouri State University in Springfield, MO. Having been exposed to music at a very young age through his father, his journey has included collaborations with countless jazz luminaries, most notably on the east coast. He performs extensively in Kansas City and St. Louis and holds degrees from Southern Illinois University.

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The Charlie Parker Celebration is presented by **Kansas City Jazz Alive**. The mission of KC Jazz Alive is to build awareness, serve as a listening body, provide a platform for integrating ideas, function as a voice, provide exposure to resources, and unite the Kansas City jazz community. As a catalyst organization - supporting artists, enthusiasts and venue owners, we strive to “raise the tide that lifts all jazz boats.” Visit [www.kcjazzalive.org](http://www.kcjazzalive.org) | [www.charlieparkercelebration.com](http://www.charlieparkercelebration.com)



**The Kansas City Jazz Orchestra** is one of the nation’s preeminent big bands, performing classic and original repertoire in a variety of settings. With the beautiful Kauffman Center For The Performing Arts as a home base, KCJO’s concert season puts forth engaging themed shows ranging from Duke Ellington’s early works to brand-new reimaginings of pop music, “celebrating the past, and embracing the future.” In addition to the season, the orchestra plays a variety of concerts, dances, and festivals, engaging audiences from Kansas City, Missouri to Hannover, Germany, and beyond!



**Midnight Blue Jazz, LLC** is a transformative corporation providing seamless fusion of services for multiple sectors within the global jazz, education, non-profit, and corporate communities. Our mission is to celebrate jazz - its authenticity and genius, by delivering high quality products through creative, scholarly, and strategic services to enduring global jazz, education, non-profit, and corporate communities. Visit [www.midnightbluejazzkc.com](http://www.midnightbluejazzkc.com) | Facebook - @midnightbluejazzkc



A full-service Coffeehouse with an exceptional "black box" theatre located just below the coffeehouse. As an oasis in the middle of Westport’s "Entertainment District" in Kansas City, Missouri, **Westport Coffee House** features an establishment that provides Computer / Internet access with two high-speed Internet connections. On the lower level we feature theater, comedy, and music. Drinks are our specialty and Grilled panini Sandwiches and baking "by Pam" will always keep you coming back for more. Visit [www.westportcoffeehouse.com](http://www.westportcoffeehouse.com) | 816.756.3222

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