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**Jazz on the Chesapeake Festival to Pay Tribute to Charlie Byrd**

On Labor Day Weekend 2011, Jazz on the Chesapeake will present the second annual Monty Alexander Jazz Festival at the Avalon Theatre in Easton. In addition to performances by more than a dozen nationally and internationally known jazz artists, including Monty Alexander, the 2011 Festival will feature a tribute to the late Charlie Byrd, who thrilled mid-Atlantic audiences for decades with his jazz and classical guitar. Festival Artistic director and legendary jazz pianist, Monty Alexander accompanied Byrd on numerous occasions over the years, and wants to pay homage to their past association and to the guitarist's many accomplishments in jazz.

The Festival's tribute to Byrd will be held on Saturday, September 3, 2011 at 4 p.m., featuring multi-talented American jazz guitarist-composer-producer and international recording and touring artist Nate Najjar, collaborating with accomplished vibraphonist and drummer Chuck Redd and his ensemble. Najjar, who was heavily influenced by Charlie Byrd, has a distinct affinity for Jazz, Latin, Blues and Gospel stylings. Redd was a member of the Charlie Byrd Trio

and also the featured vibraphonist for the Mel Torme All-Star Jazz Quintet. The Monty Alexander Trio will round out the evening with a performance following the Byrd tribute on Saturday night at 8 p.m.

Chesapeake Chamber Music's Jazz Committee takes pride in the fact that the Festival gives Easton an opportunity to bring "emerging jazz artists" before appreciative audiences. The 2010 Monty Alexander Festival gave 18-year old Grace Kelly, an amazing alto saxophonist who is hailed as a rising star in the jazz world, a chance to feel the unbridled enthusiasm of the Festival's audience. On Friday, September 2 at 7 p.m. at the Avalon Theatre, trumpet player Dominick Farnacci and pianist Aaron Diehl, will perform as a duo, followed by the Grace Kelly Quintet. Farnacci, who opened for British rock stars Jamie Cullum and Jeff Beck at the famed O2 in London, has gained recognition from Quincy Jones who says of Dominick "this kid is 360 degrees!" Diehl, who has performed with the Wynton Marsalis Septet, is known for his interpretations of the music of Scott Joplin, "Jelly Roll" Morton, Art Tatum, Duke Ellington, and other masters.

In 2009, Chesapeake Chamber Music's Jazz Festival first edged onto Easton's cultural agenda with a single concert by Monty Alexander. In 2010, Alexander lent his name to the Festival and assumed the role of Artistic Director and the Festival grew to three events. Following the Festival, Jazz on the Chesapeake was formed as Chesapeake Chamber Music's program supporting jazz performance and promotion.

The Monty Alexander Jazz Festival is generously underwritten by Verizon, with additional support from numerous private sponsors. Tickets reservations can be secured now, however,

tickets officially go on sale July 15, 2011. For further information about Jazz on the Chesapeake, visit [ChesapeakeChamberMusic.org/jazz](http://ChesapeakeChamberMusic.org/jazz) or call the CCM office at 410-819-0380.

**CUTLINES:**

**Photo #1: Pictured is alto saxophonist Grace Kelly, a rising star in the jazz world who appeared at the 2010 Monty Alexander Jazz Festival. Kelly will return to play at the 2011 Jazz on the Chesapeake Festival.**

**Photo #2: Pictured is accomplished vibraphonist and drummer Chuck Redd and his ensemble, who will be collaborating with multi-talented American jazz guitarist-composer-producer and international recording and touring artist Nate Najar, in a tribute to the late Charlie Byrd at the upcoming 2011 Jazz on the Chesapeake Festival on September 2 -3, 2011 in Easton, MD.**

**Photo #3: Pictured is legendary jazz pianist, Monty Alexander, who lent his name to the Festival and who will perform at the 2011 Jazz on the Chesapeake Festival.**

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