All-State Ensemble and Choir Will Collaborate on John Legend's 'Ordinary People'

"It's an Intense Rehearsal Schedule, But I'm Sure the Kids Will Be Up to the Challenge"

Michael Philip Mossman

"Ordinary People", a ballad about an up-and-down romance, was released as the second single on John Legend's 2004 inaugural album, *Get Lifted* (G.O.O.D. Music/SonyUrban Music/Columbia). It became his signature song. On Friday evening, November 13, the New Jersey High School All-State Jazz Ensemble and Choir will perform Michael Philip Mossman's arrangement of it at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center as part of the TD James Moody Jazz Festival.

"This a rare opportunity to collaborate with both big band and jazz choir," said Mossman, a jazz trumpeter and Professor of Jazz at the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College. Mossman is Conductor of the All-State Jazz Ensemble, and "I just happened to have an arrangement of 'Ordinary People' I had done for a professional jazz choir and a German Youth Orchestra some years back."

The All-State Jazz Ensemble will also perform Mossman's arrangement of Dizzy Gillespie's "Con Alma" (Mossman played in Gillespie's band), Ray Bryant's "Cuban Fantasy", Toshiko Akiyoshi's "Long Yellow Road", and Thad Jones' "All My Yesterdays."

"Cuban Fantasy," said Mossman, "is a classic Afro-Cuban piece made famous by the Machito Orchestra. Playing with the Machito Orchesta was my first serious gig when I got to New York (in the early 1980s)."

Mossman played lead trumpet and solo trumpet in Akiyoshi's Jazz

Lori Lynch

Orchestra, and "It's amazing how many of my students haven't heard of her," he said. "Her contributions are very, very important. She's someone who really opened the door for a lot of young composers. She was not only a composer but a player. She played piano with Mingus, and she played at a time when it was really unusual for women. She played with some pretty salty guys, and she learned how to be a really tough bandleader."

Akiyoshi, who will turn 97 on December 12, was discovered in 1952 by Oscar Peterson when he was on a Jazz at the Philharmonic Tour in Japan. She moved to New York in 1959. Then, in 1972, she and her second husband, saxophonist/flutist Lew Tabackin, moved to Los Angeles and formed the Toshiko Akiyoshi Jazz Orchestra.

The All-State Jazz Choir will be conducted by Lori Lynch, Director of the University Chorus at Rowan University. She said the choir's performance will include "some terrific jazz vocal arrangements by arrangers that I really respect from the jazz repertoire." There will be two arrangements by the New York Voices' Darmon Meader: Sammy Fain and Irving Kahal's "I'll Be Seeing You" and "Smack Dab in the Middle," composed by Jesse Stone under the pseudonym, Charlie Calhoun.

"We're doing a Paris Rutherford arrangement of 'Green Dolphin Street" (Bronislaw Kaper/Ned Washington). His arrangements are just fantastic for vocal jazz. We'll also be singing an arrangement of 'God Bless the Child' (Billie Holiday/Arthur Herzog, Jr.) by Steve Zegree. A newer thing that's come out is 'From the Start' by the singer, Laufey. The arrangement is by Michele Weir; music and lyrics are by Laufey and Spencer Stewart. And, we'll be doing a fun piece called 'Stand Up and Make a Change', written by Ly Tartell and Greg Jasperse."

At the time of our interview, the choir had one rehearsal, with a second planned for the week of October 19. "Then, we have the three-day experience," Lynch said. "We have a rehearsal and performance in Atlantic City (at the New Jersey Edu-

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cation Association Convention) and then the following week at NJPAC. I'm very encouraged with the kids. They came in, having worked on the pieces on their own. It's an intense rehearsal schedule, but I'm sure the kids will be up to the challenge. I know it's a lot of music to learn in a very short amount of time, but I think they'll do a great job."

Lynch spent 33 years in the Roxbury Township School District as the Lead Teacher in Performing Arts and the Director of Choral Activities. She retired in 2017 and has been at Rowan for eight years. "I really enjoy teaching kids of all different levels," she said. "It's interesting teaching kids who are a little bit older. I'm working with a lot of student teachers who are getting ready to go into the music education field. I'm also working with the University Chorus where there are students from all

The All-State Ensemble and Choir will collaborate on Michael Philip Mossman's arrangement of "Ordinary People" from John Legend's debut album, *Get Lifted.*

different kinds of majors who are just really interested in keeping up their singing. They were very involved in the arts in their high schools. It's an interesting cross section."

Mossman rotates serving as Director of the Queens College Jazz Studies program with three other faculty members: alto saxophonist Antonio Hart, drummer Dennis Mackerel, and music theorist Mark Anson-Cartwright. "I also teach a 9 a.m. Jazz Theory course at Juilliard," he said. "It sounds like a punishment, but my students all show up early for class." The charts for the NJPAC performance, he acknowledged, "are difficult," but, "we'll have two or three days of very intensive rehearsal all day long, getting them to understand what they have to be ready for."

In 2013, Mossman was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Instrumental Arrangement for his "Afro-Latin Suite." In addition to playing with Dizzy Gillespie, Machito, and Toshiko Akiyoshi, Mossman performed with vibraphonist Lionel Hampton, pianist Horace Silver, baritone saxophonist Gerry Mulligan, and trumpeter Jon Faddis, among many others.

He was also Director of Blue Note Records' "young lion" group, Out of the Blue, in the 1980s. "Blue Note," he recalled, "had gotten back in the business of recording new music. There was a national audition. People were invited to audition live, and it was like a shootout. We chose six guys, and we did four albums for Blue Note." The other five musicians were saxophonists Kenny Garrett and Ralph Bowen, pianist Harry Pickens, bassist Robert Hurst, and drummer Ralph Peterson.

Mossman was part of Mulligan's big band in the mid-'80s and was a member of the band that did a "Rebirth of the Cool" tour in 1992. Other members of that band included alto saxophonist Lee Konitz, trumpeter Art Farmer, and trombonist Rob McConnell. Playing with Silver in the late '80s and early '90s, he added, was "a wonderful experience."—SJ

TD JAMES MOODY JAZZ FESTIVAL

ALL-STATE JAZZ ENSEMBLE

Jerry Xu, *Alto Saxophone, Cherry Hill High School East*

Noah Tamiso, *Alto Saxophone, Newark Academy*

Eli Wunder, *Baritone Saxophonist, Ridgewood High School*

Noah Harris, *Bass, Somerville High School*

Ace Leigh, *Bass Trombone, Cherokee High School*

Vir Mehrotra, *Drumset, West Windsor-Plainsboro High School South*

Brody Frers, *Guitar, Ridgewood High School*

Jay Fang, *Piano, Bridgewater-Raritan High School*

Jay Thatte, *Tenor Saxophone, Newark Academy*

Jesse Burden, *Tenor Saxophone, Holmdel High School*

Hayden Moon, *Trombone, Millburn High School*

Brandon Shyu, *Trombone, Livingston High School*

Alex McMillen, *Trombone, Shore Regional High School*

Thomas Berei, *Trumpet, Mountain Lakes High School*

Connor Li, *Trumpet, Livingston High School*

Lucas Comesana, *Trumpet, Princeton High School*

Lukas DeBlasio, *Trumpet, Somerville High School*

Brangel Neris, *Trumpet, Clifton High School*

ALL-STATE JAZZ CHOIR

ALTOS

Bihana Noel, *Orange High School*

Abigail Skye Fauci, *East Brunswick High School*

Elsie Sarfo, *Piscataway High School*

Natsuki Mori, *Tenafly High School*

Ellie Kim, *Cresskill High School*

Alexis Burchell, *Pascack Valley High School*

Shantal Estevez, *Perth Amboy High School*

Rachel Enache, *Florence Twp Memorial High School*

Olivia Betancourt, *Warren Hills Regional High School*

Cadence Szewc, *Hunterdon Central Regional High School*

Madison Moran, *Rahway High School*

BASS

Leo Amankwah, *Orange High School*

Amruth Gani, *East Brunswick High School*

Synsere Hancock, *Rahway High School*

Anthony Yanes, *Rahway High School*

Christian Douze, *Rahway High School*

SOPRANOS

Isabella Garritano, *Cresskill High School*

Zienne Ababa, *Hopewell Valley Central High School*

INSTRUMENTAL QUARTET

Prav Deshpande, *Bass, Holmdel High School*

Jake Julius, *Drumset, Livingston High School*

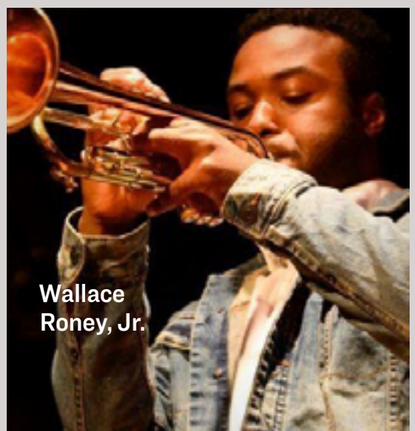
Charles Budzinski, *Guitar, Livingston High School*

Brian Zhang, *Piano, Holmdel High School*

TD James Moody Jazz Festival

All performances at NJPAC unless otherwise noted.

Catherine Russell


Wallace Roney, Jr.

NOVEMBER 6

Sitar player Niladri Kumaar

NOVEMBER 7

Dizzy Gillespie All-Stars
Bethany Baptist Church

NOVEMBER 12

Miles @100 with Jon Faddis & Friends

NOVEMBER 13

All-State Jazz Ensemble and Choir

Vocalist Gregory Porter

NOVEMBER 14

Vocalist Catherine Russell: "Who is Louis Armstrong?" (WBGO Kids' Concert)

Guitarist Jesse Cook

NOVEMBER 15

Vocalist/pianist Bruce Hornsby and bassist Christian McBride

NOVEMBER 19-22

New Jersey Symphony: "Rachmaninoff's Symphonic Dances"

NOVEMBER 21

Saxophonist/flutist Charles Lloyd

Ben Vereen's 80th Birthday Concert

NOVEMBER 22

Trumpeter Wallace Roney, Jr.
Dorthaan's Place

Sarah Vaughan International Vocal Competition

For more info or to order tickets, go to **njpac.org** *or call (888) 696-5722.*

WALLACE RONEY, JR. PHOTO BY RUDY LU