

Cedar Knolls' teen named to jazz band

HANOVER TWP. - Guitarist Justin Bocchino of Cedar Knolls is one of 19 northern New Jersey teenagers accepted to the Brick City Jazz Orchestra (BCJO), a collaboration between the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) and the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz.

The teens auditioned in front of a panel of jazz educators on Sept. 28. They will receive the opportunity to heighten their skills as musicians and bandmates this Fall with the creation of the orchestra.

As NJPAC's newest arts education initiative, the 18-piece BCJO ensemble will allow students to collaborate as performing artists and serve as cultural ambassadors for both Newark and the state, touring both regionally and nationally.

The formation of the BCJO adds a new chapter to Newark's jazz legacy, which reaches back to the days when such luminaries as Sarah Vaughan, Woody Shaw, Dizzy Gillespie and Sonny Rollins could be heard in the downtown's clubs and halls. Legendary jazz label Savoy Records made Newark its home for many years, and one of the city's sons, saxophonist James Moody, is remembered to this day by NJPAC's week-long TD James Moody Democracy of Jazz Festival, being held this year from Monday, Nov. 4 to Sunday, Nov. 10.

Some of the world's most re-



JUSTIN BOCCHINO

spected jazz artists and educators will guide the BCJO members. James Burton III, conductor of the Juilliard Jazz Orchestra and associate conductor of Wynton Marsalis' new Jazz at Lincoln Center All-Star Orchestra, will conduct the BCJO.

Grammy Award nominated vibraphonist Stefon Harris will serve as artist-in-residence, providing artistic leadership and instruction in jazz theory. A preliminary roster of guest artists and coaches includes jazz masters Geri Allen, Carl Allen, Christian McBride, Jon Faddis and Benny Golson, among others. In addition to teaching musicianship, the faculty will provide sectional support and mentor the young musicians on their art, professionalism and life choices.

The BCJO will rehearse weekly at NJPAC from October to May, with rehearsal performances taking place during the academic year. The BCJO's official debut performance will be at the Women's Association of NJPAC Luncheon in May 2014.

Nurturing the next generation

of jazz musicians is an ever-present goal and reality for NJPAC, which has been committed to the highly successful Wells Fargo Jazz for Teens program since its founding in 1998. The existence of the BCJO will tighten the bonds among the Arts Education Department's additional jazz programs and their students.

In addition to the benefits of professional mentoring, the BCJO program builds self-confidence, leadership qualities, creative expression and a spirit of teamwork within its members.

"The Brick City Jazz Orchestra is about the transformative power of music.

These young musicians represent the best that the Greater Newark area has to offer. On audition day there was a strong sense that NJPAC was doing something that has the potential to be transformational in the lives of these young people," said Laurie Carter, NJPAC's vice president of Arts Education. "James Burton III and the team of section mentors he assembled instantly bonded with the group, and it was evident that the young people of the Greater Newark area are ready to take on the world under the mentorship of world-class musicians."

The ability to pay tuition does not factor into admission decisions. Tuition for BCJO students will be assessed on a sliding scale.