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## **Saratoga Performing Arts Center & Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce Introduce Freihofer's Jazz Fest Friday on June 22**

### ***New Strategy to Engage the Local Business Community Increases the Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz Festival's Role as an Economic Driver for the Region***

(Saratoga Springs, NY) – As part of Saratoga Performing Arts Center's mission to increase collaboration among the local business community and position Saratoga Springs as a worldwide cultural destination, SPAC in partnership with the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce introduced **Freihofer's Jazz Fest Friday 2018**. Presented at a press conference at Caffè Lena on May 22, the new community event is slated for June 22 as the kick-off to Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz Festival weekend.

The new initiative and partnership brought together SPAC President & CEO **Elizabeth Sobol**, Saratoga County Chamber President **Todd Shimkus**, Saratoga Springs **Mayor Meg Kelly**, President of Turf Hotels **Brian Straughter**, Associate Director of Institutes at Skidmore College **Maria McColl** and Dean of Special Programs at Skidmore College **Paul Calhoun**, Absolutely Live Entertainment President and Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz Festival producer **Danny Melnick**, and Executive Director of Caffè Lena **Sarah Craig** to discuss SPAC's increased engagement with the business community, the festival's expanded role as an economic driver for the region, Saratoga's rich history as a "jazz city," and the continued contributions of institutions like Caffè Lena and the Skidmore College Jazz Institution to the city.

"We are delighted to partner with the Saratoga County Chamber for the first Freihofer's Jazz Fest Friday -- a strategic initiative to proactively connect the arts with local businesses," said SPAC President & CEO Elizabeth Sobol. "The cultural tourist spends 60% more than the average leisure tourist, therefore, adding an evening of programming to showcase Saratoga's vibrant downtown and our incredibly talented local jazz musicians is a win for our community and an added value for out of town guests."

"The local business community is excited to partner with the Saratoga Performing Arts Center to officially kick off summer in Saratoga, on Friday, June 22, with a celebration of Jazz music at a range of local venues in and around the City of Saratoga Springs. This first-ever Jazz Fest Friday is a unique opportunity for us to expand this world-renowned Festival from two to three days and to showcase our community as a top destination for Jazz music in the world. We're thrilled to have so many local hotels, restaurants, stores and venues involved already and we fully expect to add more locations, artists, and discounts in the coming days as word spreads," said Todd Shimkus, President of the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce.

**Freihofer's Jazz Fest Friday** will feature Chamber businesses welcoming locals and visitors with scores of live jazz events, themed dining, and social dance options that will serve as the kick-off to the Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz Festival in Saratoga Springs. Participating restaurants, bars and venues include Caffè Lena, National Museum of Dance, The Adelphi Hotel, Sperry's, Northshire Bookstore, Kru Coffee, The Gideon Putnam, Hampton Inn & Suites, Holiday Inn at Saratoga Springs, The Local, Morton's the Steakhouse and more.

In addition to the jazz inspired festivities scheduled around the city, SPAC's Action Council will present the featured event, **A Night on Bourbon Street**, at the Canfield Casino in Congress Park. Kicking off at 7:30 p.m. on June 22, guests are encouraged to don their flapper best as they enjoy tunes from bold jazz trumpeter and smoky vocalist, Bria Skonberg, New Orleans inspired fare by Lily and the Rose gourmet catering, and sumptuous cocktails at the open bar befitting of a festive "Big Easy" fête. Tickets for *A Night on Bourbon Street* start at \$150 and are available at [spac.org](http://spac.org).

The new Freihofer's Jazz Fest Friday initiative and *A Night on Bourbon Street* event precede the 2018 Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz Festival, slated for **Saturday, June 23** and **Sunday, June 24** at the [Saratoga Performing Arts Center](http://Saratoga Performing Arts Center). Now in its 41<sup>st</sup> year, the festival features an extraordinary roster of artists, ranging from jazz luminaries -- **Jon Batiste, Chris Botti, Herbie Hancock, Gregory Porter, Joey Alexander**, and gospel and R&B legend **Mavis Staples**, who will headline this year's legendary festival -- to emerging artists making their Saratoga debuts such as **José James, Lakecia Benjamin and SoulSquad, Scott Sharrard & The Brickyard Band, Jazzmeia Horn** and **Keyon Harrold**. For tickets or more information, visit [spac.org](http://spac.org).

#### **ABOUT FREIHOFER'S SARATOGA JAZZ FESTIVAL:**

Founded in 1978 by jazz impresario George Wein, Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz Festival is the fifth longest-consecutive-running jazz festival in North America. Initially founded as "the Newport Jazz Festival at Saratoga" the weekend event was renamed Freihofer's Saratoga Jazz Festival in 1998. With an inside seating capacity of 5,200, and lawn seating of 20,000, the two-day, two-stage festival continues to be one of the largest jazz music events in North America, beloved by audiences for both the remarkable annual line-up of international jazz talent and the spectacular setting at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center in the idyllic Saratoga Spa State Park.

More information about what to bring to the Jazz Festival can be found online at [www.spac.org](http://www.spac.org). Stella Artois returns to the festival as the lead sponsor of the lawn experience ("the hang"). The upscale Belgian beer company is no stranger to sponsoring high-profile arts and cultural events; they have been notably involved with the Chicago Jazz Festival, the Singapore Jazz Festival, and the Sundance Film Festival.

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