



Highlights

Headliner: Veronica Swift

JazzFest 2026 is pleased to welcome international sensation, **Veronica Swift**, as the **headliner of its main event the evening of June 6** at the **Paramount Theater**.

Swift has established herself as **one of her generation's iconic voices in jazz**.

She recorded her first album at age nine, and since then has enjoyed a career spanning two decades which saw a **2nd place win at The 2015 Thelonious Monk Jazz Competition**, a twice-a-year residency at **Birdland Jazz Club**, joining [trumpeter] **Chris Botti's** touring band, as well as touring with **Wynton Marsalis** and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and the **Benny Green** trio. She has appeared with **Michael Feinstein**, recorded with **Jeff Goldblum**, and traveled the globe as she leans into the leading edge of jazz and other genres that capture her energy, ingenuity, and creative essence.

Her 2021 **album This Bitter Earth** received a **5-star review** – and the **cover** – of **DownBeat** magazine. In 2024, she was honored with a **French knighthood as Chevalier in the Order of Arts and Letters**.

Swift was **raised in Charlottesville, Virginia**, as part of a family of renowned jazz artists. Her parents are singer **Stephanie Nakasian**, and the late jazz pianist **Hod O'Brien**.

Now making her home on the west coast, her **2026 album, titled "Home,"** will be **released in June**. With songs like "I Miss the Mountains," "Home" from "The Wiz," and "I'm Comin' Virginia," Swift explores longing to return to her beloved Appalachia, her place in the country that is her home, and the complex challenges of this time as we question our roots.

Live at the Paramount Theater
Saturday, June 6, 2026, 7 p.m.
Charlottesville, VA

Praise for Swift's Artistry and Skill

"...never heard someone scat with so much vocabulary and authenticity in bebop...

"highest echelon of jazz vocalists" - Trumpeter, Chris Botti (recording artist, four times No. 1 on Billboard jazz albums chart)

"Veronica Swift is a woman of many voices, and she uses every one of them to refract a dizzying kaleidoscope of moods" — DownBeat

"She has a miraculous voice, musical ability and technique, as well as an innate gift for entertaining a crowd." — Wall Street Journal

Sample Recordings

[Softly, As In A Morning Sunrise](#) — Javier Nero Jazz Orchestra 2025

[Home Blues](#) -- Pacific Jazz Orchestra

[Embraceable You](#) — Chris Botti Digital 2021

[Wind Beneath My Wings](#) — Pacific Jazz Orchestra, with Stephanie Nakasian

[Rag Doll](#) — Postmodern Jukebox





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Artists and Features

Local, Regional, National, and International Artists

In addition to **Saturday, June 6 mainstage events** at the **Paramount Theater**, JazzFest performances present a full four days of outstanding music. Planned **Thursday through Sunday** events include a host of the finest artists in Charlottesville, surrounding cities, throughout the Mid-Atlantic, and beyond.

- The festival welcomes **JazzFest founder, guitarist [Royce Campbell](#)** – internationally acclaimed for his work with Henry Mancini, Marvin Gaye, and Quincy Jones – at a Sunday “**Founder’s Brunch**” at **The Guild at Vault Virginia**.
- A special **concert at The Guild at Vault Virginia** on **Sunday** afternoon features **vocalist Ali Webb** and her fine ensemble.
- Helping to mark the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the **U.S. Navy Band Commodores jazz ensemble** kicks off **Ting Pavilion’s Fridays After Five** big band concert June 5, followed by **saxophonist Charles Owens** with **R4nd4zzo BigB4nd (Randazzo BigBand)**, featuring many of **Richmond’s finest jazz artists**.
- Watch for Veronica Swift’s mother, sensational **vocalist Stephanie Nakasian**; **guitarist Charlie Ballantine** and his trio, a favorite of Charlottesville audiences; and the **Robert Jospe Trio** featuring **pianist Daniel Clarke**, **bassist Paul Langosch**, and “Jos” on drums – all at **The Front Porch**.
- Many of Charlottesville’s most celebrated artists and bands will also be featured in **JazzFest’s Club Circuit** of **several downtown venues** each night, **both Wednesday and Thursday** evenings, June 4 and 5.

JazzFest 2026 will close with a **celebratory jam session** at **Miller’s Downtown**, **Sunday evening**.

Special Features

JazzFest is committed to enhancing **youth jazz education** through **Spring 2026 opportunities and festival activities**.

- During the spring semester, **public school band directors** are selecting and rehearsing a **multi-high school orchestra** for the festival's **Young Lions of Jazz Matinee** at the **Paramount**, Saturday June 6.
- The Paramount event will also include **trumpeter John D'earth** leading a cadre of his **5th and 6th grade students** from **Walker Upper Elementary School**, as well as a performance by the **Lakeside Middle School** band.
- A **performance by UVA students and faculty** will also be featured at the Matinee.
- The event invites audience members to join **saxophonist and UVA professor, Jeff Decker** for a presentation on **how**, though it was **initially used to suppress or distort blackness**, the packaging required by the introduction of **larger, long-playing record "albums"** eventually provided an opportunity for **African American artists** to carve a space for the presentation of **agency and identity** previously denied them.

Working with **Friends of Charlottesville Downtown**, as part of its **50th Anniversary celebration**, JazzFest supports the Downtown Mall's **galleries, bookstores, other retailers, theaters, restaurants, and diversity of fine local businesses**.

- The festival welcomes related **art exhibits, book and record events, dance events, films, special menus, window displays, or other jazz-inspired activities**. For inquiries, **contact** jazzfest@cvillejazz.org.

JazzFest invites businesses throughout Charlottesville downtown and beyond to feature **jazz playlists** in their stores and venues throughout the four-day festival.

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