

The School of Music, Theatre, and Dance at Kansas State University presents:

# A BOBBY WATSON RETROSPECTIVE

A QuVee Mock Masterclass Series Concert Featuring:  
Bobby Watson, and the K.C. Quartet



Wednesday October 2nd, 2024  
Live in the Purple Masque Theatre

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# A BOBBY WATSON RETROSPECTIVE

A QuVee Mock Masterclass Series Concert Featuring:  
Bobby Watson K.C. Quartet

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## Musicians:

|                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| Saxophone..... | Bobby Watson   |
| Piano .....    | Roger Wilder   |
| Bass.....      | James Ward     |
| Drums.....     | Michael Warren |

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## Audience Notes

Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the management.

Listening devices are available for the hearing impaired. Please ask the House Manager.

K-State Theatre reserves the right to remove anyone from the audience.

Children under 5 years are not permitted, unless specified as a performance for children.

**Recording or streaming of the performance is strictly prohibited.**

The School of Music, Theatre, and Dance; 109 McCain, 785-532-5740, Bryan Pinkall, Director





# About Bobby Watson:

BOBBY WATSON sits among the pantheon of present-day jazz greats. Born in Lawrence, Kan., his career now spans more than four decades. A multi-GRAMMY®-nominated saxophonist, composer, bandleader, educator and producer, Watson trained formally at the University of Miami and then, from 1977-1981, earned his “doctorate” as musical director of Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers. During his four-plus years with the legendary drummer, the saxophonist contributed to 14 Jazz Messengers recordings — more than anyone else in the group’s 35-year (1955-1990) storied history. Early on, in addition to Blakey, the saxophonist also worked with notable jazz icons and elder statesmen such as Max Roach, Louis Hayes, George Coleman and Sam Rivers, as well as sharing music experiences with innumerable noteworthy peers and colleagues as well as legendary vocalists such as Joe Williams, Lou Rawls, Betty Carter, Dianne Reeves and Carmen Lundy.

An association with bassist Curtis Lundy and drummer Victor Lewis led Watson to launch the first iteration of Horizon, the highly acclaimed acoustic quintet, modeled in many ways after the Jazz Messengers, but produced with its own distinct and more modern twist. Horizon, now considered one of the preeminent small groups of the mid-1980s to mid-1990s, released several now-classic titles for the Blue Note and Columbia record labels. Virtually simultaneously, Watson also issued several other titles such as Love Remains (Red), the saxophonist’s now-classic 1986 release. The recording, recognized by the Penguin Guide to Jazz (Penguin; 7th Ed.), received the publication’s highest rating, cited in the edition as a part of its “core collection” joining other entries as a title any jazz aficionado should own. Year of the Rabbit, a musical tribute to Johnny Hodges, followed in 1989; Tailor Made, the Watson-led GRAMMY®-nominated all-star big band in 1993; he also released multiple titles by the four-horn 29th Street Saxophone Quartet and composed music for the Robert De Niro-directed film, A Bronx Tale (1993).

From 2005-2008, Watson issued a trio of recordings on the Palmetto label: Live & Learn (2005), Horizon Reassembled (2006), which brought him back together with Lewis, Terell Stafford, Edward Simon and Essiet Okon Essiet, and From the Heart (2008), on which he unveiled yet another project, again sharing the spotlight with bassist Lundy.

After spending 25 years in New York where Watson was omnipresent on the jazz scene, the saxophonist and his wife, vocalist-composer Pamela Baskin-Watson, returned to Kansas City, invited to do so at the behest of the University of Missouri-Kansas City, where he was named the first William D. and Mary Grant/Missouri, Distinguished Professor in Jazz Studies at the school’s Conservatory of Music & Dance. In May 2020, after 20 years, the saxophonist retired from the post, transitioning into emeritus status while serving as an unofficial ambassador for the university’s Jazz Studies Department. During Watson’s tenure, the UMKC program developed and evolved substantially to the point where it is now considered one of the country’s finer jazz programs.

In 2010, the saxophonist self-produced The Gates BBQ Suite, what he calls “a labor of love.” The recording celebrates his hometown’s most famous food product with the music and track titles referencing the one-time family business. At the time of its release Gates became the perfect vehicle for his University of Missouri-Kansas City jazz students. Noted the All About Jazz review: “Bobby Watson serves up some ‘down to the bone’ goodness in The Gates BBQ Suite. The seven-part suite for large ensemble features the UMKC Conservatory of Music & Dance Concert Jazz Orchestra, and is a heartfelt tribute to Watson’s hometown..., which includes the area’s landmark Gates Barbecue restaurant.”

Watson took the orchestra to Europe and Japan, where it performed at a number of summer festivals. Watson’s self-produced Check Cashing Day followed; released in 2013 it centers on and honor the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have A Dream” speech.

## About Bobby Watson Continued:

In 2017 Watson began a relationship with Smoke Sessions records, an outgrowth of the Upper West Side venue where he mostly plays when returning to New York City. His initial release for the label, *Made in America*, another well-conceived project, reflects upon a singular theme; on this occasion Watson turned his attention toward identifying lesser known, but important African Americans; each composition pays homage to a different person.

In November 2019, he participated as one-third of Bird At 100's front line, sharing the spotlight with fellow altoists Vincent Herring and Gary Bartz. In many ways the recording brought Watson full circle on a number of fronts. Most obviously: August 29, 2020, is the centennial of Charlie Parker's birth; that Watson hails from the Kansas City metro area, and made his way to New York, serves as a clear reminder of Bird's path. And, of course, Parker and Watson both play the alto saxophone.

Watson's latest Smoke Sessions project is the just-released (June 26, 2020) *Keepin' It Real*. The recording's personnel represent a blend of long-standing and relatively recent musical associations. Joining Watson, who dubbed the group "New Horizon," is his long-time musical ally, bassist Lundy; also on the session: veteran drummer Victor Jones along with a trio of younger players – trumpeters Josh Evans and Giveton Gelin, who share their duties and pianist Victor Gould. All told, the saxophonist has issued well over 40 recordings under his own name, while appearing on well over 100 other titles. His next, but yet untitled release for the label, is scheduled for Fall 2022 release.

Not surprisingly, Watson has received a number of well-deserved awards that in various ways recognize his musical contributions throughout his career. In 2011 the saxophonist was inducted into the Kansas Music Hall of fame. In 2013 he received the prestigious Benny Golson Jazz Masters Award from Howard University in Washington, D.C. Simultaneously, the Black National Caucus officially recognized his work in the Congressional Record. On August 23, 2014 – serendipitously Watson's 61st birthday – he was selected as one of the first inductees into the then-newly established 18th and Vine "Jazz Walk of Fame." Joining him was Pat Metheny as the only other living selection; four of the city's jazz cornerstones also received recognition: Count Basie, Jay McShann, Parker and Mary Lou Williams.

The sun may have set on Watson's formal position as Director of Jazz Studies at UMKC and as a most-respected jazz educator, but for Professor Emeritus Watson, the work continues. As energetic as ever, Watson says he's looking forward to the post-COVID-19 world, so he can continue his now-life-long journey of performing throughout the United States and internationally.

# Land Acknowledgement

Indigenous Faculty Staff Alliance Land Acknowledgement (January 15, 2020)

As the first land-grant institution established under the 1862 Morrill Act, we acknowledge that the state of Kansas is historically home to many Native nations, including the Kaw, Osage, and Pawnee, among others. Furthermore, Kansas is the current home to four federally recognized Native nations: The Prairie Band Potawatomie, the Kickapoo Tribe of Kansas, the Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, and Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska.

Many Native nations utilized the western plains of Kansas as their hunting grounds, and others – such as the Delaware – were moved through this region during Indian removal efforts to make way for White settlers. It's important to acknowledge this, since the land that serves as the foundation for this institution was, and still is, stolen land.

We remember these truths because K-State's status as a land-grant institution is a story that exists within ongoing settler-colonialism, and rests on the dispossession of Indigenous peoples and nations from their lands. These truths are often invisible to many. The recognition that K-State's history begins and continues through Indigenous contexts is essential.

We encourage you to support the **Friends of Indigenous Faculty and Staff Alliance** and our Indigenous students. Please scan the QR code below to provide direct funding to Indigenous students and/or organizations that financially assist the excellent education K-State provides.

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# Fall 2024 QuVee Mock Masterclass Series Artist

The Kansas State University School of Music, Theatre, and Dance announces the inaugural QuVee Mock Masterclass Series artists for Fall 2024, an exceptional opportunity for students to engage with world-class artists, made possible through the generous support of Jerry A. Hall.



## Renee Fleming

Thursday, September 26th

Renowned for her radiant voice and captivating presence, Renee Fleming is one of the most celebrated sopranos of our time. With a distinguished career that spans opera, Broadway, recordings, television, and film, Fleming has earned numerous accolades, including multiple Grammy Awards and the National Medal of Arts. Her artistry and emotional depth have made her a beloved figure in both classical and popular music.



## Bobby Watson

Wednesday, October 2nd

A legendary figure in the world of jazz, saxophonist Bobby Watson is known for his innovative compositions and dynamic performances. A multi-Grammy-nominated saxophonist, composer, bandleader, educator and producer, Watson sits among the pantheon of present-day jazz greats.



## Chanticleer

Thursday, October 10th

This Grammy Award-winning vocal ensemble is praised for its lush, rich sound and masterful interpretations of music spanning centuries. Chanticleer is recognized for its diverse repertoire, ranging from Renaissance polyphony to contemporary choral masterpieces, and has captivated audiences worldwide with its extraordinary musicality.



## Amit Peled

December 2nd - 5th

Internationally renowned cellist Amit Peled is celebrated for his passionate musicianship and technical brilliance. Peled's performances combine profound artistry with a deep connection to his audience, and his masterclasses offer invaluable insights into the art of cello performance.