

News Release

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Brett Williams to Receive 2011 Pittsburgh Jazz Society / BNY Mellon Jazz Scholarship

PITTSBURGH, July 21, 2011 — The Pittsburgh Jazz Society and BNY Mellon today announced the selection of pianist Brett Williams, a native of Allison Park, as the recipient of the 2011 Pittsburgh Jazz Society / BNY Mellon Jazz Scholarship. Williams will receive his scholarship award on Sunday, September 25, during the Pittsburgh Jazz Society's Jazz Day in the Park at Schenley Plaza in Oakland.

Chosen by a panel of nationally recognized jazz musicians and educators on the basis of his scholarship application and accompanying audition CD, Williams will receive a \$5,000 tuition award from the Pittsburgh Jazz Society and BNY Mellon.

"Every year, I am impressed by the talented jazz students who apply for this scholarship and this year Brett Williams was the shining star," said Tony Mowod, founder and president of the Pittsburgh Jazz Society. "With BNY Mellon's support, we are able to assist aspiring jazz students to pursue their dreams and reach their potential."

Williams began playing music at age two by striking a mallet and hairbrush on kitchen pots and pans. He composed his first song at age four and played his first professional gig at age nine. He has released four CDs, entitled Brett's Blues, Piano Room, Searching and Limitless. Williams has opened for David Sanborn at Hartwood Acres; has had an audience with Wynton Marsalis at Jazz at Lincoln Center; performed at the Byham Theatre in the Walt Maddox production of Wake up Your Dreams; and played for Bishop Desmond Tutu at Carnegie Music Hall. He was selected for the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association All-State Jazz Band in 2008. Then in 2009, became the youngest person to receive an August Wilson Center Fellowship. Williams was also a part of the band formed for the multi-genre soul and jazz concert called Synthesis, held at the August Wilson Center in tribute to Chuck Cooper, along with Grammy-nominated producer Rex Rideout, Poozie Bell, Dwayne Dolphin, Sean Jones, Roby Edwards and Juan Vasquez.

Williams, a graduate of Hampton High School, is a sophomore at Duquesne University majoring in Music Performance. He plays in Dwayne Dolphin's Piccolo Bass Band and with many young upcoming jazz musicians, such as Benny Benack III, George Heid III, Miles Jackson, Anton DeFade and Julian Powell. He also performs with C.O.L. (Center of Life) and leads his own group, the Brett Williams Band. Recently, Williams participated and competed in the Monterey Next Generation Jazz Festival with C.O.L., where the group took second place in the Open Combo Division and he won "Best Solo Performance."

A non-profit 501(c) (3) all-volunteer organization, The Pittsburgh Jazz Society is dedicated to the promotion, preservation and perpetuation of all jazz through education, performance, partnering and community outreach for members and the general public. Please visit www.pittsburghjazz.org to become a member or to learn more about the Pittsburgh Jazz Society.

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