

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kansas City Area Youth Jazz Welcomes Master Pianist Everett Freeman, Jr. as Clinician for 2026 Season

KANSAS CITY, MO — Friday, April 24, 2026 Kansas City Area Youth Jazz Inc. (KCAYJ) is proud to announce the appointment of master jazz pianist **Everett Freeman, Jr.** as a clinician for the 2026 season. Mr. Freeman will work directly with the Bill Crain Ensemble, under the leadership of featured clinician and director Houston Smith.

Everett Freeman, Jr. brings a distinguished professional pedigree to the program. A cornerstone of the Kansas City jazz scene and a musician of international caliber, Freeman has performed alongside legendary figures such as Clark Terry, Max Roach, and Ahmad Alaadeen. His deep understanding of the bebop tradition and modern harmonic structures makes him an invaluable asset to the development of the region's most promising young musicians.

“We are honored to have a musician of Everett’s stature join our educational team,” said Christopher Burnett, the Founder of Kansas City Area Youth Jazz. “His presence in the Bill Crain Ensemble, alongside the expertise of Houston Smith, ensures our scholarship fellows are learning from the very best in the industry. This collaboration embodies our mission to bridge the gap between jazz history and its future.”

Since its inception, Kansas City Area Youth Jazz Inc. has remained dedicated to preserving the city's rich musical heritage while fostering a high-level environment for jazz performance and recording. By providing young artists with professional-tier experiences—including studio recording and performances at premiere venues—KCAYJ continues to serve as a vital pipeline for the next generation of jazz professionals.

The 2026 season marks another milestone for the organization as it continues to pair legendary local talent with emerging student leaders. For more information on upcoming performances or program details, please visit YouthJazz.us.

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