



Jazz Passengers Music Projects, Inc.

<http://jpmppinc.org>

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Members of Jazz Passengers partner with NYC high school artists for multi-media event, Abrons Arts Center, May 23 and 24, 2019

Featuring the Jazz Passengers and students from New York City Schools: The Institute for Collaborative Education, Bronx Early College Academy and High School for Violin and Dance.

New York, NY, March 17, 2019 (Updated May 12, 2019): On Thursday and Friday, May 23 and 24, at 7:00 PM, the sounds and stories of the New York City subway will fill the Abrons Arts Center, 466 Grand Street (at Pitt Street), New York City, with **STUCK ON SUBWAY MOON**, a live multi-media musical performance that combines professional jazz musicians and filmmakers with original poetry and songs by high-school music students. Members of the celebrated downtown ensemble [THE JAZZ PASSENGERS](#) will be among the featured performers with public school students from the Institute for Collaborative Education in Manhattan, and the High School for Violin and Dance and the Bronx Early College Academy in the Bronx. The SUBWAY MOON project focuses on building community and connection through art. Seating is general admission and tickets are \$10.00. Tickets are available at the door or at <https://www.abronsartscenter.org/>

[#StuckOnSubwayMoon](#) presented by #JPMPInc will be performed at the [Abrons Arts Center](#) as part of the @Abrons Series Program. #StuckOnSubwayMoon is the story of 30 NYC teenagers and a few intractable musicians, stuck on a subway bridge with only their voices and imaginations to carry them through the moonlit night. The student cast has been writing poetry, composing music, reciting lyrics, creating video and rehearsing for #StuckOnSubwayMoon since November 2018. This innovative work originated when the students – using a shared google doc to contribute their poetry before meeting in person – shared their metaphorical visions of being captive on a subway car stalled on a bridge at night. After twelve weeks of rehearsals with the Subway Moon staff, professional musicians and poets, the students fleshed out the songs and scenes into a theatrical performance. The young people involved—especially those interested in careers in the arts—benefit from having a space to build creative skills as well as by working with professional musicians, poets, and filmmakers.

For the May performances, music, and video images will rattle together--but this trip is more propulsive and will take us a greater distance than any rush hour D-train you are likely to take.

TESTIMONIAL

Franklin Sim, Principal of High School for Violin and Dance said, “There are not enough words to express our gratitude, excitement, and appreciation for the consideration and opportunity to collaborate [with Subway Moon]. Whenever I visit the work sessions, students are actively and eagerly engaged in writing and performing their poems. When my colleagues and I walk into the Subway Moon “studio,” we never cease to be in awe of the interactions among students as they excitedly encourage each other. Students are engaging in peer to peer discussions and they are providing relevant feedback to each other in a relaxed manner while using their own experiences and their individual ways of expressing themselves via both writing and spoken word.”

SUBWAY MOON



SUBWAY MOON is a multi-week musical/video performing experience that combines the forces of professional jazz musicians and filmmakers with high-school music students from around the world. It is designed to be 1) a public performance series including jazz, poetry, and film; and 2) an educational and field-experiential program for students from a far-reaching compass of backgrounds. The subway theme provides

cultural/environmental anchor—a common ground from which students and audiences can meet across geographical boundaries.

SUBWAY MOON was created in Brooklyn in 2007 by musician and New York City high-school teacher Roy Nathanson. Nathanson rode the subway into Manhattan to his school, writing poems and stories on the commute. He found that he could write in a focused and private way there despite the subway’s public interior. Nathanson scored these subway poems for his band Sotto Voce, and filmmaker Andrew Gurian created video interpretations to the music. The poems were published by Buddy’s Knife jazzedition and performed at MassMOCA and Joe’s Pub in 2007, and in 2009, the *Subway Moon* CD was released.

SUBWAY MOON AS CURRICULUM



Roy Nathanson teaching Subway Moon Students

In 2008, Nathanson and Gurian brought SUBWAY MOON into music classrooms, working with students at the Institute for Collaborative Education, as well as assisting students and teachers in Paris, France, to write original songs about their experiences on public transportation and incorporate visual elements into the work. The first collaborative concert, featuring student groups alongside The JAZZ PASSENGERS, and was performed at Paris’ Banlieues Bleues Festival and at The Cooper Union (NYC) in 2008. To date SUBWAY MOON has been presented in more than twenty unique venues in four countries (the United States, France, Germany and England).

Of the England performance, Philip Johnson wrote in *The Independent*, "Subway Moon, must have been a life-changing experience for its participants... It was the most inspiring performance I've seen in years." In his review of the Munich performance, Dirk Wagner writes in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, "The result was not the one that we usually applaud at conventional school concerts, but a summit meeting rightly celebrating three separate bands....Together with the impressive videos projected onto a large screen they delivered a total work of art."

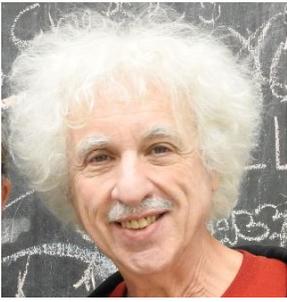
Zuri Gordon, Subway Moon teacher and alumna said, "All of the students involved in the upcoming collaboration attend NYC high schools, but they likely would not have met and interacted in an artistic way without the Subway Moon collaboration. Being a part of Subway Moon asks them to look at their subway experiences in a new way and encourages them to find artistic inspiration in the ride. Everything – from a late train upending one's schedule to catching the eye of another passenger – becomes a story, then a poem, then a song."

SUBWAY MOON finds the beauty and creativity in public transportation and the trains, buses, and ferries that take us throughout urban areas. For the NYC students rehearsing their songs right now, this project has given them a space to write original material and perform it in a prominent venue alongside their peers and professionals.

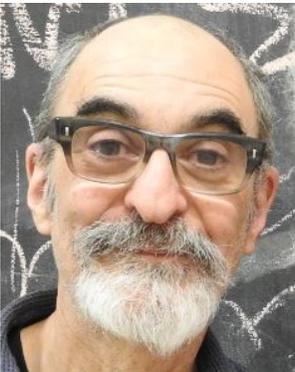
CREATIVE TEAM

In addition to the 30+ high school students involved as writers, musicians and performers, the creative team for Stuck on Subway Moon is led by Roy Nathanson, band leader of the Jazz Passengers and Andrew Gurian, professional film maker, who together co-founded the Subway Moon project together in 2007. Roy and Andy's bios are below. In 2019, Stuck on Subway Moon is transformed into an entirely new theatrical experiment, thanks to the assistance of Victoria Abrash, a faculty member of the Eugene Lang College of The New School, offering advice and strategic guidance to Roy Nathanson and Producer and JPMP Executive Director Dana Ware. Victoria has expertise in dramaturgy, theater history, theory, and dramatic literature, and has served as a dramaturg and collaborator in all forms of theater, from classical to contemporary to performance art and has written educational and program materials, theatrical adaptations, and more. Director Corey Ruzicano has worked at the Lark, New Group, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, Encore's Off-Center and is creative projects manager for Jeanine Tesori's studio Siena Music. Her commitment to empowering young artists includes work with the 52nd Street Project, Lincoln Center Education, and A BroaderWay, a program created in 2010 by Idina Menzel and Taye Diggs dedicated to offering girls from urban communities an outlet for self-expression, building self-esteem, achievement and leadership. Lighting designer Jennifer Fok's work has

been seen at Lincoln Center Education, HERE Arts Center, Portland Stage, The Flea, NCPA Beijing, Ars Nova, Wild Project, Bushwick Starr, and elsewhere. Scenic designer Lauren Barber has worked at A.R.T./New York, the McCarter Theater, American Theater of Actors, New Studio on Broadway, and elsewhere. Music director Bill Ware is a world class jazz vibraphonist, composer, arranger, band leader and more. He has composed for theater and film in addition to his stellar performance career, highlights of which include touring with Steely Dan from 1993-95, and being a founding member of the Jazz Passengers and Groove Collective.



ANDREW GURIAN began making films at age 12. His films have been exhibited in museums and festivals worldwide, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, MoMA, San Francisco Museum of Art, the Museum of Contemporary Art (Chicago), and WNET/Channel 13. Gurian joined the TP Videospace Troupe (founded by Shirley Clarke) in 1972. As a member he led live video workshops throughout the 70's at the Kitchen, Antioch College, Bucknell University, Wesleyan University, and the Flaherty Film Seminar. For the TP he directed video shows at Anthology Film Archives, Young Filmmakers/Video Arts, NYU, SUNY (Oswego), and the Women's Interart Center. For the past decade, Gurian has created several live video performances and video installations and has collaborated with a half dozen dancers on video performances, among them Yoshiko Chuma, Marjorie Gamso, Scott Caywood, and Leslie Satin. Gurian's article "Thoughts on Shirley Clarke and the TP Videospace Troupe" is published in the Millennium Film Journal (Issue 42, Fall, 2004). Gurian appears in Nam June Paik's and Howard Weinberg's video tribute *Topless Cellist: Charlotte Moorman*. He was Associate Director of the Annual Avant Garde Festival of New York. Since 2007 he has been a guest artist/lecturer at NYU's Gallatin School of Individualized Study.



ROY NATHANSON has had a varied career as saxophonist, composer, poet, actor, and teacher. After playing with the Lounge Lizards, Charles Earland and performing in downtown theater in the 1980s, he formed the Jazz Passengers with Curtis Fowlkes. The band has been together for over thirty years, recording and touring with such vocalists as Elvis Costello and Deborah Harry. Nathanson has received commissions from Chamber Music America, New York Foundation for the Arts, Meet the Composer, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the University of Wisconsin.

Since the early 2000s, Nathanson has concentrated on a combining text and music, primarily through his band Sotto Voce. His other projects include the radio play, "You're the Fool," broadcast by NPR, the song cycle "Fire at Keaton's Bar and Grille," and the duo cd, "Nearness and You." In 2008, Nathanson released the CD, "Subway Moon," along with a poetry book which became the SUBWAY MOON arts/education project. He is a recipient of the Bessie and Joseph Jefferson Awards for Composition and from 20015-2017 headed the music department

at Institute for Collaborative Education, a NYC public school and is currently an Adjunct Professor at Gallatin College of NYU.



The [JAZZ PASSENGERS](#) are a fantastical fusion of post-bop and musical comedy, once called a “perverse mainstream hard-bop group as imagined by Frank Zappa.” (Bob Blumenthal, *Boston Globe*, 1989). Their name, a take-off on Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers, reveals the musicians’ wild ride along the eccentric currents in modern American music. Saxophonist Roy Nathanson and trombonist Curtis Fowlkes founded the Jazz Passengers in 1987. The two

musicians found strong affinity in their Brooklyn roots while playing together for the Big Apple Circus and in John Lurie’s seminal band, The Lounge Lizards. The Passengers first broke out on the New York City avant-garde scene centering around the Knitting Factory with a hybrid of Mingus-influenced dance rhythms and original tunes complete with lyrics and entertaining stories. The band celebrated their 30th anniversary in 2017 with their latest CD release “Still Life With Trouble” (Thirsty Ear). Besides Nathanson and Fowlkes the Jazz Passengers members-are Bill Ware on vibraphone, Bradley Jones on bass, Sam Bardfeld on violin, E.J. Rodriguez on percussion and Ben Perowsky on drums. For #StuckOnSubwayMoon, the personnel will include Tim Kiah on bass and vocals. Mr. Jones and Mr. Perowsky will not appear.



SUBWAY MOON’s fiscal sponsor is [Jazz Passengers Music Projects, Inc.](#) (JPMP), a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. JPMP projects offer educational opportunities for students not only to write original material but also to perform it in prominent, professional venues (museums, theaters, concert halls) side-by-side with their peers from other countries. Participating students are from every kind of background and sensitivity: some are at-risk with poor academic histories, others are more

sophisticated or from more stable homes. Some come from backgrounds lacking economic privilege; others are from more comfortable means. Some have never experienced formal music concerts of any kind in any way; others come with music performance histories on both sides of the proscenium. Oversight and participation by working professionals ensures performances of SUBWAY MOON and HOME that impress not only the students' grandparents but the widest music-loving public.



The @Abrons Series Program is a subsidized theater rental program that provides access to their spaces as well as production services at subsidized rates. While @Abrons is not curated, priority is given to shows, events and artistic projects with very low budgets whose missions align with the Abrons commitment to anti-oppression. The Abrons Series Program is

for shows, events, or artistic projects working to build community projects that are socially or civically inclusive – yet have very small budgets. The [Abrons Arts Center](#) is a program of the Henry Street Settlement, founded in 1893 by social work and public health pioneer Lillian Wald and based on Manhattan's Lower East Side. Henry Street Settlement delivers a wide range of social service, arts and health care programs to more than 50,000 New Yorkers each year.

Funding for these performances was made possible by the Augustine Foundation and generous individual donations. Proceeds will go to support the music programs at participating New York City schools in collaboration with JPMP Inc.

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