

KCSYMPHONY.ORG



BANK OF AMERICA  
**CELEBRATION**  
AT THE STATION  
KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY

**FREE CONCERT and FIREWORKS**

## SPECIAL GUESTS



### **A La Mode Quintet**

**Jesica Poell**, vocals

**Clayton DeLong**, guitar

**Marvin Gruenbaum**, violin, vocals

**Steve Rigazzi**, string bass

**John Blegen**, clarinet, saxophone

A La Mode Quintet is a versatile Jazz ensemble, bringing together “Gypsy Jazz,” songs from the Golden Era, Bossa Nova and Kansas City Jazz style. At the nucleus of the group are founding members Jesica “Baby J” Poell (vocals) and Clayton DeLong (guitar), who brain-stormed the band name and artistic direction several years ago while visiting a local pie bakery. Jesica is an enchanting songstress, well versed in opera prior to realizing her passion to become a renowned jazz vocalist. Rhythm/solo guitarist Clayton is an aficionado of Gypsy Jazz, and an expert in Latin rhythms, blues and many other styles. Jazz violinist Marvin Gruenbaum (violinist with the Kansas City Symphony), plays in a spirited funky and bluesy fiddle style, and continually offers virtuosic solos as well as spicy interplay with Jesica’s vocal lines. Steve Rigazzi, a well-known and sought-after local bassist, provides the band’s solid backbone and a keen sense of humor. John Blegen (clarinet and saxophone) entered the Kansas City music scene from Chicago five years ago. His clear, fluent style has brought him great success locally, where he plays regularly with the Bram Wijnands Trio and New Red Onion Jazz Babies. A La Mode has recently recorded and released their first album (available on CD and online) entitled “C’est Si Bon.” (For more details, visit [alamodejazz.com](http://alamodejazz.com))



## **627 Stomp (Dancing during the A La Mode performance)**

627 Stomp is a growing organization indebted to the rich history of Kansas City jazz culture. Named for the Pete Johnson hit – itself an homage to the venerated Local 627 musicians' union – it strives to create a sustainable community of dancers, musicians, historians and regular citizens

alike in pursuit of preservation, education and sharing of this unique heritage. Currently, the group specializes in spreading accessibility and awareness of vernacular jazz dancing through teaching and social dance events!



## **Airlifter Brass**

Airlifter Brass is the Brass Quintet of The United States Air Force Band of Mid-America. With the traditional instrumentation of two trumpets, French horn, trombone and tuba plus percussion, the ensemble is known for their versatility and outstanding musicianship. A component group of the Band of Mid-America, their performance repertoire

spans five centuries, from the glorious antiphonal sounds of the Renaissance to the rich diversity of American musical styles. Whether a military march, jazz standard, or an original arrangement of patriotic favorites each Airlifter Brass program is thoughtfully planned for a blend of inspiration and entertainment. Their repertoire has universal appeal and includes special programming for younger audiences. This ensemble not only performs in concert halls and civic events but also adds a distinctive presence to official military ceremonies and events of state. These six gifted players proudly represent the skill and professionalism of the United States Air Force as musical ambassadors before military and civilian audiences throughout the band's ten-state area of responsibility.



## **Patti Austin**

Patti Austin's keen interest in being a total entertainer likely started at the age of 4, when she stepped onto the stage of the Apollo Theater in Harlem at the urging of music legend Dinah Washington. The daughter of jazz trombonist Gordon Austin, Patti was a bona fide recording artist in her teens, achieving her first chart success in 1969 with "The Family Tree" (a Top 50 R&B single) after a string of 45s that would later become treasured collectors' items among Britain's northern soul music community.

During the '70s, Austin was the undisputed queen of the New York session scene. Her voice was heard behind everyone from Paul Simon, Cat Stevens, James Brown and Joe Cocker to Bette

Midler, Roberta Flack, Luther Vandross and Diana Ross, and on countless memorable commercial jingles. After a series of much-acclaimed albums for CTI Records, she signed with her godfather Quincy Jones' Qwest label. She began achieving mainstream success on an international level thanks to the Grammy® Award-nominated hit, "Baby Come To Me," her now-classic duet with James Ingram and the follow-up, Oscar-nominated duet, "How Do You Keep the Music Playing?". Further appearances with Jones included "Stuff Like That," his Grammy® Award-winning classic "The Dude," and "From Q With Love Vols. 1 & 2."

Austin's Grammy®-nominated "For Ella" album opened up new doors for her as a performer. Her embrace by the jazz world was cemented further with her Grammy® Award-winning classic "Avant Gershwin." Her most recent critically acclaimed pop/R&B release, "Sound Advice," will soon yield a sequel and further demonstrate her artistic versatility.

In 2017, Austin continues her philanthropic work with the Over My Shoulder Foundation and keeps up a constant touring schedule. For more information, visit [pattiaustin.com](http://pattiaustin.com).



## **John Musgrave**

Poet John Musgrave from Baldwin City, Kansas, served in the Marines during the Vietnam War. His poetry recounts combat stories of Vietnam and the strong brotherhood developed among the troops. His book, "Notes to the Man Who Shot Me," is a collection of combat poems based on his experiences. He

was 19 years old when he received the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with the Gold Star, but it was unknown whether he would survive the gunshot wounds to his chest. He did survive, and

dedicated the book to his wife, Shannon. Recently, the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation presented Musgrave with the 2017 Robert A. Gannon Award for poetry.



### **Jim Birdsall**

Jim Birdsall served in Viet Nam with 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry and the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne divisions. He finished his education with help from the GI Bill, then moved to Kansas City and began his career as an actor and announcer. He has appeared on stage at nearly every theater in Kansas City, most recently as Marc Rothko in Unicorn Theatre's production of *Red*.

As a voiceover artist, Jim is the signature voice of the CNBC Network and proudly for 25 years, the voice of the Hallmark Hall of Fame. Mr. Birdsall is also one of the lead narrators for NFL Films. Country music fans may also recognize Mr. Birdsall as the voice of WSM, home of the Grand Ole Opry as well as many television and radio commercials.

For more information, visit [kcsymphony.org/celebration](https://kcsymphony.org/celebration) or the official [Facebook event page](#).

View [event schedule](#) | View [event map](#)