



MONTREAL JAZZ SERIES



Straight Ahead-Gentle Soul

A vibrant tribute to the soul of Montreal jazz.

With *Gentle Soul*, the group *Straight Ahead* revives a pivotal era of Montreal's jazz scene, drawing inspiration from the legendary jam sessions at Café Mo-Jo and the Mount Royal Tam-Tams. This unique performance immerses the audience in the creative, collective energy that defined the 1970s, when the rhythms of djembes and congas echoed as a call to musical freedom.

Leading the project is Muhammad Abdul Al-Khabyr, an accomplished trombonist and the proud heir to his father, Sayyid Abdul Al-Khabyr — a key figure in Montreal jazz and former member of the Duke Ellington Orchestra. Joined by top-tier musicians — Luc Beaugrand (piano), Mathieu McConnell-Enright (bass), and Martin Auguste (drums) — Muhammad continues the spirit of “straight ahead”: sincere, vibrant music rooted in tradition.

Gentle Soul is the third installment of the landmark *Montreal Jazz Series* trilogy. More than just a concert, it is a journey into a rich and inclusive musical heritage — a celebration of diversity, memory, and innovation.

A powerful, authentic, and unifying performance — perfect for jazz venues and festivals looking to spotlight Montreal's living musical history.





Muhammad Abdul Al-Khabyyr, born in 1959 in Hull, is a renowned trombonist, composer, and educator. Trained in Montreal, he has contributed to over 2,000 recordings and performed with the Duke Ellington Orchestra from 1987 to 1994. He has taken part in Broadway shows and shared the stage with legends such as Stevie Wonder, Aretha Franklin, Barry White, and many other icons. As a composer for the NFB and various productions, he is also active as a jury member and board member of the *Guilde des musiciens du Québec*. Highly involved in Quebec's music scene, he has worked with numerous local artists. He is also the creator of several original musical projects. A passionate teacher, he teaches at several respected institutions. His career makes him a key figure in jazz and music in Quebec and beyond.

Luc Beaugrand is a pianist, composer, arranger, and producer from Montreal whose career spans several decades. A co-founder of the group Uzeb at the age of fifteen, he quickly became a prominent figure in Quebec's jazz scene. A graduate of McGill University, he also trained at the Berklee School of Music and the New England Conservatory, honing his craft alongside some of the greatest musicians. He has shared the stage with legends such as Dizzy Gillespie, Steve Coleman, and Kenny Garrett. A regular performer at the Montreal International Jazz Festival since 1982, he has also toured extensively in Europe and across Canada. His career includes numerous recording collaborations, notably a Juno Award-winning album in 2012 with Sonia Johnson. A respected educator, he teaches at the Université de Montréal and contributed to the creation of the college-level program in music and songwriting techniques.



Mathieu McConnell-Enright is a Montreal-based double bassist whose playing combines sonic depth with musical sensitivity. Holding a master's degree in jazz performance from McGill University, he is emerging as a rising voice on the Canadian jazz scene. He has performed with artists such as Rémi Bolduc, Kevin Dean, Rafael Zaldivar, Claire Devlin, and Erik Hove. His performances have taken him to major stages, including the Montreal International Jazz Festival and the Ottawa Jazz Festival. In 2015, he won an Opus Award with Rémi Bolduc's *Tribute to Dave Brubeck* project. His discography reflects a rich versatility, ranging from straight-ahead jazz to more contemporary explorations. A passionate artist and sought-after collaborator, he embodies the creative new generation of Quebec jazz.

Martin Auguste is a Montreal-based drummer who has been active on the jazz and world music scenes for over 30 years. A graduate in jazz performance from McGill University, he has performed across Canada, Europe, Asia, and the United States. He has collaborated with leading ensembles such as the Christine Jensen Jazz Orchestra, Kaba Horo, and L'Orkestre des pas perdus. His international tours and recordings have earned him a Juno Award, an Opus Prize, and ADISQ nominations. Known for his precise, energetic, and versatile playing, he is a sought-after collaborator both on stage and in the studio. His career reflects a broad musical openness, ranging from contemporary jazz to Balkan and Latin influences. Alongside his performance work, he shares his passion as an educator, mentoring a new generation of musicians.

