



Saturday | May 20 | 8pm | Calderwood Studio at GBH Boston

The Legendary Count Basie Orchestra
featuring Diane Schuur
Directed by **Scotty Barnhart**

Scotty Barnhart conductor
Diane Schuur vocals
Frank Greene Lead trumpet
Bijon Watson trumpet
James Zollar trumpet
Endre Rice trumpet
* **Clarence Banks** trombone
Isrea Butler Lead trombone
Ron Wilkins bass trombone
Mark Williams trombone
Joshua Lee baritone saxophone
Doug Miller tenor saxophone
Dave Glasser Lead alto saxophone, flute
Doug Lawrence tenor saxophone
Stantawn Kendrick alto saxophone, flute
Robert Boone drums
Trevor Ware bass
Will Matthews guitar
Glen Pearson piano
* **Dee Askew** manager

* worked or performed with Count Basie

Selections will be announced from the stage.

Today's program will run approximately two hours;
there will be one 15-minute intermission.

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THE LEGENDARY COUNT BASIE ORCHESTRA

In the history of Jazz music, there is only one bandleader that has the distinction of having his orchestra still performing sold-out concerts all over the world, with members personally chosen by him, for more than 30 years since his passing. Pianist and bandleader William James “Count” Basie was and still is an American institution that personifies the grandeur and excellence of Jazz. The Count Basie Orchestra, today directed by Scotty Barnhart, has won every respected jazz poll in the world at least once, won 18 Grammy Awards, performed for kings, queens, and other world royalty, and appeared in several movies, television shows, at every major jazz festival and major concert hall in the world. Recent honors include their 2022 Grammy Nomination for *Live At Birdland*; a 2019 Grammy Nomination for *All About That Basie*, which features special guests Stevie Wonder, Jon Faddis, and Take 6, among others; and the 2018 *DownBeat* Readers Poll Award as the #1 Jazz Orchestra in the world. Their critically acclaimed release in 2015 of *A Very Swingin’ Basie Christmas!* is the very first holiday album in the 80-year history of the orchestra. Released on Concord Music, it went to #1 on the Jazz charts and sold out on Amazon! Special guests include vocalists Johnny Mathis, Ledisi, the orchestra’s own vocalist Carmen Bradford and pianist Ellis Marsalis. A BBC TV produced documentary on Mr. Basie and the orchestra entitled *Count Basie: Through His Own Eyes* premiered on PBS in the US and UK in 2019 coinciding with the orchestra’s 85th anniversary. It features interviews by Quincy Jones, Scotty Barnhart, Dee Askew, John Williams, and several other important members and associates of Mr. Basie and the orchestra.

A leading vocalist in contemporary jazz, **DIANE SCHUUR** is as eclectic as she is brilliant. Nicknamed “Deedles” as a child (her mother’s endearment), Tacoma-born Schuur grew up steeped in traditional American jazz, courtesy of her parents’ formidable record collection with ample LPs by Duke Ellington and Dinah Washington.

Dinah Washington is often listed as Schuur’s major vocal influence. She learned the iconic singer’s “What a Difference a Day Makes” while still a toddler and began developing her own rich, resonant vocal style. Schuur is also an accomplished pianist, accompanying herself onstage, whether leading her own small group, with big band or symphony orchestra.

The artist has been blind since her premature birth in 1953, having lost her sight to the disorder Retinopathy of Prematurity. It affected newborns receiving high-oxygen therapy during neonatal intensive care—which was standard practice until, tragically, 1954. She first learned to play piano by ear, picking out tunes on the keys with two fingers at age three. Her formal study of piano began while at the Washington State School for the Blind which Schuur attended until she was 11 years old. At 12, she started learning about blind pianist George Shearing. Her family arranged a meeting with Shearing during a local stint in Seattle, and she learned from that encounter that a life in music was indeed within her grasp, despite her handicap. Deedles finished her studies in public schools, eventually studying voice at the University of Puget Sound.

After playing clubs around the Pacific Northwest, Schuur's first break came in 1975 at age 21, when she did an informal backstage audition for Doc Severinsen during one of the *Tonight Show* bandleader's tour stops at the Seattle Opera House. Severinsen's drummer Ed Shaughnessy was so moved by Diane's talent, he invited her to sing with him at the Monterey Jazz Festival the same year. That performance led to a return, high-profile featured spot at Monterey in 1979, where Stan Getz, captivated by her set, became her mentor and advocate.

A subsequent invitation from Getz had her participating in an all-star performance at the White House with Dizzy Gillespie, Chick Corea, Jon Faddis, Itzhak Perlman, and Getz, filmed for PBS. When GRP Records owner Larry Rosen happened to catch its broadcast, Rosen signed her immediately to GRP, and Schuur's career took off. First Lady Nancy Reagan requested Schuur return for an encore performance in 1984, and she was back in D.C. yet again in 1999, as one of the select musical guests invited to sing for Stevie Wonder who was a Kennedy Center Honoree.

Connecting with audiences is what Schuur does better than anything else, and after five illustrious decades she's still doing it, on record and in concert. "For the future I plan to continue my reading of American song," reflects Schuur, "paying respect to celebrated writers and polishing their gems in the jazz tradition." And she is, indeed, fulfilling that goal, touring the world with her own group.

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