



WBGO Expands Its Voice with Major New Digital Initiative

Newark, January 10, 2017 – WBGO, the global leader in jazz radio, is pleased to announce a major advance in its online footprint and digital operations, in close partnership with NPR. Along with a recent update to its mobile app, the changes will involve a strong new online editorial focus and a redesigned website, launching on Jan. 17 with the support of NPR's Digital Services.

The upgraded WBGO.org will feature expanded content, including streaming on demand of all WBGO on-air programming for two weeks after air date, and a curated selection of exclusive WBGO archival content. The site will continue to be the home for widely acclaimed, nationally syndicated programs like *The Checkout* and *Jazz Night in America*, in video as well as podcast and streaming forms.

And in a sign of WBGO's commitment to quality, the organization has hired the world-renowned jazz journalist Nate Chinen to be Director of Editorial Content — a new role created in partnership with NPR.

"We're excited about having someone with Nate's deep understanding of jazz, as well as his expert ability to communicate information about the music we love," said WBGO President and CEO Amy Niles, who made the announcement last night at WBGO's Board of Trustees meeting. "This is truly a transformative time in WBGO's presentation of jazz as we launch our new digital platforms to complement our on air presence and bring new audiences to our music. Nate Chinen, truly a great editorial voice of our time, was the only choice to lead this new charge. His commitment to jazz, the people who make it, and the audiences who love it are completely aligned with our mission of elevating this great cultural art form."

Chinen, who for more than a decade has been a jazz critic for *The New York Times* and a columnist for *JazzTimes* magazine, sees his new role as an opportunity to bolster the jazz discourse at a time of historic pressure on newsrooms and print periodicals. “There isn’t a media organization in the world more dedicated to this music than WBGO,” he said, “and I aim to draw attention to the incredible work already being done there, while developing a new space for engagement with musicians and the global jazz public. There’s a critical need for authoritative jazz writing online, and I’m excited to join the WBGO team, collaborating closely with NPR Music, to help produce some innovation in that area.”

Niles said Chinen will help strengthen the station’s ability to engage on its traditional and digital platforms. “Nate will be an integral part of our *Jazz Night in America* team in addition to leading our editorial coverage of jazz both locally and globally,” she said.

Jazz Night in America, produced at WBGO in partnership with NPR and Jazz at Lincoln Center, is carried on over 200 stations nationally, and has a robust digital presence which will only increase with Chinen’s input. NPR’s Vice President for Programming and Audience Development, Anya Grundmann, said, “We’re thrilled that through our innovative partnership with WBGO, Nate Chinen will become NPR Music’s lead jazz writer and curator. Nate writes beautifully on the sound of jazz and the state of this crucial American form, as well as genres like hip-hop and folk, and his perspective will help to shape a vital, boundary-breaking conversation about music across public radio and beyond.”

Nate’s work has earned him a reputation as one of the most prominent jazz critics working today. He is a ten-time winner of the Helen Dance-Robert Palmer Award for Excellence in Writing, presented by the Jazz Journalists Association, as well as their award for Best Book About Jazz, for George Wein’s autobiography, *Myself Among Others: A Life in Music*, which he coauthored. In addition to *The New York Times*, where he began contributing in 2005, he has a longtime affiliation with *JazzTimes*, as both a columnist and feature writer. His other outlets have included *Downbeat*, *Slate*, the *Village Voice*, *Blender* and *Vibe*. His work has appeared in *Best Music Writing 2011* and in the anthologies *Miles Davis: The Complete Illustrated History* and *Pop When the World Falls Apart: Music in the Shadow of Doubt*. He is currently working on another book, about jazz in our time.

About WBGO

WBGO is the global leader in jazz radio, broadcasting from the jazz capital of the world. Founded in 1979, WBGO is a publically-supported cultural institution that preserves and elevates America's music: jazz and blues. Within public radio, WBGO is regarded as a leader because of its ground-breaking work in community engagement and the presentation of jazz. WBGO, Newark Public Radio, is one of the original 12 New Jersey cultural organizations that has been designated a "Major Impact" arts organization by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, and has been awarded this distinction for each year for more than two decades.

About *Jazz Night in America*

Jazz Night in America is a multi-media documentary program produced by WBGO-Newark Public Radio, NPR Music and Jazz at Lincoln Center. Through hour-long radio shows and video shorts, the program tells the story of jazz through historical, musical and social contexts, live concert captures and in-depth interviews. Broadcast on some 200 public radio stations around the country and on NPR.org, it reaches the most diverse listening audience on public radio.

About Nate Chinen

Nate Chinen was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, into a musical family: his parents were popular local entertainers, and he grew up around working musicians, becoming a devoted jazz fan in his early teenage years.

He began writing about music professionally in 1996, at the *Philadelphia City Paper*. There he covered one of the great jazz cities at ground level, writing a steady stream of reviews and features — and eventually a biweekly column, *The Gig*.

He moved to New York in 1998, and soon began working with the Newport Jazz Festival founder and impresario George Wein on his autobiography, *Myself Among Others: A Life in Music*. Published in 2003, it received rave reviews and the award for Best Book About Jazz, from the Jazz Journalists Association.

Chinen has also contributed to a range of national music publications, including *DownBeat*, *Blender* and *Vibe*. For several years he was the jazz critic for *Weekend America*, a radio program syndicated by American Public Media. From 2003 to 2005 he covered jazz for the *Village Voice*, sharing a beat with Francis Davis.

But Chinen's closest affiliation with a music periodical has been with *JazzTimes*, from the early 2000s to the present: he wrote three of the magazine's most recent cover stories, about the eminent tenor saxophonist Sonny Rollins and two pianists of wildly different profiles, Joey Alexander and Keith Jarrett. In 2004 Chinen resurrected *The Gig* as a monthly *JazzTimes* column, and over the years it has been a forum for a host of issues relevant to the jazz community: the rise of social media and new recording technologies, the shortage of women in

jazz criticism, the biases inherent in the Grammys. (For better or worse, a column in 2013 formally introduced the term “jazzbro.”)

Chinen began writing about music for *The New York Times* in 2005, joining a small corps of pop critics including Ben Ratliff and Jon Pareles. Along with Ratliff, whose example was instructive, Chinen shaped the jazz coverage at the *Times* for the next 11 years, writing regular reviews, critic’s notebooks, features and obituaries. He recently established a profile series called the New Vanguard, and wrote a year-end appreciation of the vitality of jazz’s elders. His most recent piece was a long-form review of the 2017 NYC Winter Jazzfest, published this week.

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