

MAY 15 Fri  
7:30pm | Baker Hall

# NYC SKA ORCHESTRA



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**ZOELLNER  
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LEHIGH UNIVERSITY



2025.2026  
SEASON

Zoellner Arts Center receives state arts funding support through a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.



# ABOUT

NYC SKA ORCHESTRA is a 20-piece big band that creates and performs lush original compositions and arrangements of songs from the rich, historic, and culturally iconic Jamaican music styles of ska, mento, rock steady, reggae, and jazz of the 1950s, 60s and 70s. They blend the exuberant musical layers of the jazz big band era, soul and R&B with Jamaican roots music. Their sound is unique, accessible, joyous, hugely entertaining and danceable.

## BIOGRAPHIES



**Larry McDonald** is the 89 year-young “Musical Father” of the group and a celebrated Jamaican percussionist and vocalist (Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, Bunny Wailer, Lee Scratch Perry, The Skatalites, Gil-Scott Heron, Toots & The Maytals, Taj Mahal, Mick Jagger.)



**Kevin Batchelor** is the Orchestra’s founder and bandleader; with a storied career as an arranger, trumpeter, singer and educator (Sting, Shaggy, Steel Pulse, Skatalites, Marcus Miller, Jimmy Cliff, Maxwell, Rihanna, and Keith Richards.)



**Aida Brandies-Hargrove** is an accomplished singer, arranger, musician, producer whose work spans jazz, soul, and R&B. The widow of legendary jazz trumpeter Roy Hargrove, Aida serves as President of the Roy Hargrove Legacy and Executive Director of the Roy Hargrove Big Band.



**Pallavi Gummalam** is a professional vocalist and performer who has established herself as a versatile artist, performing in large-scale big band settings as well as intimate jazz gigs, ska and reggae, a cappella and as a soprano.



**Karl Wright** is a master Jamaican drummer with extensive recording and touring credits with Sting, Shaggy, Monty Alexander, Machel Montano and many others.

NYC SKA ORCHESTRA also features a passionate team of top-notch professional musicians and arrangers including **Paul Nowinski** (Bass), **Jonny Meyers** (Guitar) **Nick Balaban** (keys), **James K** (trumpet), **Josh Levinson** (trumpet), **Matt Ragsdale** (trumpet), **John Speck** (trombone), **J Walter Hawkes** (trombone), **Buford O'Sullivan** (trombone), **Dan Fusco** (trombone), **Greg Lapine** (alto Saxophone), **Matt Knoegle** (alto saxophone), **Tony Orbach** (tenor saxophone/flute), **Nigel Iniss** (tenor saxophone) and **Paul Vercesi** (Baritone saxophone/flute).

**Contact information and more can be found at  
[www.nyc-ska-orchestra.com](http://www.nyc-ska-orchestra.com)**

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