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A mobile guitar performance, "Tilted Axes" will help kick off the festival on Sat., Sept. 10, with a musical march from W. 11th Street and Waverly Place to "The Cube" at Astor Place and back. (Photo by Bob Krasner)

Klezomatics, 'Kerouac at 100,' 'Tilted Axes,' Suzanne Vega and much more coming at The Village Trip festival

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Mark your calendars. On second thought...you might actually want to get a bigger calendar so you have enough room to note down all these events.

The Village Trip Festival is coming back around for its fourth trip in Downtown Manhattan — and it's shaping up to be bigger and better than ever.

This year's festival will run from Sept. 10 to Sept. 24 and will boast its largest geographic footprint to date.



The Village Trip keeps growing, this year expanding into the East Village. (Poster by Marc Kehoe)

A diverse program of cultural and arts events, the two-week-long festival will span the history-laden neighborhoods of Greenwich Village, the West Village and the East Village — from Washington Square Park to Tompkins Square Park.

Festival programming will feature jazz, rock and classical music performances, local neighborhood and history walks, topical talks and panel discussions exploring critical issues, such as human rights, women's political action and freedom of speech, as well as an exhibition of neighborhood artists, and the return of David Amram as Village Trip artist emeritus.

“Our goal is to bring the city alive — from West to East, and back again — with a rich slate of happenings that represent all that's made Downtown Manhattan a magnet for creativity and activism for more than a century and a half,” said Liz Thomson and Cliff Pearson, the festival's joint artistic directors.





Lorin Sklamberg, the lead singer and accordionist of The Klezmatics, performed at the festival's June 29 preview party. (The Village Trip)

This festival's signature event will be a free concert in Washington Square Park featuring The Klezmatics and gospel singer Joshua Nelson, along with Reverend Billy and the Church of Stop Shopping. The open-air concert is scheduled for Saturday afternoon, Sept. 24.

"The Klezmatics are thrilled to be a part of this year's Village Trip Festival," said Lorin Sklamberg, a founding member of The Klezmatics. "It is especially meaningful since The Village Trip is expanding to include the East Village, whose kinetic energy was so vital to the band's genesis in the 1980s. We are also beyond excited for the opportunity to present "Brother Moses Smote the Water," our ecstatic collaboration with the mighty "Prince of Kosher Gospel," Joshua Nelson, as part of our Washington Square Park debut."





David Amram performing at The Village Trip preview party at the newly reopened Cafe Figaro. (Photo by Maria Passannante Derr)

Additional highlights will include:

- “8th Street Experience”: Opening-day kickoff outdoor free concert with a line-up of “musical hooligans” led by David Amram and friends (W. Eighth and MacDougal Streets, Sat., Sept. 10)
- “Tilted Axes: Music for Mobile Electric Guitars”: Also on the fest’s opening day, the “Tilted Axes” procession route will begin and end at St. John’s in the Village (218 W. 11th St.). The musicians will circle Washington Square Park, proceed east to Astor Place, and then back again to the West Village, making street stops to engage the public along the way. The procession will culminate in the courtyard of St. John’s in the Village with the premiere performance of a “Tilted Axes” composition created for the 2022 Village Trip Festival. (Sat., Sept. 10, 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m).





Bobby Sanabria, performing at the preview party, and his big band will be back for this year's Village Trip. (Photo by Maria Passannante Derr)

- “Jack Kerouac at 100”: A series of Village Trip events, honoring Kerouac’s centennial, including:
 - o “On the Road”: A staged reading with music, featuring selections from the generation-defining opus, directed by David Deblinger of HB Studio. (Strand Book Store)
 - o “Kerouac’s Village”: A panel discussion about the New York City neighborhoods where Kerouac lived and worked.
 - o “Classical Jack”: A musical performance of classical selections that inspired Kerouac. (St. John’s in the Village Church)
 - o “Children of the American Bop Night”: A spirited evening of jazz inspired by Kerouac and performed by David Amram and Latin jazz virtuoso Bobby Sanabria. (Joe’s Pub, Sept. 16)
- “Framing the Village”: An exhibition of paintings, drawings and photographs by Village artists depicting — or inspired by — the neighborhoods of the West Village, Greenwich Village and East Village. Curated by New York City artist Marc Kehoe. (Revelation Gallery, St. John’s in the Village Church)





Patrick Grant leading a previous performance of "Tilted Axes" up Astor Place. (Photo by Bob Krasner)

- “Global Greenwich Village”: Inaugural Village Trip lecture by Robert Snyder, Manhattan Borough historian and professor of American studies and journalism (Rutgers University, Newark), examining the Village as a mecca for artists, musicians and writers who sought social justice and political change. Professor Snyder will also cite the impact of Afro-Cuban revolutionaries and politically astute women in New York.
- “I’ll Take Manhattan”: A celebration of New York in song, performed and convened by Janis Siegel (The Manhattan Transfer) with pianist and arranger John Di Martino and friends. (Joe’s Pub, Sept. 18)
- “Eleanor’s Legacy”: A panel discussion honoring Eleanor Roosevelt, longtime Washington Square Park resident, and her dedication to human rights and women’s leadership, 60 years after her death.



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David Amram reading from “Offbeat: Collaborating with Kerouac,” at the festival preview party. The 2008 book includes the multi-instrumentalist’s memories of the bygone Greenwich Village scene of the 1950s and ’60s and his adventures and friendship with “On the Road” writer Jack Kerouac, one of the leading lights of the Beat Generation. (Photo by Jamie Kalikow)

- “Wonderful Town”: Walking tour led by Jamie Bernstein (Leonard Bernstein’s daughter), to explore locations mentioned in the Broadway musical, primarily set in Greenwich Village, followed by a cabaret set by Janis Siegel (The Manhattan Transfer) featuring songs from the show. (Washington Square Hotel)
- James Beard Townhouse: On-site tour of Beard’s West Village home, his longtime culinary mecca on W. 12th Street.
- “Freedom of Speech in Contested Times”: A panel discussion exploring some of the parallels between the expression of social and political unrest from the past and today. (Venue to be determined)



Liz Thomson and Cliff Pearson, the co-artistic directors of The Village Trip festival. Thomson is the festival’s founder. (Photo by Jamie Kalikow)

The Village Trip held a preview party on June 29 at the newly reopened Cafe Figaro. Mark Levine, the Manhattan borough president, who attended, said he’s excited for the arts-and-cultural extravaganza’s return.

“It’s really good news that The Village Trip is back — bigger than ever and going all the way to

the East Village!” Levine said. “There’s so much amazing, eclectic culture in this community, which block-for-block has more artistic history than almost any other place in America. It’s just wonderful. I cannot wait to attend the festival.”

Presenting partners and venues for the 2022 fest include Drom, East Village Community Coalition, Figaro Cafe, HB Studio, James Beard Foundation, Joe’s Pub, La Sala de Pepe & Foto Espacio Gallery, Pangea Restaurant & Cabaret, St. John’s in the Village, Strand Book Store, Village Preservation, Washington Square Hotel and North Square Restaurant & Lounge, and the New York Public Library branches at Jefferson Market and Tompkins Square Park.



Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine is a Village Trip fan. (Photo by Jamie Kalikow)

The Village Trip was created in 2018 to celebrate the dynamic artistic, musical and activist legacy of the West Village, East Village and Greenwich Village neighborhoods of Downtown Manhattan. The Village Trip is for New Yorkers, their families, friends and neighbors, and for visitors from around the world.

The festival kicked off in 2018 with Suzanne Vega performing in Washington Square Park. In 2019, the three-day festival featured an outdoor concert headlined by Steve Earle. Due to the pandemic in 2020, The Village Trip was canceled. For 2021, the now-nine-day festival included Bobby Sanabria and his Multiverse Big Band performing in Washington Square Park.