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# Jazz musicians pair for Uncorked show

By **Al Robitaille**  
[www.GeorgetownMusictown.com](http://www.GeorgetownMusictown.com)

Toronto session guitarist Mike Conto joins forces with Canada's multi-award winning jazz trumpet icon Brownman Ali at Downtown Georgetown's Uncorked On Main for three Fridays: May 29, July 10 and Aug. 14.

Both are known for their energized playing styles, but in this bare-bones duo configuration their introspective, exploratory nature will be on full display.

Together they have been described as "what Chet Baker and Jim Hall might have sounded like had they been paired more often" (NOW Magazine).

Brownman Ali, in Toronto after a winter of subbing in with the touring band for legendary hip-hop artist Jay-Z, is no stranger to the duo format. He has run his lauded monthly jazz series BROWNMAN+1 at Toronto's Musiduum for the last three years. In it he invites various "+1"s to perform.

"There's nowhere to hide in a duo," said Ali. "It's one of the most open, exposed and vulnerable situations a jazz musician can find himself in."

Conto and Brownman were hired separately by the Toronto District School Board to conduct

jazz workshops for students and found themselves playing duets together, calling on tunes from the Great American Songbook.

"But we won't just be playing standards," Conto said regarding the upcoming Uncorked show. "Expect to hear lots of interpretations of the classics, but also a healthy dose of modern jazz exploration."



**BROWNMAN ALI**  
 Photo by Steve Stober

Adds Ali, "like Miles would want."

Both musicians are top shelf jazz artists. Ali is an internationally acclaimed performer now called upon by the likes of Quincy Jones, Missy Elliot and Mos Def after a four year stint touring the globe with Guru's Jazzmatazz. The teaming of the two will yield deep explorations of the jazz artform.

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As a bonus, acclaimed visual artist Stephanie Schirm will capture these artists live on canvas while they perform! Schirm has been slowly amassing a collection of Ali paintings and drawings. Several of her Ali works have appeared in art galleries. She is working her way to a full showing, and will use the rare opportunity of Ali appearing in her hometown of Georgetown as yet another chance to paint him live. Schirm will be set up in the venue and patrons are welcome to watch her capture the artists in full flight.



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