

Chicago Calling is a quartet that's all about the jazz greats that came from the Chicago Jazz Scene. Juli Wood and her quartet not only perform some of the music written by or associated with such musical greats like: Johnny Griffin; Eddie Harris; Dinah Washington; Joe Williams; Sun Ra; John Gilmore; Clifford Jordan; Johnny Hartman; Von Freeman; Fred Anderson; Gene Ammons; Carmen McRae; Herbie Hancock; Nat King Cole; Ahmad Jamal; Earma Thompson; and Jodie Christian, but she relates the history, circumstances and personalities that made these musicians Chicago legends.

Chicago Calling offers a unique musical tour through the history of Chicago Jazz, the musicians and the legendary venues where they performed.



Juli Wood
Saxophone/Vocals

For the past twenty years, Juli Wood has established herself as a solid, swinging, lyrical entertainer in Chicago's Jazz music scene. Juli works in the same vein of the great traditional saxophonist/vocalists like "Cleanhead" Vincent, Eddie Harris and Louis Jordan. Juli's love of "Chicago Jazz" and history started under the mentorships of Chicago Legends Earma Thompson and Jodie Christian. Not only did Juli learn how to play "swinging tunes" from these veterans of "Chicago Jazz" but also many of the rich colorful stories behind the great legends of the Chicago Jazz scene.



Harrison Bankhead
Bass

Harrison Bankhead's rich bass sound provides part of the drive and melodic intensity for the group. He is a key force in Ed Wilkerson's "8 Bold Souls", and has also collaborated with Ernest Dawkins, Hamid Drake, Fred Anderson, Dee Alexander, and Roscoe Mitchell among others. Harrison is a native of Waukegan, IL and has been on the jazz scene for many years in Chicago. He has two wonderful recordings out as a leader – "Morning Sun, Harvest Moon" and "Velvet Blue" on Engine records.



Avreeayl Ra
Drums

Avreeayl Ra is a drummer extraordinaire! He was born in Chicago and is a long time member of the Chicago AACM. He has played with AACM co-founder Kelan Philip Cohran, Fred Anderson, Amiri Baraka, Fontella Bass, Lester Bowie, Ari Brown, Oscar Brown Jr., Henry Butler, Professor Longhair, Hamid Drake, Malachi Favors, Henry Grimes, Billy Harper, Joseph Jarman, Kidd Jordan, Nichole Mitchell, Sun Ra, Pharoah Sanders and many more. Howard Reich, Chicago Tribune's music critic called Ra "An indispensable Chicago innovator who shapes the music making swirling around him with remarkable precision and poise ... extraordinarily sensitive percussion."



Leandro Lopez Varady
Piano

Leandro was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Graduated from the Catholic University of Argentina (UCA) in 1992 as Licentiate in Music, major Composition with a Gold Medal and Awards.

He traveled Asia (Singapore-South Korea-China) from 1997 to 2000 with the Eldeé Young Quartet (former bassist of the Ramsey Lewis trio) and has lived in Chicago since 2000. Active in the Chicago music scene he has performed in the Green Mill, Jazz Showcase, Andy's Jazz Club among others as well as in several theaters: Harris Theater at the Millennium Park, Auditorium Theater at Roosevelt University, North Shore Center for the Performing Arts among others..