

THE 5TH ANNIVERSARY
DUKE ELLINGTON
WASHINGTON, D.C. | **JAZZ FESTIVAL**



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**Duke Ellington Jazz Festival Closes with Performances
at the White House and at the Kennedy Center**

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**Sold-Out Kennedy Center Concert Tribute to Ellis Marsalis
Featured Sons, Harry Connick, Jr., and Dr. Billy Taylor**



CELEBRATING
NEW ORLEANS

Thomas Hale Boggs, Jr.
Honorary Co-Chairman

Walter Isaacson
Honorary Co-Chairman

Marc H. Morial
Honorary Co-Chairman

Sheila C. Johnson
*Honorary Chairman of
the Ovation Society*

Claude E. Bailey
Chairman of the Board

Charles Fishman
Executive Producer

Sunny Sumter
Managing Director

Paquito D'Rivera
Artistic Adviser

[June 22, 2009 – Washington, DC] The 5th anniversary Duke Ellington Jazz Festival (DEJF) spectacular celebration of New Orleans was the most successful and high-profile festival to date. The DEJF estimates nearly 100,000 people attended sold-out shows and free events including those at the Phillips Collection and on the National Mall. On its closing day, June 15th, the DEJF participated in the launch of a new White House music series before presenting, with the Kennedy Center, its completely sold-out finale -- a tribute to Ellis Marsalis with performances by the Marsalis family, Harry Connick, Jr., and Dr. Billy Taylor.

“This year’s festival was beyond category -- an incredibly joyous celebration of our 5th anniversary and of the seminal musical heritage of New Orleans,” mused Charles Fishman, Founder and Executive Producer of the DEJF. “To partner in a White House education program to promote jazz and then to produce a concert honoring Ellis Marsalis – who performed with his sons, Harry Connick, Jr., and Dr. Billy Taylor -- in the same day is just phenomenal. We are grateful for this level of support and excitement for this unique American music.”

At The White House. The DEJF presents educational programming year-round working with District of Columbia schools and is a presenting partner in the new White House educational music series, *Jazz Studio*. Ellis Marsalis and sons Branford, Wynton, Delfeayo and Jason, along with DEJF artistic adviser, Paquito D’Rivera, helped lead student workshops before D’Rivera performed in the East Room with his 14 year old protégé Tony Madruga’s trio (featuring DC-based Kush Abadey and Zach Brown); Elijah Easton from Duke Ellington School for the Performing Arts and on the closing number, Wynton Marsalis. Said Sunny Sumter, Managing Director of the DEJF who oversees education, “To be invited to participate in such a significant program to promote and preserve jazz is a testament to the strong educational outreach that is primary to our organization’s efforts. We are grateful to the First Lady and to the White House for such a unique partnership opportunity.”

At The Kennedy Center. The Marsalis brothers performed later that night as the DEJF and the Kennedy Center presented *Celebrating a Jazz Master: Ellis Marsalis* in tribute to their father. At the concert, in-between upbeat horn-fueled tunes, the sons swapped funny family tales and one-upped each other as only brothers can do, but always agreeing upon the fact that their father was, as their brother Ellis III recited from the stage in his compelling ode, "...a beacon, both being and showing." After intermission, Taylor came out to play a piece in honor of his friend before Connick, Jr., emerged to play a piano duet with Marsalis and then to sing "Stardust." The brothers returned to the stage with Connick, Jr., still on piano and Eric Revis on bass to round out the rhythm section. Herlin Riley spelled Jason Marsalis on drums whenever Marsalis was on xylophone. During the concert, Fishman presented Maestro Marsalis with the DEJF's 2009 Lifetime Achievement Award, who only wanted to thank his wife Dolores.

Guests at the concert included Sheila Johnson, Chair of the DEJF Ovation Society; honorary chair Thomas Hale Boggs and Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito. Following the concert, members of the Ovation Society individual giving circle, honored artists, guests, and the DEJF board and staff celebrated the phenomenal concert in the Kennedy Center's beautiful Terrace Restaurant which features a spectacular view of the monuments at night. Specialty drinks were created by Bacardi for the occasion including the Bombay Sapphire Jazz Fizz. Gift bags included Bacardi minis, a cocktail recipe book and a copy of Washington Life among other keepsakes.

Bringing Out 100,000. Over 2,300 people packed the hot ticket event at the Kennedy Center, which followed a weekend in which more than 85,000 came out to The National Mall for the DEJF's two-day *New Orleans on the Mall* extravaganza featuring 10 renowned New Orleans groups: the Rebirth Brass Band, Terence Blanchard, Buckwheat Zydeco, Donald Harrison, Little Freddie King, Nicholas Payton, Irma Thomas, Don Vappie and the Creole Jazz Serenaders, Trombone Shorty and Bob French's Original Tuxedo Jazz Band. Aside from the beautiful weather, the audience was delighted by the music and great surprises. DEJF Artistic Adviser Paquito D'Rivera made surprise appearances, guesting with both Buckwheat Zydeco and Donald Harrison; Trumpeter Nicholas Payton spotlighted bassist Esperanza Spalding, currently featured in a Banana Republic campaign, who sang an entrancing "Let It Ride." The young phenomenon Trombone Shorty, who sings and plays trumpet and trombone, whipped the crowd up into a frenzy with an amazing set during which he and his band members swapped instruments, putting Shorty on the drums. They played like nothing happened and ended the set by jumping into the crowd and starting up a second line. Irma Thomas closed the night with her incredible blues-fused jazz vocals including her song from the movie "Secret Life of Bees" and implored the crowd to donate to the festival and help keep great music alive for the people.

The Jazz Nightlife. Another great surprise took place Saturday night at The Madison Hotel, a sponsor of the DEJF, and a participating venue in the DEJF's *Jazz in the 'Hoods* late-night concert series presented by the DC Sports and Entertainment Commission. D'Rivera came by to catch his protégé, 14-year-old Madrugá, leading a trio featuring local teen sensations Zach Brown and Kush Abadey, and then took the stage as a surprise birthday tribute to his wife, Brenda. D'Rivera was surprised himself when, after the bar closed, Branford Marsalis – who had just checked into the hotel – came in with his soprano saxophone.

Management re-opened the bar and another jazz nightlife story was born as Paquito and Branford sat next to one another on bar stools and teased each other with renditions of "Down by the Riverside." The few lucky stragglers went wild and were treated to a spontaneous once-in-a-lifetime experience.

At the Embassy of France. The festival's opening gala concert was preceded by a reception at which newly-appointed Deputy Mayor Valerie Santos accepted the DEJF's John Conyers, Jr. Jazz Advocacy Award on behalf of the Government of the District of Columbia and Mayor Adrian M. Fenty, who was unable to attend. Other recipients representing the city were Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton and Council President Pro Tempore Jack Evans. The exhilarating concert featured New Orleans jazz icon Dr. Michael White and the Original Liberty Jazz Band, with the ever-versatile D'Rivera as their special guest. After selling out a 7:30 p.m. performance, a second show was added by demand and nearly sold out as well.

At the Phillips Collection. *Jazz 'n Families Fun Day* was a big hit at the Phillips Collection as over 4,000 came out for two full days of free family-friendly music and arts programming on June 6 and 7. In partnership with the Phillips Collection and the annual Dupont-Kalorama Museum Walk, the weekend festival celebrated the synergy between jazz and the visual arts. Highlights included solo performances by pianist Janelle Gill and vibraphonist Chuck Redd, and swingin' sets by Antonio Parker and Reginald Cyntje. Families interacted with trumpets, saxophones, drums, and flutes in the instrument petting zoo, listened to over 10 jazz performances, enjoyed a lively storyteller, dabbled in a hands-on art-making workshop, and viewed the Phillips Collections' impressive exhibits.

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The Duke Ellington Jazz Festival. With over 100 performances in more than 45 venues across the city, the Duke Ellington Jazz Festival (DEJF) is the largest music festival in Washington, DC, and is a highly anticipated cultural event in the nation's capital. It has received widespread praise for its impressive mix of local, nationally and internationally-known artists and its presentation of programs and performances at diverse venues in different neighborhoods of the District. Signature events at the DEJF include free, all-day concerts on the National Mall, which last year attracted more than 40,000 people. The DEJF's mission is to provide enriching and entertaining programs that attract the broadest possible demographic to jazz; use jazz as a form of arts education; honor DC's own Duke Ellington and other jazz greats; and add to the city's rich jazz history, further enhancing the nation's capital city as a premier cultural destination.

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