



**DUKE ELLINGTON
JAZZ FESTIVAL
WASHINGTON D.C.**

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**Former Jazz Vocalist, TV Host and Aspen Institute Manager,
SUNNY SUMTER, Named Chief Operating Officer of
Duke Ellington Jazz Festival in Washington, DC**

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5th Annual Festival Salutes New Orleans June 5-15, 2009, with the
Marsalis Family, Terence Blanchard, Harry Connick, Jr, and More

[March 25, 2009 – Washington, DC] A former jazz vocalist and television host for *Jazz Central* on BET Jazz (now BET J), Sunny Sumter has merged her performing arts experience with her management experience in her expanding position at Festivals DC, Inc, which produces the annual Duke Ellington Jazz Festival (DEJF). A DC native, Sumter joined the DEJF in March of 2008 to direct and expand its educational initiatives. Her role continues to evolve as she was just promoted to chief operating officer by Charles Fishman, Founder/Executive Producer of Festivals DC and the DEJF.

Comments Fishman, “Sunny is the perfect person to help grow this festival. She has over 17 years of programming and management experience in nonprofit cultural organizations and was a performing artist herself. She really understands what it takes to meet the needs of all the partners involved from artists to business to the community. And she has been invaluable in strengthening our internal infrastructure and developing our educational programs so we can keep bringing jazz to the people all year long.”

In her new role as chief operating officer, Sumter will be responsible for managing the daily operations of the DEJF. She will continue relationship-building with sponsors, culture and educational institutions, government agencies and venue partners while overseeing more of the internal administrative, marketing and production logistic operations of DEJF. She will also continue in her role as director of outreach and education initiatives.

Sumter explains, “I’ve always believed in the unique advantages of jazz as a tool to engage people from all walks of life and to build community here in the nation’s capital. It’s thrilling to be in a role that allows me to connect with key leaders in business, politics and the arts about the Festival and communicate its growing cultural and economic impact on our city while also connecting to young people through our music education programs. I’m excited at the new scope of work before me in growing our staff, our brand, our funding, our partnership base and streamlining our operations.”

Sumter's recent management background includes six years managing special projects for the Aspen Institute. Sumter has considerable experience working in the arts nonprofit field, having held positions at the Smithsonian Institution, the Rhythm and Blues Foundation and the Trellis Fund. She also has strong experience in education, having served as a music instructor for the Smithsonian Institution, a board member for the DC Chapter of the International Association for Jazz Education and a member of the National Collaboration for Youth and the DC Arts and Humanities Education Collaborative.

From 2001-2005, she was familiar to many jazz fans nationwide as one of the hosts of *Jazz Central* for BET Jazz, now BET J and a channel of Black Entertainment Television (BET). As a jazz vocalist, she toured internationally and performed at such Washington, DC-area institutions as the Kennedy Center, Smithsonian's Baird Auditorium, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Wolf Trap and the Inn at Little Washington. She was awarded a fellowship by the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities and an Emerging Artist Award from the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation. Commissioned to compose and perform a song for the Africa National Summit, she received an enthusiastic standing ovation for it by more than 1,000 attendees, including U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, ambassadors, government and foundation officials, and business leaders from the U.S. and Africa. With four recordings that range from traditional to world beat to contemporary jazz, Sumter received acclaimed praise by the Washington Post among others. She earned her bachelors of arts in music business at Howard University's School of Fine Arts.

5th Annual Duke Ellington Jazz Festival June 5-15, 2009 Celebrates New Orleans

Expanding to 11 days from seven days last year, the 5th annual Festival will present over 100 programs in nearly 50 venues, bringing jazz to every part of the city and to every level of fan from young to old, artist to student, resident to tourist.

Now permanently moved to June, the 5th anniversary festival will pay tribute to the unique, rich and diverse musical heritage of New Orleans and salute pianist/composer/educator Ellis Marsalis, a patriarch of jazz in New Orleans and father of musicians Branford, Delfeayo, Jason and Wynton. The Marsalis sons will perform, along with Harry Connick, Jr., and others in the DEJF's closing Jazz Masters concert in Ellis' honor on June 15th at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The DEJF's unique and free programs include *Jazz 'n Families Fun Day*, which expands to two days and takes place June 6-7 at the Phillips Collection, and *Jazz on The National Mall*, which will expand to three days and kicks off June 12 with a twilight concert by Grammy Award-winning trumpeter and composer, Terence Blanchard. Known for his musical scores for Spike Lee's films including "When the Levees Broke," a film about the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Blanchard will perform "A Tale of God's Will: A Requiem for Katrina."

For schedule and more information, visit www.dejazzfest.org.

2009 DEJF Festival: Celebrating New Orleans - Artists Include:

Paquito D'Rivera, *DEJF Artistic Advisor*

Terence Blanchard	Harry Connick, Jr.
Duke Ellington Orchestra	Bob French's Original Tuxedo Band
Donald Harrison	Little Freddie King
Branford Marsalis	Ellis Marsalis
Delfeayo Marsalis	Jason Marsalis
Wynton Marsalis	Nicholas Payton
Rebirth Brass Band	Dr. Billy Taylor
Irma Thomas	Don Vappie & the Creole Serenaders
Dr. Michael White	Buckwheat Zydeco

Duke Ellington Jazz Festival. With over 100 performances in nearly 50 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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