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2018 Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz International Piano Competition Will Take Place December 2-3 in Washington, D.C.

Weekend Includes All-Star Gala Concert Honoring Jazz Legend Dee Dee Bridgewater and Special Tribute to Longtime Institute Supporter Aretha Franklin

Washington, D.C. —The 30th Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz International Competition will be presented December 2-3 in Washington, DC. Open to musicians ages 30 and under from across the globe, this year's competition will shine a spotlight on the piano.

The Semifinals of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz International Piano Competition will be held on Sunday, December 2nd, from noon to 5:00 p.m. at the Smithsonian Institution's Baird Auditorium inside the National Museum of Natural History. The 14 semifinalists will compete before an all-star panel of judges that includes jazz pianists **Monty Alexander, Joanne Brackeen, Cyrus Chestnut, Herbie Hancock, Jason Moran, Danilo Pérez and Renee Rosnes**. Each semifinalist will perform for 15 minutes, accompanied by **Rodney Whitaker** on bass and **Carl Allen** on drums.

From this group, the judges will select three finalists who will perform in the final round at The Kennedy Center Eisenhower Theater on Monday evening, December 3rd. At stake is more than \$100,000 in scholarships and prizes, including a \$25,000 first place scholarship and guaranteed recording contract with Concord Music Group; a \$15,000 second place scholarship; and a \$10,000 third place scholarship.

Following the three finalists' performances at the Competition Finals, an **All-Star Gala Concert** will include a special tribute to the late **Aretha Franklin**, who was an Institute supporter for more than two decades through her many performances and contributions to the Institute's jazz education programs. NEA Jazz Master, multiple GRAMMY Award-winning vocalist, and Tony Award-winning actress **Dee Dee Bridgewater** will receive this year's Maria Fisher Founder's Award. The event will bring together major names in jazz, including past Competition winners and finalists **Ambrose Akinmusire, Melissa Aldana, Kris Bowers, Jazzmeia Horn, Linda Oh, and Jamison Ross**. They will be joined by **John Beasley** (Musical Director), **Terri Lyne Carrington, Jimmy Heath, Ledisi**, and others. Also performing will be the graduate-level college students who attend the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Performance at UCLA. Additional talent will be announced shortly.

Proceeds from the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz International Piano Competition and All-Star Gala Concert will help fund the Institute's public school education programs in Washington D.C., Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, Newark, San Francisco and the Mississippi Delta.



Editors please note the following event and ticket information

Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz International Piano Competition Semifinals

Sunday, December 2nd at 12 noon with ticket distribution at 11:00 a.m.

Baird Auditorium at the National Museum of Natural History, 10th St. & Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, DC

Tickets are free of charge and will be distributed by the Smithsonian Associates at the National Museum of Natural History on a first-come, first-served basis beginning at 11:00 a.m.

Thelonious Monk International Jazz Piano Competition Finals and All-Star Gala Concert

Monday, December 3rd at 7:30 p.m.

Kennedy Center Eisenhower Theater, 2700 F St. NW, Washington, DC

Tickets are \$35 to \$125 and may be purchased via the Kennedy Center box office in person, by calling 800.444.1324, or online at www.kennedy-center.org. Information regarding VIP packages, which include a post-event VIP Cast Party, is available from the Institute at 202.364.7272.

Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz

The Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz is a nonprofit education organization established in 1986. Its mission is to offer the world's most promising young musicians college level training by internationally acclaimed jazz masters and to present public school-based music education programs for young people around the world. The Institute preserves, perpetuates and expands jazz as a global art form, and utilizes jazz as a means to unite people of all ages, backgrounds and nationalities. All of the Institute's programs are provided free of charge to students, schools and communities worldwide. The Institute's programs help fill a tremendous void in arts education left by budget cuts in public school funding, and use jazz as the medium to encourage imaginative thinking, creativity, a positive self-image, and respect for one's own and others' cultural heritage. Jazz great **Herbie Hancock** serves as the Institute's chairman. www.monkinstitute.org.

Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz International Competition

Presented since 1987, the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz International Competition is recognized as the world's most prestigious jazz competition and for discovering the next generation of jazz masters. Each year, major scholarships and prizes including recording contracts are awarded to the talented young musicians participating in the Competition. The scholarships help pay tuition for college-level jazz education studies and provide funds for private, specialized instruction.

The competition has launched the careers of a number of major jazz artists including saxophonist Joshua Redman; vocalists Cécile McLorin Salvant, Jane Monheit and Gretchen Parlato; pianist Marcus Roberts; bassist Ben Williams; and trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire. These artists and dozens of others from past competitions have forged successful careers as performing and recording artists, as well as music educators to help perpetuate America's legacy of jazz. Past judges have included Quincy Jones, Diana Krall, Branford Marsalis, Christian McBride, Dianne Reeves, Slide Hampton, Pat Metheny, Roy Haynes and many others.

2018 Competition Semifinalist Bios

Thomas Enhco, of Paris, France, began classical training on the violin and piano as a child and studied formally at the Centre des Musiques Didier Lockwood and the Paris National Conservatory. Since then, he has achieved international recognition, winning France's prestigious Django d'Or "New Talent" award, the "R v lation" prize at the Victoires du Jazz, the third Grand Prize at the Martial Solal International Jazz Piano Competition, and the second Grand Prize at the Osaka International Chamber Music Competition. Enhco has recorded and performed in dozens of countries with top artists like Jack DeJohnette, John Patitucci, Didier Lockwood, Ari Hoenig, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Ibrahim Maalouf and Rudresh Mahanthappa.

Steven Feifke, a native of Lexington, Massachusetts, is a prolific pianist, composer and educator. A regular at key venues including The Blue Note, Smalls and Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola, he frequently works as a musical director and leads his own big band, septet and trio. Feifke has arranged and written for a variety of contexts both in and out of jazz, and his music can be heard on the hit Netflix show "Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee." He holds a bachelor's degree in jazz studies and a minor in economics from New York University, along with a master's degree in jazz composition from the Manhattan School of Music. Feifke's debut record is *Peace In Time*, released independently in 2015.

Addison Frei, of Lawrence, Kansas, has won first prize in several competitions including the 2017 Parmigiani Montreux Jazz Piano Solo Competition and the 2016 UNISA International Jazz Piano Competition. His latest album on TCB Records, *No Defense*, was celebrated with solo piano performances at the Monterey Jazz Festival, Montreux Jazz Festival, Alhambra (Geneva), and Lucerne Piano Festival. His previous releases include *Intentions* (2014) and *Transit* (2016), featuring frequent collaborator Janis Siegel of The Manhattan Transfer. A graduate of the prestigious University of North Texas Jazz Studies program, Frei currently holds the piano chair in the Juilliard Artist Diploma Ensemble.

Liya Grigoryan was born in Yerevan, Armenia, and grew up in Rostov-on-Don, Russia. At age five, Grigoryan began taking part in piano competitions and performance tours throughout Russia, the Ukraine, Germany and Scotland. In 2010, she moved to Amsterdam to pursue degrees at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam. Grigoryan has won high-profile international competitions and awards, including the Leiden Jazz Award and the Keep an Eye International Jazz Award, and has taken part in exchanges at the Manhattan School of Music and the Hudson Jazz Workshop. She performs actively in the Netherlands and across Europe, and has appeared on top stages including Bimhuis, the Concertgebouw and the North Sea Jazz Festival.

Michael King, of Chicago, Illinois, began playing drums in his church band at age four. At 14, he transitioned to the piano and organ and began learning the instruments by ear. As a student at Chicago's Gallery 37 Center for the Arts, he was selected to participate in the prestigious Ravinia Jazz Scholars program and the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz National Performing Arts High Schools initiative. A graduate of Oberlin Conservatory, King has performed with Bobby Watson, Kevin Eubanks, Dave Liebman, Gary Bartz, Billy Hart, Rufus Reid and many others. He appears regularly on stages around the world with major artists including Dee Dee Bridgewater, Robin Eubanks, Theo Croker and Melissa Aldana.

Holger Marjamaa, a native of Tallinn, Estonia, was raised in a musical family. Beginning classical studies at age five, he developed a strong interest in the music of Chick Corea and famed jazz vocals group Take 6, and resolved to play jazz professionally. A graduate of the Estonian Music Academy, the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki and the Manhattan School of Music, Marjamaa has won numerous awards, including the Grand Prix at the XXIV International Solo Jazz Piano Competition in Vilnius, Lithuania and the Young Estonian Jazz Talent Award. He has appeared with international talents

including Lee Ritenour, Dennis Chambers, Lonnie Liston Smith, David Kikoski, Lee Pearson and Chad Lefkowitz-Brown.

Dave Meder, of Tampa, Florida, is a multifaceted pianist, composer and educator who took first place at the 2013 Jacksonville Jazz Piano Competition and was selected as a finalist for the American Pianists Association's 2019 Cole Porter Fellowship. He has performed on leading stages including the Torino Jazz Festival, Tokyo Jazz Festival, Jazz at Lincoln Center and Jazz at the Kitano. With an M.M. from New York University and an Artist Diploma from The Juilliard School, Meder's mentors include Kenny Barron, Mark Turner, George Cables, Nathan Davis and Curtis Fuller. Meder recently became Assistant Professor of Jazz Piano at the University of North Texas Jazz Studies program, and is the youngest instructor ever to hold such a position.

Krisztián Oláh of Hungary has become a recognizable presence on the European jazz scene at just 22 years of age. He has earned recognition at international jazz competitions including the Targu-Mures International Jazz Festival, Nottingham International Jazz Piano Competition, and Montreux Jazz Piano Competition, where he won third place in 2015. His Oláh Krisztián Trio performs at top venues and festivals across Hungary, and his Color Art Ensemble merges his interests in jazz and classical influences. In 2016, the Hungarian Jazz Federation recognized Oláh as the Young Jazz Musician of the Year. A graduate of the Béla Bartók Conservatory in Budapest, he currently studies jazz piano at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music.

Tom Oren was born in Tel Aviv, Israel, and began his musical training at age six. An honors graduate of the Israeli Conservatory of Music, he studied at the renowned Rimon Jazz Institute and attended the Berklee College of Music on a full scholarship. Oren's achievements include winning first prize in Rimon's annual Jazz Musician Contest and numerous America-Israel Cultural Foundation Scholarships. A pianist, arranger and composer, he has worked with a host of leading Israeli jazz musicians, most recently as a core member of the Eli Degibri Quartet. Oren has appeared on world-class stages including Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola, the JazzAhead! Festival in Bremen, and the 2018 International Jazz Day celebration in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

Maxime Sanchez, a native of Toulouse, France, began studying the piano at age four while living in South Korea. Following his family's return to France, he enrolled in the jazz studies program at the famed Conservatoire National Supérieur in Paris. Sanchez formed the successful Flash Pig quartet, which has performed at high-profile European events, including the famed North Sea Jazz Festival in 2015. The same year, he received broad acclaim as the winner of the Euroradio Jazz Competition. Since 2017, Sanchez has engaged in a variety of creative projects, collaborating with prominent French reedist and composer Michel Portal, composing for an 80-voice choir and jazz quartet, and performing with the innovative musical collective Banquise.

Jake Shapiro is an accomplished pianist and organist from Chicago, Illinois. Actively performing since age seven, he studied with acclaimed instructors Laura Hoffman and Jim Trompeter before earning his master's degree in jazz piano performance from the University of Miami's Frost School of Music. Shapiro has garnered three coveted Student Music Awards from *DownBeat* Magazine in the Jazz Arrangement, Small Jazz Combo and Blues/Pop/Rock Group categories. At just 25 years of age, Shapiro has already accrued an impressive list of collaborations, working with Danilo Pérez, Rufus Reid, Ed Calle, Jon Faddis and Terence Blanchard. He is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Miami.

Billy Test, a native of Philipsburg, Pennsylvania, is an in-demand pianist, composer, arranger and educator who has appeared at some of the leading venues in the United States. With a dual degree in jazz and classical piano performance from William Paterson University and a master's degree from the Manhattan School of Music, he has learned from some of the best in jazz, including Mulgrew Miller, Harold Mabern, Jim McNeely and Dave Liebman. Test has performed with the Village

Vanguard Orchestra, Joel Frahm, Sheila Jordan, Jerry Bergonzi and Giacomo Gates on stages including Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, Blue Note, Birdland, Smalls and Mezzrow. He recently relocated to Cologne, Germany, where he occupies the piano chair for the renowned WDR Big Band.

Isaiah J. Thompson's accomplishments bely his 21 years. The West Orange, New Jersey native began studying classical piano at age five and quickly branched out into other styles. He has been recognized as an Outstanding Soloist at both the Essentially Ellington and Mingus High School Competitions and was invited to participate in Jazz at Lincoln Center's inaugural Summer Jazz Academy. Thompson has performed at venues across the United States and around the world with jazz luminaries including Christian McBride, Herlin Riley and Buster Williams, and was featured on the *Handful of Keys* album with Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. He is currently in his fourth year at The Juilliard School.

Xavi Torres, of Tarragona, Spain, is one of the European jazz scene's top young pianists. After attending the Conservatory in Tarragona, Torres studied at the Catalonia College of Music in Barcelona and the Conservatorium van Amsterdam, where he completed degrees in both jazz and classical music. In Amsterdam, Torres has performed with outstanding musicians including Tineke Postma, Dick Oatts, Terrell Stafford, Ben van Gelder, Jasper Blom and Reinier Baas. He has appeared on more than 20 records as a sideman and performed on three continents. In 2017, Torres was named to the Young VIP program, which recognizes the most promising young jazz talents in the Netherlands, and he completed a 14-concert tour of the country's leading venues.