



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 22, 2012

Contact: Alisse Kingsley, Muse Media  
(323) 467-8508; [AlissetheMuse@aol.com](mailto:AlissetheMuse@aol.com)

**THELONIOUS MONK INSTITUTE OF JAZZ ANNUAL COMPETITION AND GALA,  
MADE POSSIBLE BY CADILLAC, WILL BE HELD IN WASHINGTON, D.C. SEPTEMBER 22-23**

**FESTIVITIES WILL HONOR FIRST FEMALE UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF STATE  
MADELEINE ALBRIGHT**

*Cast features Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Jimmy Heath, George Duke, Patti Austin, Nnenna Freelon, James Carter, Ingrid Jensen, Jane Ira Bloom, James Genus, Lee Ritenour, Geri Allen, Vinnie Colaiuta, Ada Rovatti, Claire Daly and special guests Aretha Franklin and Chris Botti*

Washington, D.C. – The 25th annual Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition presented by the world-renowned Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, will take place September 22-23, 2012. Open to musicians under age 30 from across the globe, this year's competition will shine the spotlight on the drums. The evening will also feature a star-studded "Women, Music and Diplomacy" Gala honoring former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, as well as an appearance by the UNESCO Director General, Irina Bokova.

Twelve semifinalists will compete at the Smithsonian Institution on Saturday afternoon, September 22<sup>nd</sup>. From this group the judges will select three finalists who will perform in the final round at the Kennedy Center on Sunday evening, September 23<sup>rd</sup>. At stake are over \$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. Cadillac is the Presenting Sponsor for the weekend, and air transportation will be provided by United Airlines, Official Airline of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz.



Secretary Albright said, "I am enormously honored to be the recipient of this year's distinguished Maria Fisher Founder's Award. Over the past fifteen years I have worked closely with Herbie Hancock, Thelonious Monk, Jr., Tom and Cheri Carter, along with many talented Institute students who have represented our country on diplomatic, cultural, and educational tours around the world. The Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz has played a vital role in fostering arts education on six continents and has ensured that America's music will continue to flourish and be appreciated by millions. On behalf of all jazz enthusiasts, I applaud their great success."

*Madeleine Albright with Thelonious Monk Institute Chairman Herbie Hancock and students from Miami's New World School of the Arts who participate in the Institute's Performing Arts High Schools Jazz Program.*

*Photo courtesy of Miami Dade College*

This year's competition judges include an all-star panel of drummers: Carl Allen, Brian Blade, Terri Lyne Carrington, Peter Erskine, Roy Haynes, and Ben Riley. The Musical Director is George Duke and the cast includes Geri Allen, Patti Austin, Jane Ira Bloom, James Carter, Vinnie Colaiuta, Claire Daly, Akua Dixon, Nnenna Freelon, James Genus, Herbie Hancock, Jimmy Heath, Ingrid Jensen, Linda Oh, Lee Ritenour, Ada Rovatti and Wayne Shorter, along with special guests Aretha Franklin and Chris Botti. Additional hosts and entertainers will be announced shortly.

Herbie Hancock, Chairman of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, said, "We are proud to honor Madeleine Albright, a brilliant, fascinating, Renaissance woman—a trailblazer whose political and social journey has inspired millions of people around the world. Her support of the Institute has been critical to our success and we are most grateful for her friendship. She is a champion of the music and has used her love of and respect for jazz as a diplomatic tool to bridge cultural differences and encourage peace, understanding, and tolerance wherever she travels."

"We are looking forward to an inspiring and memorable night of music," said Tom Carter, President of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz. "This year's competition highlights the drums—the heartbeat of the bandstand—and we have some exciting surprises in store for our audience. The Gala Concert promises to be a historic blending of musicians and vocalists who will pay tribute to the important role of women in jazz and diplomacy."

The Competition Semifinals on Saturday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> will be held from noon to 6:00 pm at the Smithsonian Institution's Baird Auditorium. The 12 semifinalists will be accompanied by Geoffrey Keezer on piano, Rodney Whitaker on bass, and Jon Gordon on saxophone. Each semifinalist will perform for 15 minutes. From this group, 3 finalists will be selected to perform during the first half of the Gala on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, which will take place at 7:30 pm at the Kennedy Center's Eisenhower Theater. Each finalist will perform for 10 minutes along with Gordon, Whitaker and Keezer. The star-studded Gala performance honoring Madeleine Albright will take place after intermission following the Finals.

The 12 semifinalists are: **Justin Brown**, Richmond, California; **Dor Herskovits**, Tel Aviv, Israel; **Noam Israeli**, Haifa, Israel; **Dustin Kaufman**, Houston, Texas; **Kristijan Krajncan**, Kranj, Slovenia; **Martin Krümming**, Gotha, Germany; **Julian Külpmann**, Hanover, Germany; **Abe Lagrimas, Jr.**, Waipahu, Hawaii; **Kyle Poole**, Los Angeles, California; **Jamison Ross**, Jacksonville, Florida; **Colin Stranahan**, Denver, Colorado; and **Oscar Suchanek**, Waltham, Massachusetts.

The Gala Concert will honor Madeleine Albright, a friend of the Institute for more than 15 years. Selected by President Bill Clinton to serve as the first female United States Secretary of State, Albright is one of the most respected and admired women of all time. She will be presented with the 2012 Maria Fisher Founder's Award in honor of her longtime support of jazz, music education, and the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz. The award honors individuals who have made valuable contributions to jazz and jazz education. Past recipients include Herbie Hancock, B.B. King, Bruce Lundvall, Stevie Wonder, George Benson, Wayne Shorter, Clark Terry, Jimmy Heath, George Wein, and Clint Eastwood.

The September 23<sup>rd</sup> Competition Finals and Gala Concert at the Kennedy Center also will feature the winner of the 2012 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Composers Competition, sponsored by BMI. This year's recipient is **Yusuke Nakamura** of Tokyo, Japan, who will perform his winning composition, "Heavenly Seven." The Composers Competition carries a prize of \$10,000 and is presented to a composer who best demonstrates originality, creativity, and excellence in jazz composition.

The Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition, often compared in stature to classical music's International Tchaikovsky Competition and Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, is widely regarded as the most prestigious jazz competition in the world. Each year, the competition features a different musical instrument, and major scholarships and prizes are awarded to talented young musicians. Over the past 25 years, the competition has launched the careers of a number of jazz stars including saxophonist Joshua Redman; vocalists Jane Monheit, Gretchen Parlato and Tierney Sutton; pianists Joey DeFrancesco, Marcus Roberts and Jacky Terrasson; trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire;

and bassist Ben Williams. These artists and dozens of others from past competitions have forged successful careers as performing and recording artists, and music educators, helping to preserve and perpetuate America's legacy of jazz.

Proceeds from the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Drums Competition and All-Star Gala Concert will help fund public school jazz and blues education programs throughout Washington D.C., Los Angeles, Chicago, New Orleans, and the Mississippi Delta. BET will broadcast the competition, and the semifinals will be streamed online via the Smithsonian Institution and Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz websites.

**Editors please note:**

Event and ticket information

**Thelonious Monk International Jazz Drums Competition Semifinals**

Saturday, September 22, 2012 at 12:00 p.m.

National Museum of Natural History, 10<sup>th</sup> 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 Drums Competition Finals and “Women, Music and Diplomacy”  
All-Star Gala Concert**

Sunday, September 23, 2012 at 7:30 p.m.

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

Tickets are \$50 to \$75 and may be purchased via the Kennedy Center box office in person, by calling 800.444.1324, or online at [www.kennedy-center.org](http://www.kennedy-center.org). Information regarding VIP packages, which include admission to the post-event VIP Cast Party, is available from the Institute at 202.364.7272 x107 or [bjones@monkinstitute.org](mailto:bjones@monkinstitute.org).

**Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz**

The Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz is a nonprofit educational organization established in 1986 in memory of Thelonious Monk, the legendary jazz pianist and composer. Monk was one of the primary architects of bebop and his impact as both performer and composer has had a profound influence on every genre of music. His more than 70 compositions are classics that continue to inspire artists in all disciplines. Monk believed the best way to learn jazz was from a master of the music. The Institute follows that same philosophy by bringing together the greatest living jazz musicians to teach and inspire young people, offering the most promising young musicians college level training by internationally renowned jazz masters through its prestigious fellowship program in Jazz Performance at UCLA, and presenting public school-based jazz education programs around the world. Helping to fill the tremendous void in arts education left by budget cuts in public school funding, the Institute's school programs are provided free of charge 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 Chairman. Visit the Institute at [www.monkinstitute.org](http://www.monkinstitute.org).

**Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition**

Since 1987, the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz has presented the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition, which is recognized as the world's most prestigious jazz competition and for discovering the next generation of leading jazz artists. 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. Past judges have included Dave Brubeck, Quincy Jones, Diana Krall, Christian McBride, Branford Marsalis, Pat Metheny, Dianne Reeves, and many others.

## **Competition Semifinalists**

**Justin Brown**, 28, was born in Richmond, California and began playing drums at age 3. He participated in the Young Musicians Program at the University of California Berkeley and later attended Berkeley High School. After graduation, he was accepted into the Dave Brubeck Institute, where he performed with Brubeck's trio and studied with Christian McBride. He went on to attend the Manhattan School of Music. Since moving to New York, Brown has performed with Kenny Garrett, Terence Blanchard, Gretchen Parlato and Esperanza Spalding, and is a member of the Gerald Clayton Trio.

**Dor Herskovits**, 28, was born in Tel Aviv, Israel and began playing drums at age 14. He studied at the Rimon School of Jazz and Contemporary Music in Israel before transferring to the Berklee College of Music. At Berklee, he had the opportunity to study with Hal Crook, Ralph Peterson, and Dave Santoro, and received the Ralph Pace Scholarship Award for Outstanding Achievement. Herskovits graduated from Berklee with honors and is currently performing with a variety of artists.

**Noam Israeli**, 24, was born in Haifa, Israel and started playing piano at age 10 and drums at age 13. He attended the Thelma Yellin High School of the Arts, where he graduated with a Diploma of Excellence from the jazz department. Israeli later studied at both the Rimon School of Jazz and Contemporary Music in Israel and the New School in New York. He has performed with notable Israeli musicians including Ofer Ganor and Anat Cohen, and has also played with Kurt Rosenwinkel, Mark Turner and Eddie Gomez. Israeli was recently awarded a major scholarship to attend the Berklee College of Music.

**Dustin Kaufman**, 25, was born in Houston, Texas and began playing drums at age 9. After graduating from Houston's High School for the Visual and Performing Arts, he received an undergraduate degree from the New School and a Master of Music from the Manhattan School of Music. Kaufman has studied with Justin DiCiccio, John Riley and Eric Harland, and has performed with Nicholas Payton, Chris Potter and Jason Moran. He has appeared at venues around the world including the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center and the Bern Jazz Festival in Switzerland.

**Kristijan Krajncan**, 25, was born in Kranj, Slovenia and began playing cello at age 5 and drums at age 10. He studied at the Prins Claus Conservatory in the Netherlands and spent half a year in an exchange program that brought him to New York to study with John Riley and Joey Baron. In addition to playing drums, Krajncan performs as a cellist and composes music for film. He is currently attending the Amsterdam Conservatory, where is studying film composition.

**Martin Krümmling**, 28, was born in Gotha, Germany and began playing piano at age 5 and drums at age 11. He later moved to Berlin, where he joined the German Youth Jazz Orchestra. Krümmling attended the Jazz Institute in Berlin before moving to New York to study at the Manhattan School of Music. He has studied with John Hollenbeck and John Riley, and has performed with Lage Lund and Jason Moran, among others. Krümmling tours and records with the New York-based collective Field Vision.

**Julian Külpmann**, 23, was born in Hanover, Germany and began playing drums at age 7. He studied at the Hanns Eisler Academy in Berlin with Kurt Rosenwinkel, Jeff Ballard and Joey Baron. Since 2007, Külpmann has been a member of the Federal Jazz Orchestra of Germany. He has toured and recorded with dozens of European jazz artists, and received numerous awards including the Drummer of Tomorrow Award in Frankfurt and the Future Sounds Award from Leverkusener Jazztage.

**Abe Lagrimas, Jr.**, 29, was born in Waipahu, Hawaii and began studying drums at age 4. While still in high school, he participated in the Drummer's Collective program, the Berklee Summer Performance Program and Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead Residency Program. Lagrimas received a degree in music education from the Berklee College of Music, where he performed with the South Korean group Prelude. In 2011, he received the Na Hoku Harano Award from the Hawaii Academy of Recording Arts. Lagrimas has performed with Eric Marienthal, Eric Reed and Jon Irabagon, and is the music director for vocalist Charmaine Clamor.

**Kyle Poole**, 19, was born in Los Angeles, California and began playing drums at age 14. In high school he participated in the Thelonious Monk Institute's Jazz in the Classroom and BeBop to Hip-Hop programs, performing with Herbie Hancock, Roy Hargrove and Bobby Watson. Poole graduated from the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts and moved to New York to attend the New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music on a full scholarship. He has since performed with Mike LeDonne, Peter Bernstein, Frank Lacy and others.

**Jamison Ross**, 24, was born in Jacksonville, Florida and began playing drums at age 4. He attended the Douglas Anderson School of the Arts, where he received numerous awards including the Florida All-State Jazz Band Drummer Award for 4 consecutive years. Ross received a Bachelor of Music degree in Jazz Studies and Bachelor of Arts in Commercial Music from Florida State University. He has performed with Wynton Marsalis, Chick Corea, George Clinton and P-Funk, and is a member of the Wes Anderson Quartet and Carmen Lundy's band.

**Colin Stranahan**, 26, was born in Denver, Colorado and began playing piano at age 3, switching to drums at 8. He received a National Foundation for the Advancement in the Arts Award in 2005. Stranahan attended the Dave Brubeck Institute before moving to New York to study at the New School. In 2007, he was accepted into the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Performance, where he studied with Terence Blanchard, Danilo Pérez, John Scofield and many others. Stranahan currently records and tours internationally, and performs with artists including Kurt Rosenwinkel, Jonathan Kreisberg and Fred Hersch.

**Oscar Suchanek**, 20, was born in Waltham, Massachusetts and began studying drums at age 7. In high school, he participated in the New England Conservatory Prep Program and the Berklee Summer Performance Program. He was also a member of the Massachusetts All-State Jazz Ensemble. Suchanek is currently a student at the Berklee College of Music, where he has studied with Hal Crook, Terri Lyne Carrington and Ralph Peterson. He has performed at the Berklee Performance Center, the New Music Festival, and the Latin Culture Student Composition Concert.

### **Composers Competition Winner**

**Yusuke Nakamura**, 34, was born in Mikakonojō, Japan and began studying piano at age 5. He grew up in Japan, the U.S. and Malaysia, playing cello in his high school string ensemble. Nakamura received a bachelor's degree in theory and composition from Azusa Pacific University in California. While living in California, he studied with pianist Tamir Hendleman. In 2004, he won the Silver Award at the Asakusa Jazz Competition. Nakamura resides in Tokyo, where he leads his own jazz quartet and performs as a member of a Japanese traditional string ensemble.

###