



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Contact: JB Dyas  
jbdyas@monkinstitute.org  
323.270.3904 (cell); 310.206.9501 (office)

THELONIOUS MONK INSTITUTE BRINGS ALL-STAR HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ SEXTET TO ST. AUGUSTINE AND JACKSONVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS AS PART OF NATIONAL PEER-TO-PEER EDUCATION INITIATIVE, APRIL 3-7 FEATURING INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED RECORDING ARTISTS **BOBBY WATSON** AND **LISA HENRY**

WEEKLONG SERIES OF EVENTS INCLUDES A PERFORMANCE  
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AT **THE PARLOUR** IN JACKSONVILLE ON APRIL 6

Washington, DC – With lead funding from United Airlines and the National Endowment for the Arts, the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz will bring its “Peer-to-Peer” jazz education program to St. Augustine and Jacksonville public schools April 3-7. Combining performance with educational information, these “informances” will be presented by six of the country’s most gifted high school music students along with internationally acclaimed jazz saxophonist and GRAMMY nominee **Bobby Watson**, vocal sensation and former winner of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz International Vocals Competition **Lisa Henry**, and renowned jazz educator **Dr. JB Dyas**. Each school visit will include an assembly program featuring a musical performance for all students, followed by jazz workshops for each school’s jazz band and choir with the visiting student performers playing alongside and sharing ideas with their Florida counterparts.

“We’ve found that sometimes young people can learn about certain things better from kids their same age, and one of them is jazz,” said jazz great **Herbie Hancock**, Chairman of the Institute, NEA Jazz Master, and Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). “And when you hear how accomplished these musicians are at such a young age, you know their peers are going to listen.”

Besides playing jazz at a level that belies their years, the students will talk with their St. Augustine and Jacksonville peers about what jazz is, why it’s important to America, and how a jazz ensemble represents a perfect democracy. They also will discuss important American values that jazz represents: teamwork, freedom with responsibility, unity with ethnic diversity, the correlation of hard work and goal accomplishment, and the importance of finding a passion early in life, being persistent, and believing in yourself. When young people hear this important message from kids their same age, they are often more likely to tune in.

The members of the all-star sextet selected nationwide to participate in the Florida tour include trumpeter **Brett Karner**, 17, from Miami; tenor saxophonist **Robert Gilliam**, 17, from Dallas; pianist **Kevin Gullage**, 18, from New Orleans; guitarist **Jordan Reifkind**, 16, and bassist **Caleb Ossmann**, 17, from Los Angeles; and drummer **Christian Burgs**, 18, from Houston. “Working on Mr. Watson’s music for the past couple of months has been a good challenge,” said Reifkind, a member of last year’s National GRAMMY High School Jazz Ensemble. “His music is really melodic and it covers everything from bebop to contemporary.”

Immediately following the informances, Watson, Henry, and Dyas will conduct jazz workshops for each host school’s jazz band and choir in which the visiting students will play side-by-side with their Florida counterparts, providing tutelage peer to peer. In so doing, they will teach and learn from one another not unlike Thelonious Monk did with his fellow musicians during the bebop era some 70 years ago. They’ll also learn about each other’s cities and culture.

“I’m eager to talk with the students in St. Augustine and Jacksonville about their growing up on the East Coast, as opposed to my growing up on the West Coast,” said Ossmann. “I bet we’re not all that different.”

The weeklong tour will include a performance open to the public on **April 6** at Jacksonville’s premier jazz club, **The Parlour, 2000 San Marco Blvd.**, where Jacksonville residents and visitors are invited to enjoy an evening of music with Watson and Henry alongside jazz’s future “young lions.” The octet will perform standards, jazz classics, and contemporary jazz, including compositions from Watson’s and Henry’s latest recordings. Shows begin at 8:00 & 10:00 pm. For further information call 904-396-4455 or visit **www.parlourjax.com**.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS & EDUCATORS



**Bobby Watson** is one of the top alto saxophonists in the world. He grew up in Kansas City, studied formally at the University of Miami, and then moved to New York where he was to become a member of Art Blakey's *Jazz Messengers*, one of the most important groups in the history of jazz. He later formed *Horizon*, the quintessential contemporary hard bop quintet of the 1980s and '90s. Known for his extraordinary ability to play swing, hard bop, and contemporary jazz, Watson has appeared at every major venue and jazz festival worldwide and has recorded more than 100 albums as a leader, sideman, or guest artist. He is also one of the most gifted and prolific composers of his generation (with more than 100 recorded compositions to his credit) and is the recipient of numerous national and international awards and citations, including being named *#1 Alto Sax Player* and *Musician of the Year* in *DownBeat Magazine's* Critic's Poll. Besides being an internationally acclaimed performer and composer, Watson is an esteemed jazz educator and enjoys working with up-and-coming young jazz artists. He serves as Director of Jazz Studies at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and presents jazz workshops around the globe. His latest album, *American Made* (Smoke Session Records, 2017), is scheduled for release in April 2017. [www.bobbywatson.com](http://www.bobbywatson.com)



**Lisa Henry** is a dynamic vocalist with a combination of swingin' cool and down home class. A Kansas City native, she began by singing gospel music in the Baptist church, and by age 12 was singing the music of Billie Holiday and Miles Davis. Henry was a winner of the 1994 Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz International Vocals Competition and was later named an International Jazz Ambassador to Africa. She toured Chile, Argentina and Peru with the Institute in the 1990s, performing for 34 Heads of State at the Summit of the Americas. In 2006, she participated in a U.S. State Department-sponsored tour of India and performed for an esteemed presidential dinner at the White House celebrating the Institute's 20th Anniversary. Over the past 20 years, Henry has toured the globe, sharing the stage with such artists as Ambrose Akinmusire, Kenny Barron, Don Braden, Gerald Clayton, Robin Eubanks, Kenny Garrett, Herbie Hancock, Roy Hargrove, Antonio Hart, Ingrid Jensen, Kevin Mahogany, Lou Rawls, Wayne Shorter, Terrell Stafford, Dayna Stephens, Clark Terry and Bobby Watson. Her *Live from 18th and Vine* recording has received critical acclaim. [www.lisahenryjazz.com](http://www.lisahenryjazz.com)



**Dr. JB Dyas** has been a leader in jazz education for the past two decades. Formerly the Executive Director of the Brubeck Institute, Dyas currently serves as Vice President for Education and Curriculum Development at the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz. He oversees the Institute's education and outreach programs including *Jazz in America: The National Jazz Curriculum* ([www.jazzinamerica.org](http://www.jazzinamerica.org)), one of the most significant and wide-reaching jazz education initiatives in the world. Throughout his career, Dyas has performed across the country, taught students at every level, directed large and small ensembles, developed and implemented new jazz curricula, and written for *DownBeat* magazine and other national music publications. He has served on the Smithsonian Institution's Task Force for Jazz Education in America and presented numerous jazz education events worldwide with such artists as Dave Brubeck and Herbie Hancock. Dyas received his master's degree in Jazz Pedagogy from the University of Miami and PhD in Music Education from Indiana University. He is a recipient of the *DownBeat* Achievement Award for Jazz Education.

## ABOUT THE 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 education 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](http://www.monkinstitute.org).

## ABOUT THE NATIONAL PERFORMING ARTS HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ PROGRAM

The Institute's *National Performing Arts High School Jazz Program* facilitates the education of gifted music students who attend public performing arts high schools across the nation. The Program offers them the opportunity to participate in pre-conservatory, highly specialized, performance-based jazz curricula; study with some of the world's most eminent jazz artists and educators; perform in jazz combos comprising their peers; and prepare for entry into the country's most distinguished conservatories and university schools of music. Included is instruction in Jazz Improvisation, Theory, Composition, History, and Styles and Analysis. The Institute works with each school in developing jazz curricula and instructional methodology; provides ongoing private and group instruction with Institute teaching staff, visiting artists and educators; offers special residences with jazz masters; and arranges high-profile performance opportunities for the student ensembles.

## ABOUT THE PEER-TO-PEER JAZZ EDUCATION INITIATIVE

Through the national *Peer-to-Peer Jazz Education Initiative*, which receives lead funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and United Airlines, the Institute invites outstanding music students from select public performing arts high schools across the nation to participate in weeklong *peer-to-peer jazz informance tours*. The young musicians gain invaluable performance experience playing as a

jazz combo alongside internationally acclaimed artists while they, in turn, help educate young audiences in public schools throughout the U.S. about jazz, America's indigenous musical art form. In so doing, they not only help develop jazz audiences for the future, but also exemplify the important American values that jazz represents: teamwork, unity with ethnic diversity, democracy, persistence, and the vital importance of really listening to one another.

#### ABOUT JAZZ APPRECIATION MONTH

Jazz Appreciation Month (JAM) was created by the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History in 2002 to herald the extraordinary heritage and history of jazz for the entire month of April. JAM is intended to stimulate and encourage people of all ages to participate in jazz – to study the music, attend concerts, listen to jazz on radio and recordings, read books about jazz, and more. The month-long jazz celebration culminates with International Jazz Day on April 30.

#### ABOUT INTERNATIONAL JAZZ DAY

In November 2011, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) officially designated April 30th as International Jazz Day in order to highlight jazz and its diplomatic role of uniting people in all corners of the globe. The annual event, celebrated in more than 190 countries worldwide, is chaired and led by **Irina Bokova**, UNESCO Director General, and legendary jazz pianist and composer **Herbie Hancock**, who serves as a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador and Chairman of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz. The Thelonious Monk Institute serves as the lead nonprofit organization charged with planning and promoting this annual worldwide celebration. The culmination of Jazz Appreciation Month, which draws public attention to jazz throughout April, International Jazz Day brings together communities, schools, artists, historians, academics and jazz enthusiasts from all over the world to celebrate and learn about jazz and its roots, future and impact; raise awareness of the need for intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding; and reinforce international cooperation and communication. Havana, Cuba is serving as the International Jazz Day 2017 Global Host City. [www.jazzday.com](http://www.jazzday.com)

#### St. Augustine and Jacksonville Peer-to-Peer Jazz Informance, Concert, and Workshop Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
Monday, April 3 *	Assembly Program/Concert Jazz Band and Vocal Workshops	10:05 am 12:15 pm	<b>St. Augustine High School</b> 3205 Varella Avenue, St. Augustine, FL 32084 904-547-8530 • Dr. DeArmas Graham, Principal
Tuesday, April 4	Assembly Program/Concert Jazz Band and Vocal Workshops	10:05 am 12:15 pm	<b>Creekside High School</b> 100 Knights Lane, St. Johns, FL 32259 904-547-7300 • Mr. Randy Johnson, Principal
Wednesday, April 5	Assembly Program/Concert Jazz Band and Vocal Workshops	11:40 am 1:00 pm	<b>Mandarin High School</b> 4831 Greenland Road, Jacksonville, FL 32258 904-260-3911 • Dr. Donna Richardson, Principal
Thursday, April 6	Assembly Program/Concert Jazz Band and Vocal Workshops	10:30 am 12:30 pm	<b>First Coast High School</b> 590 Duval Station Road, Jacksonville, FL 32218 904-757-0080 • Mr. Timothy Simmons, Principal
	Concerts Open to the Public	8:00 pm 10:00 pm	<b>The Parlour</b> 2000 San Marco Blvd., Jacksonville, FL 32207 904-396-4455 • Mr. Blair Redington, Manager
Friday, April 7 **	Assembly Program/Concert Jazz Band and Vocal Workshops	10:30 am 12:30 pm	<b>Fletcher High School</b> 700 Seagate Avenue, Neptune Beach, FL 32266 904-247-5905 • Mr. Dean Ledford, Principal

EDITORS:

#### \* Media Day/Press Concert for St. Augustine

Monday, April 3, 10:05 am, St. Augustine High School, 3205 Varella Avenue, St Augustine, FL 32084 • (904-547-8530)

#### \*\* Media Day/Press Concert for Jacksonville

Friday, April 7, 10:30 am, Fletcher High School, 700 Seagate Avenue, Neptune Beach, FL 32266 • (904-247-5905)

For more information, full-length bios, and photos, or to schedule an interview with one of the artists and/or students, please contact: **JB Dyas** at [jbdyas@monkinstitute.org](mailto:jbdyas@monkinstitute.org) or 323-270-3904.