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**THELONIOUS MONK INSTITUTE OF JAZZ FINALISTS SHARE STAGE WITH ARETHA FRANKLIN,
HERBIE HANCOCK, CHRIS BOTTI AND A HOST OF OTHERS AT GALA CONCERT HONORING
MADELEINE ALBRIGHT, MADE POSSIBLE BY CADILLAC**

Festivities Celebrated “Women, Music and Diplomacy” And Featured Appearances By
UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova, Tipper Gore and Helen Mirren

Jamison Ross of Jacksonville, Florida, Wins 2012 Drums Competition

Washington, D.C. – The 25th annual Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition and “Women, Music and Diplomacy” All-Star Gala Concert came to a close with roaring applause and cheers as Tipper Gore joined first place winner Jamison Ross on drums in a rousing finale featuring Thelonious Monk’s classic composition “In Walked Bud.”

Presented by the world-renowned Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz in partnership with Cadillac, the stellar event featured the finals of the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Drums Competition with performances by first place winner Jamison Ross, 24, from Jacksonville, Florida; Justin Brown, 28, of Richmond, California; and Colin Stranahan, 26, of Denver, Colorado. Brown and Stranahan were named second and third place winners, respectively. At stake was more than \$100,000 in scholarships and prizes, including a \$25,000 first place scholarship and guaranteed recording contract with Concord Music Group. This year’s competition judges included a distinguished panel of drummers: Carl Allen, Brian Blade, Terri Lyne Carrington, Jimmy Cobb, Peter Erskine, and Ben Riley.

“The heartbeat of the bandstand – the drums have been an inspiration to every culture from the genesis of mankind,” said Institute Chairman Herbie Hancock.

The evening also featured a star-studded “Women, Music and Diplomacy” Gala honoring former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright with the Institute’s 2012 Maria Fisher Founder’s Award. In accepting the award Secretary Albright said, “Jazz is America’s most distinctive form of art, and this Institute is a world treasure. By sending its Ambassadors abroad, the Institute helps to spread the gospel of Jazz to every corner of the globe.” In the spirit of the evening, Secretary Albright took her place behind the drums and performed a moving rendition of “Nessun Dorma” with Chris Botti and George Duke.

UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova delivered remarks about the successes of the newly established International Jazz Day, celebrated annually on April 30th, and also addressed the role of jazz as a diplomatic force in uniting people around the world. She announced that next year’s International Jazz Day will take place in Istanbul, Turkey.

The Gala highlighted the contributions of women in jazz over the past century. Under the musical direction of George Duke, special musical segments featured a multi-generational group of all-stars performing in tribute to artists including Lena Horne, Anita O’Day, Ella Fitzgerald and Mary Lou Williams. The All-Star cast included Wayne Shorter, Jimmy Heath, Lee Ritneour, Mark O’Connor, Joe Louis Walker, Patti Austin, Nnenna Freelon, Geri Allen, Jane Ira

Bloom, Randy Brecker, James Carter, Vinnie Colaiuta, Claire Daly, Akua Dixon, Roberta Gambarini, James Genus, Ingrid Jensen, Linda Oh, Gretchen Parlato and Ada Rovatti.

A show-stopping version of “My Funny Valentine” was performed by Aretha Franklin, who could only top that with an electrifying “Respect” in honor of Madeleine Albright. The evening’s hosts included Tipper Gore, Herbie Hancock, Helen Mirren, Thelonious Monk Jr. and Billy Dee Williams.

Through the competition and its numerous educational programs, the Thelonious Monk Institute is committed to identifying and training the world’s leading young jazz musicians who will preserve the traditions of jazz while expanding the music in new directions.

For more information on the Institute, please visit www.monkinstitute.org.