

# SunHerald

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## Students learn jazz from greats

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**MOSS POINT** — Student Stephen Marshall said getting an opportunity to meet jazz musicians Thelonious Monk Jr. and alto saxophonist Bobby Watson in person on Monday was much better than watching them on television.

The music was pretty good, too, he said.

"It's a good experience," said Marshall, who plays alto saxophone in the Moss Point High School band. "I could feel the music."

The 18-year-old senior, also a pianist, was among about 1,200 students who clapped, danced and cheered during an assembly focused on jazz music and history. The program was presented by the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz and its "Jazz in America: The National Jazz Curriculum," a free online jazz music program.

Monk Jr., a jazz drummer, said the visit is part of an annual tour at schools across the United States and in foreign countries that introduces America's only original music. The tour also is part of Black History Month in February.

Watson, vocalist Lisa Henry, an ensemble of jazz musicians and institute representatives provided an hour of music lessons, songs and improvisational music, as well as jazz band and vocal master clinics to students.

"Jazz is such an American vibe," Monk said.

Monk said the group is glad to be on the Gulf Coast again, and returned because of a commitment made last year, the devastation of Hurricane Katrina and the heritage of blues and jazz in this region.



PHOTOGRAPH BY MYYA ROBINSON

**Saxophonist Bobby Watson wows Moss Point High School students with his talents during a program presented Monday by the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz.**

He said the return is an effort to give back to the community devastated by the hurricane.

The group held a public concert Monday night at MPHS. They will conduct a jazz band clinic and assembly this morning at Pascagoula High, and another clinic and vocal class at Biloxi High this afternoon before going onto two schools and Xavier University in New Orleans this week.