

Thelonious Monk Institute wows students

By [Delta State](#) | September 9, 2014 | [Bologna Performing Arts Center](#), [Community](#), [Students](#)



Dee Dee Bridgewater (top center), a multiple GRAMMY-winning recording artist, was featured today at the Bologna Performing Arts Center for a performance by the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz.

The Bologna Performing Arts Center invited middle school and high school students from across the Mississippi Delta to a special blues and jazz assembly program today presented by musicians from the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz.

The assembly featured legendary vocalist Dee Dee Bridgewater, a multiple GRAMMY-winning recording artist and Tony Award recipient for her work on Broadway.

Through lively performances, musical demonstrations and a Q&A session with the audience, the interactive program demonstrated how the blues has become a foundation for many types of popular art and entertainment — in particular, its influence on jazz music.

The Thelonious Monk Institute began its blues and jazz initiative in 2007 with major funding from Carolyn Powers, a member of the Dockery family. Powers has been leading the restoration of Dockery Farms just outside Bolivar County limits, which many consider the birthplace of the blues.

“The Thelonious Monk Institute has presented blues and jazz education programs for more than 10,000 Mississippi public school students,” said Whitney Cummins, BPAC Arts Education coordinator. “Through visits to public schools in Cleveland, Jackson, Natchez, Oxford, Rosedale and Ruleville, leading blues and jazz musicians have presented school-wide assembly programs, in addition to jazz band and vocal jazz clinics for advanced high school student musicians.

“The institute also offers free, daily in-school and after-school instrument training sessions for Ruleville elementary, middle and high school students in partnership with Delta State University. The program is helping to cultivate the next generation of musicians and perpetuate the Mississippi Delta’s blues legacy.”

Cummins added that the BPAC is dedicated to providing exceptional artistic and educational opportunities to children in the Mississippi Delta through BPAC Arts Education programming.

“Through our affiliation with Delta State University, we are able to offer a variety of programming to suit the needs of local families, school children and educators,” she said. “Through programs such as the School-Time Matinee Series, the Janice Wyatt Mississippi Summer Arts Institute, the Partners in Education program through the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts — and several other arts education initiatives — the Bologna Center is able to provide access to outlets for artistic enrichment to the local community.”

Learn more about the Thelonious Monk Institute’s free online curriculum at www.thebluesandjazz.org, which traces the history and development of the blues and jazz in America.

Contact Cummins at 662-846-4844 for more information on BPAC Arts Education programming.