

Thelonious Monk Institute International Jazz Competition Crowns 2015 Vocal Winner Jazzmeia Horn and Honors Quincy Jones

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***Honoree Quincy Jones with Herbie Hancock
Photo: Getty Images/Monk Institute***

What do you give Quincy Jones; a man whose life personifies all that is good about music, the arts, and is intent on making the world a better place for everyone? For starters, you give him great musical performances of his work from some of the best musicians on the planet as a tribute and that is exactly what the Thelonious Monk Institute did on last night at its annual International Jazz Gala at the Dolby Theater in Hollywood.



Billy Dee Williams, Patti Austin, George Benson, Al Jarreau, Herbie Hancock, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, and Dee Dee Bridgewater Congratulate Quincy Jones

The Thelonious Monk Institute awarded the Herbie Hancock Humanitarian Award to the legendary Quincy Jones. The award recognizes an individual or institution that has made extraordinary contributions toward the betterment of humankind. As Herbie Hancock, chair of the Monk Institute said, "there is no truer humanitarian on the planet than Quincy 'Q' Jones." "Quincy Jones has demonstrated his concern and caring for countless people worldwide through a broad range of musical, educational, and relief initiatives. I have known Q for over 50 years and there is no one more deserving of this award. For many decades now, he has continued to support, encourage, and nurture the younger generation of musical artists, and now at the age of 82, Quincy is just getting started."



Ledisi Performs at the Gala

Leading the all-star tribute to Jones were a dynamic gathering of proficient musicians and hosts who were unabashedly jazz enthusiasts: Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Patti Austin, John Beasley, George Benson, Dee Bridgewater, Terri Lyne Carrington, James Genus, Jeff Goldblum, Dave Grusin, Herbie Hancock, Jimmy Heath, Lisa Henry, Paul Jackson, Jr., Al Jarreau, Justin Kauflin, Hubert Laws, Ledisi, Seth MacFarlane, Gretchen Parlato, Arturo Sandoval, Luciana Souza, Wayne Shorter, Jeff 'Tain' Watts, Ben Williams, and Billy Dee Williams. They were backed by an all-star gala big band, which included Mike Cottone, Jason Goldman, Kenya Hathaway, Steve Hughes, Danny Janklow, Josh Johnson, Wendell Kelly, Bryan Lipps, Bob Sheppard, Francisco Torres, Bijon Watson, and Dontae Winslow.



Arturo Sandoval & Hubert Laws Perform during the Thelonious Monk Institute Gala

In accepting the award, Jones proclaimed himself as “the happiest man on the planet.” Jones—ever the advocate urged those in attendance to continue supporting the arts and to push the envelope. “Can you imagine that we are one of the only countries without a minister of culture?” “Jazz is the heart and soul of music. It’s at the center of everything I have ever done. We must push the boundaries to ensure that the arts remain a part of our daily lives. You cannot get an ‘A’ if you are afraid to get an ‘F,’ Jones said. “I humbly accept this honor on behalf of my fellow Jazz musicians past, present and future, and I promise that I will be right there with you on the front lines as we continue to work to preserve and promote our music, so that it will always get the recognition that it deserves.”



Jazzmeia Horn Wins Vocal Competition

The night included fantastic performances from the three finalists of the Jazz Vocal Competition. Jazzmeia Horn, 23, of Dallas, TX won the prestigious 2015 Thelonious Monk Institute International Jazz Vocal Competition. Ms. Horn, a previous winner of the Sarah Vaughn International Jazz Vocal Competition, performed jazz standards "Moanin" and "Detour Ahead."

Backed by a stellar house band that included Reggie Thomas on piano, Rodney Whitaker on bass and Carl Allen on drums, the performers were selected from 11 semi-finalists and performed before a three-judge panel that included musicians Patti Austin, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Freddy Cole, Al Jarreau, and Luciana Souza . The runners-up were Veronica Swift of Charlottesville, Va., who performed "September in the Rain," and "This Bitter Earth," and Vuyolwethu Sotashe of Mthata, South Africa, performing "If You Never Fall in Love with Me," and "Life Begins when You're in Love."



Semi-Finalist Vuyolwethu Sotashe

The Thelonious Monk Institute International Jazz Vocals Competition awarded more than \$100,000 in scholarships and prizes, including a major scholarship and a guaranteed recording contract with Concord Music Group to Ms. Horn.



Semifinalist Veronica Swift

Proceeds from the All-Star Gala Concert will support the Institute's jazz education programs in public schools across America. Through its Competition and wide range of year-round programs, the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz 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.