



## HERBIE HANCOCK INSTITUTE OF JAZZ

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HERBIE HANCOCK INSTITUTE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
PRESENT NATIONAL PEER-TO-PEER VIRTUAL JAZZ INFORMANCE • APRIL 13

HOSTED BY U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION **DR. MIGUEL CARDONA** AND  
14-TIME GRAMMY-WINNING JAZZ LEGEND **HERBIE HANCOCK**  
FEATURING THE 2021 EDITION OF THE NATIONAL PEER-TO-PEER ALL-STAR JAZZ SEPTET

Washington, DC –The Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Education will present a virtual peer-to-peer jazz informance on April 13, featuring this year’s edition of the Institute’s *National Peer-to-Peer All-Star Jazz Septet*. Hosted by U.S. Secretary of Education **Dr. Miguel Cardona** and 14-time GRAMMY Award-winning jazz legend **Herbie Hancock**, the “informance” – a combination of performance with educational information – will be presented by seven of the country’s most gifted high school music students along with renowned jazz educator **Dr. JB Dyas**. The informance will not only focus on what jazz is and why it’s important to America, but also on the American values jazz represents: teamwork, unity with ethnic diversity, the correlation of hard work and goal accomplishment, perseverance, democracy, and the vital importance of really listening to one another.

“We’ve found that young people often learn about certain things better from kids their same age, and one of those is jazz,” said 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 student audiences across the country about how a jazz ensemble represents a perfect democracy – individual freedom but with responsibility to the group – 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 listen.

The members of the septet selected nationwide include alto saxophonist **Ebban Dorsey** and tenor saxophonist **Ephraim Dorsey** from Baltimore; trombonist **Melvin Nimitz** from New Orleans; guitarist **Kai Burns** and pianist **Joshua Wong** from Los Angeles, bassist **Gabriel Barnard** from Miami; and drummer **Lawrence Turner** from Houston. “It has been both a joy and a challenge rehearsing and recording remotely with my fellow bandmates the past couple of months,” said Burns, who has done the lion’s share of engineering and mixing the group’s recordings. “While it’s unfortunate that we haven’t been able to actually play together in person due to the pandemic, we have all learned so much through this process – about music, technology, life, ourselves.”

“Jazz musicians have always been able to overcome problematic working conditions,” added Wong, who besides being one of the top jazz pianists for his age in the country has done all the group’s video editing. “It’s in our DNA.”

Along with national peer-to-peer tours featuring performances in high schools from coast to coast, the Institute has presented annual in-person jazz informances at the U.S. Department of Education during most of the past decade to highlight the importance of music education in our public schools. This year will be the first time it’s virtual. “Even in the worst of times, I always try to see if I can find a silver lining,” said Dyas, who will be leading the informance. “This year, because the informance is online, we’ll be able to reach thousands of students, teachers, administrators, and school boards across the country. And having Secretary Cardona and the great Herbie Hancock together to dialogue about music education and answer questions – amazing!”

Free and open to the public, the jazz informance webinar will be held via Zoom on April 13, beginning at 1:00 pm EDT. All attendees must register prior to the event at <https://hancockinstitute.org/what-is-jazz-doe-2021> to obtain a meeting number and passcode. Registration is open now. The Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz has lead funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and United Airlines.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS & EDUCATORS



**Herbie Hancock** is a true icon of modern music. Throughout his explorations, he has transcended limitations and genres while maintaining his unmistakable voice. With an illustrious career spanning five decades and 14 GRAMMY Awards, including Album of the Year for *River: The Joni Letters*, he continues to amaze audiences across the globe. Born and raised in Chicago, Hancock began playing piano at age 7. At age 20, he recorded his Blue Note Records debut album, *Takin' Off*, which included “Watermelon Man,” the first of many Top 10 hits. As a member of the Miles Davis Quintet in the 1960s, Hancock became one of the pioneers of modern jazz improvisation. His recordings during the 1970s combined electric jazz with funk and rock sounds in an innovative style that influenced jazz, pop, and R&B music for decades to come. In 1983, “Rockit,” from his platinum-selling *Future Shock* album, won Hancock a GRAMMY for Best R&B Instrumental. He received an Oscar in 1987 for Best Score, honoring his work on *Round Midnight*. Hancock was named an NEA Jazz Master in 2004, and received a Kennedy Center Honor in 2013. His critically acclaimed autobiography, “Possibilities,” was published in 2014. Hancock serves as Chairman of the Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz and Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). He was instrumental in establishing International Jazz Day, annually celebrated in UNESCO’s 195 member states on April 30. [www.herbiehancock.com](http://www.herbiehancock.com)



**Dr. Miguel A. Cardona** was sworn in as the 12th U.S. Secretary of Education on March 2nd, 2021. A lifelong resident of Meriden, Connecticut, Secretary Cardona began his career as an elementary school teacher and principal. In 2012, he won the National Distinguished Principal Award for the State of Connecticut and the Outstanding Administrator Award from the University of Connecticut (UCONN) Neag School of Education. He then assumed the role of Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning for the Meriden public school district, and, most recently, served as Connecticut’s Commissioner of Education. Dr. Cardona’s approach to leadership focuses on partnerships: within the Department of Education; between State agencies; and with local boards, educator unions, school administrator associations, child advocates, and, most importantly, students and families. He completed both his Master’s and Doctoral degrees in Education at UCONN, and had several articles published in the American Association of School Personnel Administrators (AASPA) Perspective, National School Boards Association, District Administration, and Scholars Strategy Network. An active member of his community, Secretary Cardona has served on the boards of directors of several nonprofit organizations.



**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 Herbie Hancock 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, and is a recipient of the *DownBeat* Achievement Award for Jazz Education. His *How to Teach Jazz to High School and College Students* video series is available free of charge at [www.artistshousemusic.org](http://www.artistshousemusic.org).

## ABOUT THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The United States Department of Education is a Cabinet-level department of the United States government. It began operating on May 4, 1980, having been created after the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare was split into the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services by the Department of Education Organization Act, which President Jimmy Carter signed into law in 1979. With a mission to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access, the primary functions of the U.S. Department of Education are to establish policy for, administer and coordinate most federal assistance to education; collect data on U.S. schools; and enforce federal educational laws regarding privacy and civil rights. The Department is led by the United States Secretary of Education, Dr. Miguel Cardona.

## ABOUT THE HERBIE HANCOCK INSTITUTE OF JAZZ

The Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz is a nonprofit education organization with a mission to offer the world’s most promising young musicians college level training by internationally acclaimed jazz masters and to present public school 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 programs are provided free of charge to students, schools and communities worldwide. The Institute’s programs use jazz as the medium to encourage imaginative thinking, creativity, a positive self-image, and respect for one’s own and others’ cultural heritage. Founded in 1986 as the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, the organization began operating as the Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz in 2019 in recognition of Mr. Hancock’s commitment to the Institute since its establishment, his expert guidance as Institute Chairman, and his immense contributions to and impact on music, education and humanity. [www.hancockinstitute.org](http://www.hancockinstitute.org).

## ABOUT THE NATIONAL PERFORMING ARTS HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ PROGRAM

The Hancock 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 opportunities 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, 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. Every year, people all over the world join forces on April 30th to celebrate jazz as a universal tool for promoting peace, dialogue among cultures, diversity, and respect for human dignity; eradicating discrimination; fostering gender equality; and promoting individual expression. Recognized on the official calendars of both the United Nations and UNESCO, in less than a decade International Jazz Day has become a global movement annually reaching more than 2 billion people in over 190 countries on all seven continents, including Antarctica, through education programs, performances, community outreach and media coverage. International Jazz Day is chaired and led by UNESCO Director General **Audrey Azoulay** and legendary jazz pianist and composer **Herbie Hancock**, who serves as a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador and Chairman of the Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz. April 30, 2021 will mark International Jazz Day's 10th Anniversary, with a spectacular All-Star Global Concert featuring socially distanced performances from around the world. Learn more at [jazzday.com](http://jazzday.com).

**THE HERBIE HANCOCK INSTITUTE**  
National Peer-to-Peer Jazz Septet



Gabriel Barnard

Lawrence Turner

Joshua Wong

Kai Burns

Melvin Nimtzt

Ephraim Dorsey

Ebban Dorsey