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GUITARIST LAGE LUND WINS 18TH ANNUAL THELONIOUS MONK INTERNATIONAL JAZZ COMPETITION

Sponsored by General Motors

Washington, DC -- The 18th annual Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition, which this year was devoted to jazz guitar, came to a close this evening with three winners among a strong field of 10 competitors. Taking top honors and the \$20,000 first place scholarship was Lage Lund, 27. A native of Skein, Norway, Lund began playing guitar at age 13. By the time he was 16, he was performing at local clubs with his own jazz trio. Lund received a full scholarship to attend the Berklee College of Music, where he studied with Bill Pierce, Hal Crook, and George Garzone. After graduating, he moved to New York and received a grant from the Fulbright Foundation. He was later accepted into the Juilliard Jazz Studies program, making him the first guitarist in the history of the program. Lund also has been the recipient of the Jimi Hendrix Award and the Max Roach Scholarship.

Second place honors and a \$10,000 scholarship went to Miles Okazaki, 30, a native of Seattle, Washington. Okazaki has a B.A. in Literature from Harvard University and a Master of Music degree from the Manhattan School of Music. He has performed with a variety of artists including Stanley Turrentine, Regina Carter, and Allan Harris. He is currently a member of Jane Monheit's group.

The \$5,000 third place scholarship went to David Mooney, 24, from New Orleans, Louisiana. Mooney has a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of North Texas and a Master of Music degree from the University of New Orleans. He has been a member of the Louis Armstrong Quintet, a group funded by the Louis Armstrong Foundation to teach jazz to high school students. He currently performs with the David Mooney Group.

This year's Competition, sponsored by General Motors, with Semifinals held at the Smithsonian Institution's Baird Auditorium on Sunday September 18 and Finals held at the Kennedy Center's Eisenhower Theater on Monday September 19 in Washington, DC, was co-hosted by Herbie Hancock, Thelonious Monk Jr., and Billy Dee Williams.

The Competition's world-class panel of judges and performers included Bill Frisell, Stanley Jordan, Earl Klugh, Russell Malone, Pat Martino, and John Pizzarelli. The Competition band was comprised of saxophonist Chris Potter, drummer Terri Lyne Carrington, bassist James Genus, and pianist Bob James, who also served as the Competition's Artistic Director. Also featured on stage were jazz All-Stars George Benson, Terence Blanchard, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, and Clark Terry.



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The Institute's 2005 Maria Fisher Founder's Award was presented to George Benson, who has made outstanding contributions to the world of jazz. Presenting the award was Institute Honorary Chairman Billy Dee Williams.

At the Competition Finals, Junko Moriya, winner of the 2005 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Composers Competition sponsored by BMI, performed her winning piece "Playground" and received the \$10,000 grand prize award from Del Bryant, President and Chief Executive Officer of BMI. Moriya began studying classical piano when she was five years old. By age 18, she was studying jazz piano and performing in the Waseda University High Society Orchestra, one of the most famous student big bands in Tokyo. After receiving her bachelor's degree from Waseda University, Moriya lived in New York, where she studied with Harold Danko and received a master's degree from the Manhattan School of Music. During this time, she performed at numerous jazz clubs in New York and in Europe. Since returning to Japan in 1993, Moriya has performed at jazz clubs, concert halls, and jazz festivals throughout Japan. She is known not only as a pianist, but also as a composer and arranger. Moriya performs with her own big band, the Junko Moriya Orchestra, and teaches jazz piano and theory at Shoubi Music University and the Yamano Music School. She directs big bands at junior high and high schools and appears on radio and television programs all across Japan.

Preceding the Finals on September 19, the Department of State hosted a VIP reception honoring the Thelonious Monk Institute and its successes in fostering the music's development through educational outreach. Jazz master Terence Blanchard performed for the audience along with the students of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Performance at the University of Southern California. Tom Carter, President of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, acknowledged the evening's co-chairs Senator Thad Cochran, Congressman and Mrs. John Dingell, Quincy Jones, and Senator and Mrs. Ted Stevens. General Richard Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, gave remarks about how music has played a role in his life.

The Competition, which showcases a different instrument every year, is the world's most prestigious jazz competition. It has launched the careers of pianists Marcus Roberts and Jacky Terrasson, saxophonist Joshua Redman, vocalist Jane Monheit, and trumpeter Ryan Kisor, among others. This year's Competition was taped for a two-hour documentary that will air on February 26, 2006 on Black Entertainment Television and BET Jazz.

The Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz (www.monkinstitute.org) was established in 1986 in memory of the renowned jazz pianist and composer. Its mission is to preserve America's legacy of jazz through performance and education. The Institute offers the world's most promising young musicians college level training by America's jazz masters and presents public school-based jazz education programs for young people around the world. Additionally, the Institute provides scholarships, performance opportunities, and worldwide recognition to gifted young musicians through its many education programs.