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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**IN CELEBRATION OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH  
NEW ORLEANS AND MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS  
TO PARTICIPATE IN "JAZZ IN AMERICA" EDUCATION PROGRAMS  
AND FREE PUBLIC CONCERTS**

Washington, DC -- With generous support from the Northrop Grumman Corporation and National Endowment for the Arts, the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, a non-profit education organization, will introduce its *Jazz in America: The National Jazz Curriculum* to thousands of public school students in New Orleans and along the Gulf Coast of Mississippi on February 20-24. *Jazz in America* ([www.jazzinamerica.org](http://www.jazzinamerica.org)) is the Institute's Internet-based jazz curriculum that is available to all 5th, 8th, and 11th grade public school students in the United States. Designed to be a regular part of each school's social studies or American history classes, it is the first jazz curriculum to use state-of-the-art Internet technology and is offered free of charge on a national basis.

As part of Black History Month festivities, the tour will include a series of jazz assembly programs, jazz band clinics, vocal master classes, and community concerts. The tour also marks the second time in a year that the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz has visited the Gulf Coast region.

Each assembly program will feature a five-piece jazz combo led by world renowned saxophonist Bobby Watson, a presentation called "What is Jazz?" by J.B. Dyas, Curriculum Project Director, and a question-and-answer session with students. In addition, jazz drummer Thelonious Monk, Jr., Chairman of the Institute's Board of Trustees, will make remarks about jazz and its role as America's greatest musical contribution to the world.

The Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz will also present two public concerts free of charge for citizens of the Mississippi Gulf Coast and New Orleans. The concerts are a gift from the Institute to the communities that were devastated by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the aftermath of these storms. The first of these one-hour concerts will be held at 7:00pm on Monday February 20 at Moss Point High School, just outside of Pascagoula, MS. The second will be held on the campus of Xavier University, one of America's historic black colleges, on Thursday February 23. This noon-time concert will be open to students and faculty of Xavier as well as the general public. These concerts will feature Bobby Watson, Thelonious Monk Jr., and internationally acclaimed vocalist Lisa Henry alongside local student jazz ensembles.

**Members of the press are invited to attend any of the following events:**

**Monday, February 20: MOSS POINT, MS**

Moss Point High School, 4913 Weems Street

9:00-10:00am Assembly Program for 1200 students in gymnasium

10:30-11:30am Jazz Band Clinic in band room

10:30-11:30am Vocal Master Class in auditorium

7:00-8:00pm Free Public Concert in auditorium

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**Tuesday, February 21: PASCAGOULA and BILOXI, MS**

Pascagoula High School, 1716 Tucker Avenue

8:15-9:15am Jazz Band Clinic in band room

10:30-11:30am Assembly Program for 1250 students in gymnasium

Biloxi High School, 1845 Richard Drive

1:30-2:30pm Jazz Band Clinic in band hall

1:30-2:30pm Vocal Master Class in choir hall

**Wednesday, February 22: NEW ORLEANS**

McDonogh 35 High School, 1331 Kerlerec Street

2:30-3:30pm Assembly Program for 800 students in gymnasium

**Thursday, February 23: NEW ORLEANS**

Xavier University, Student Center, corner of Drexel Drive and Broadway

12:00-1:00pm Free Public Concert in Grand Ballroom

1:30-2:30pm Jazz Band Clinic

NOCCA, on the campus of V.C. Haynes Middle School, 1416 Metairie Road

3:30-4:30pm Jazz Band Clinic in Room 5 (Long building)

3:30-4:30pm Vocal Master Class in Room 14 (Long building)

**Friday, February 24: NEW ORLEANS**

Lusher Extension School, 719 S. Carrollton Avenue

10:00am Jazz Band Clinic in library

About the Curriculum

The *Jazz in America* curriculum ([www.jazzinamerica.org](http://www.jazzinamerica.org)) presents an introduction to jazz as it evolved in America and spread throughout the world. It defines the characteristics of jazz, explains how to listen to the music, details the many styles of jazz, and highlights some of the musicians who have advanced the art form. The curriculum also focuses on the development of jazz in America by highlighting the major cities that influenced the music. Further, each lesson plan explores the social, economic, and political contexts within which jazz evolved. In addition to the lesson plans, the curriculum website includes a teacher's manual, assessments, and a comprehensive Jazz Resource Library.

About the Musicians

The tour will be headlined by internationally renowned saxophonist and recording artist Bobby Watson ([www.bobbywatson.com](http://www.bobbywatson.com)), who rose to prominence as a member of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, and will feature vocalist Lisa Henry, a winner of the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Vocals Competition. The members of the rhythm section are Derek Nievergelt, bass; Otis Brown III, drums; and Richard Johnson, piano. Brown attended the Thelonious Monk Institute Jazz Colony in Aspen, Colorado in the summer of 1999. Nievergelt and Johnson are 1999 graduates of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Performance at the University of Southern California, a specialized graduate level college program that enables the world's most gifted young musicians to study tuition-free with the greatest living jazz legends including Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, and Clark Terry.



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About the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz

The Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz ([www.monkinstitute.org](http://www.monkinstitute.org)) is a non-profit education organization established in memory of Thelonious Monk, the legendary jazz pianist and composer. Monk believed the best way to learn jazz was from a master of the music. The Institute follows that same philosophy by bringing together the greatest living jazz musicians to teach and inspire young people. The Institute offers the most promising young musicians college level training by America's jazz masters and presents public school-based jazz education programs for people around the world. Helping to fill the tremendous void in arts education left by severe budget cuts in public school funding, the Institute's education programs are provided free to the public and use jazz as the medium to encourage imaginative thinking, creativity, a positive self-image, and respect for one's own and others' cultural heritage.

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