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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 20, 2005

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**SPECIAL “TRIBUTE TO KANSAS CITY JAZZ” PERFORMANCE
PRESENTED TO PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS
FEATURING JAZZ MASTERS JAY MCSHANN AND BOBBY WATSON**

Performance to be taped for national broadcast on BET

The Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, the world’s leading jazz education organization, will present a special “Tribute to Kansas City Jazz” concert and master class to public school students at Paseo High School in Kansas City, Missouri on Tuesday April 26, 2005. Legendary jazz pianist Jay McShann and internationally renowned jazz saxophonist Bobby Watson, both from Kansas City, will perform on the hour-long concert with top area musicians, including vocalist Lisa Henry, from 1:00 to 2:00pm. Thelonious Monk Jr. will be on-hand for this extraordinary performance, which will be preceded by a master class for the Paseo Academy jazz ensemble from 10:30 to 11:30am. This exceptional day of events is made possible by a generous grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

About Kansas City Jazz

Kansas City played a pivotal role in the history of jazz and the development of the blues. From the 1920’s through the 1940’s, Kansas City was a bustling hub of entertainment, with popular clubs, dance halls, and cabarets. The city provided an ideal setting for musicians looking for work and attracted musicians from all over the country. As musicians flocked to Kansas City, they brought the distinctive style of their native cities with them. Soon these various musical influences were melded into a new style, unique to Kansas City, as Ken Burns explains: “Kansas City jazz featured an irresistible joyous beat, syncopated conversations between the reed and brass sections that recalled the old call and response of the Sanctified Church, and an abiding fondness for the saxophone...Kansas City singers did not sing the blues; they shouted them.” Jazz masters Charlie Parker, Lester Young, Mary Lou Williams, Jay McShann, and Bill “Count” Basie (who received his nickname in Kansas City) became legends while in Kansas City.

About the Musicians

Jay McShann has been a living legacy of Kansas City jazz for over 60 years. As pianist, bandleader, singer, and composer, McShann has been an unsung but important figure in jazz history. McShann's big band of the 1930s and '40s delivered the hard swinging music of Kansas City imbued with foot pattin' rhythms, boogie woogie beats, and the cryin' and shoutin' blues. It was a launching pad for many talented soloists including a young Charlie Parker.



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About the Musicians (continued)

Bobby Watson is one of the pre-eminent players of his generation. The Grammy-nominated saxophonist, producer, composer, and educator Watson rose to prominence as a member of Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers from 1977 to 1981, ultimately becoming musical director for the group. Bobby currently serves as the Director of Jazz Studies at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music.

Lisa Henry is an engaging vocalist with a combination of swingin’ cool and down home class. She was First Runner-Up of the 1994 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Vocals Competition and named an International Jazz Ambassador to Africa in 1995 and 1996. A mainstay on the Kansas City jazz performance circuit, Henry also has performed all over the world with Kenny Barron, Herbie Hancock, Roy Hargrove, Kevin Mahogany, and T.S. Monk.

About the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz

The Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz (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 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.

WHAT: Tribute to Kansas City Jazz

WHERE: Paseo High School
4747 Flora Avenue
Kansas City, MO 64110

WHEN: Tuesday April 26
10:30-11:30am Master Class in band room
1:00-2:00pm Concert in auditorium

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