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CHICAGO HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS ONE OF TWO SCHOOLS NATIONWIDE
SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN NEA NATIONAL PEER-TO-PEER EDUCATION PROGRAM

STUDENTS TRAVEL TO AUSTIN AND SAN ANTONIO MARCH 17-21 TO SHARE MUSIC, IDEAS WITH PEERS
FEATURING INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED RECORDING ARTISTS **BOBBY WATSON** AND **LISA HENRY**

Washington, DC – The Chicago High School for the Arts (ChiArts) was one of two schools nationwide selected by the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz to participate in a national “Peer-to-Peer Education” tour. With lead funding from the National Endowment of the Arts and United Airlines, five exceptionally gifted music students from Chicago’s premier performing arts high school will present “jazz “informances” in Austin and San Antonio public schools March 17-21. Combining performance with information, the quintet will perform with internationally acclaimed jazz saxophonist and GRAMMY nominee **Bobby Watson**, vocal sensation and former winner of the Thelonious Monk Institute International Jazz Vocals Competition **Lisa Henry**, and renowned jazz educator **Dr. J.B. Dyas**. Each school visit will include an assembly program featuring a musical performance for all students, followed by jazz workshops for each school’s jazz band and choir with the visiting student performers playing alongside and sharing ideas with their Texas counterparts.

“As young people are so influenced by kids their own age, who better to expose them to this great American art form than those of their own generation?” said Thelonious Monk, Jr., Chairman of the Institute’s Board of Trustees and son of legendary jazz pianist and composer Thelonious Monk. “And when you hear how great these young kids play, you know the future of our music is in good hands.”

Besides playing jazz at a level that belies their years, the students will talk with their Austin and San Antonio peers about what jazz is, why it’s important to America, and how a jazz ensemble represents a perfect democracy. They also will discuss important American values that jazz represents: teamwork, freedom with responsibility, unity with ethnic diversity, the correlation of hard work and goal accomplishment, 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 five Chicago students selected to participate in the Texas tour include saxophonist Isaiah Collier, 16; guitarist Michael Panelas, 17; pianist Maleke Clemmons, 18; bassist Kurt Shelby, 17; and drummer Vandes Jackson, 18. “The group has really grown by working on Bobby Watson’s music, from his earlier recordings with jazz great Art Blakey right up to his latest,” said Anthony Bruno, ChiArts’ director of jazz studies. “His music encompasses all styles of jazz from blues and swing to pop and contemporary.”

Immediately following the informances, Watson, Henry, and Dyas will conduct jazz workshops for each host school’s jazz band and choir in which the visiting students will play with their Texas counterparts side-by-side, providing tutelage peer to peer. In so doing, they will teach and learn from one another like Thelonious Monk did with his fellow musicians during the bebop era some 60 years ago. They’ll also learn about each other’s cities and culture.

“I’m really looking forward to talking with the kids in Austin and San Antonio about the blues,” exclaimed Collier, one of the best blues and jazz saxophonists for his age in the country. “I can teach them about Chicago blues, and they can teach me about Texas blues.” Indeed, the Lone Star State is renowned for the bluesy “Texas tenor saxophone style,” a very robust, sometimes raw sound that mixes the musical vocabularies of swing, bebop, blues, and R&B.

The weeklong tour will conclude with two concerts open to the public on **March 21** at Austin’s premier jazz club, **The Elephant Room, 315 Congress Avenue**, where Austin residents and visitors are invited to enjoy an evening of music with Watson and Henry alongside jazz’s future “young lions.” The septet will perform standards, jazz classics, and contemporary jazz, including compositions from Watson’s and Henry’s latest recordings. Shows begin at 7:00 & 8:15 pm. For further information call **512-473-2279** or visit **www.elephantroom.com**.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS & EDUCATORS



Bobby Watson is one of the top alto saxophonists in the world. He grew up in Kansas City, studied formally at the University of Miami, and later moved to New York where he was to become a member of Art Blakey's *Jazz Messengers*, one of the most important groups in the history of jazz. He later formed *Horizon*, the quintessential contemporary hard bop quintet of the 1980s and '90s. Known for his extraordinary ability to play swing, hard bop, and contemporary jazz, Watson has appeared at every major venue and jazz festival worldwide and has recorded more than 100 albums as a leader, sideman, or guest artist. He is also one of the most gifted and prolific composers of his generation (with more than 100 recorded compositions to his credit) and is the recipient of numerous national and international awards and citations, including being named *#1 Alto Sax Player* and *Musician of the Year* in *DownBeat Magazine's* Critic's Poll. Besides being an internationally acclaimed performer and composer, Watson is an esteemed jazz educator and enjoys working with up-and-coming young jazz artists. He serves as Director of Jazz Studies at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and presents jazz workshops around the globe. His latest album, *Check Cashing Day* (Lafiya Music, 2013), was recorded in honor of the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington and Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" speech. www.bobbywatson.com



Lisa Henry is a dynamic vocalist with a combination of swingin' cool and down home class. A Kansas City native, she began by singing gospel music in the Baptist church, and by age 12 was singing the music of Billie Holiday and Miles Davis. Henry was a winner of the 1994 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Vocals Competition and was later named an International Jazz Ambassador to Africa. She toured Chile, Argentina, and Peru with the Institute in the 1990s, performing for 34 Heads of State at the Summit of the Americas. In 2006 she participated in a U.S. State Department-sponsored tour of India and performed for an esteemed presidential dinner at the White House celebrating the Institute's 20th Anniversary. Over the past 19 years Henry has toured the globe, sharing the stage with such artists as Ambrose Akinmusire, Kenny Barron, Gerald Clayton, Robin Eubanks, Kenny Garrett, Herbie Hancock, Roy Hargrove, Antonio Hart, Ingrid Jensen, Kevin Mahogany, T.S. Monk, Lou Rawls, Wayne Shorter, Terrell Stafford, Clark Terry, and Bobby Watson. Her latest recording, *Live from 18th and Vine*, has received critical acclaim. www.lisahenryjazz.com



Dr. J.B. 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 Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz in Los Angeles. He oversees the Institute's education and outreach programs including *Jazz in America: The National Jazz Curriculum*, one of the most important and wide-reaching jazz education initiatives in the world (www.jazzinamerica.org). 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 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.

ABOUT THE THELONIOUS MONK INSTITUTE OF JAZZ

The Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz is a nonprofit education organization established in memory of Thelonious Monk, the legendary jazz pianist and composer. Monk was one of the primary architects of bebop and his impact as both a performer and composer has had a profound influence on every genre of music. He 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, offering the most promising young musicians college level training by world-renowned jazz masters through its fellowship program in Jazz Performance at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music in Los Angeles, and presenting public school-based jazz education programs around the world. Helping to fill the tremendous void in arts education left by 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. Jazz great **Herbie Hancock** serves as the Institute's chairman. www.monkinstitute.org.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL PERFORMING ARTS HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ PROGRAM

The Institute's *National Performing Arts High School Program* has been designed to facilitate the education of gifted music students who are currently attending public performing arts high schools across the nation. The Program offers them the opportunity to participate in a pre-conservatory, highly specialized, performance-based jazz curriculum; study with some of the world's most eminent jazz artists and educators; perform in a jazz combo comprised of 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*, funded in part by United Airlines and 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 week-long *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 America's indigenous musical art form, jazz. 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 CHICAGO HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS

The Chicago High School for the Arts (ChiArts) is a public college-preparatory magnet arts high school that provides advanced instruction in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts in addition to a rigorous academic curriculum. A Chicago Public Schools Renaissance Contract School, ChiArts offers challenging courses in all subject areas that encourage intellectual curiosity and develop critical thinking skills. Six hundred students in grades 9-12 participate in five hours of academic classes, three hours of arts training in their major area, and one to four hours of rehearsal/practice in a school day that spans from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. **José Ochoa** serves as Executive and Artistic Director; **Betsy Ko** serves as Music Department Chair; and saxophonist **Anthony Bruno** directs the jazz program. www.chiarts.org

ChiArts Arts Jazz Quintet



From left: Michael Panelas, 17; Maleke Clemmons, 18; Vandes Jackson, 18; Isaiah Collier, 16; Kurt Shelby, 17

Austin and San Antonio Peer-to-Peer Jazz Informance, Concert, and Workshop Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
Monday, March 17	Assembly Program/Concert Jazz Band and Vocal Workshops	1:05 PM 2:45 PM	McCallum High School 5600 Sunshine Drive, Austin, TX 78756 512-414-2519 • Mike Garrison, Principal
Tuesday, March 18	Assembly Program/Concert Jazz Band and Vocal Workshops	10:35 AM 1:10 PM	Austin High School 1715 W. Cesar Chavez, Austin, TX 78703 512-414-2505 • Sandy Compian, Principal
Wednesday, March 19	Assembly Program/Concert Jazz Band and Vocal Workshops	9:15 AM 10:35 AM	Brackenridge High School 400 Eagleland Drive, San Antonio, TX 78210 210-533-8144 • Moises Ortiz, Principal
Thursday, March 20	Assembly Program/Concert Jazz Band and Vocal Workshops	1:00 PM 2:15 PM	Sam Houston High School 4635 E. Houston Street, San Antonio, TX 78220 210-661-4134 • Darnell White, Principal
Friday, March 21	Assembly Program/Concert Jazz Band and Vocal Workshops	9:00 AM 10:15 AM	Thomas Jefferson High School 723 Donaldson Avenue, San Antonio, TX 78201 210-736-1981 • Orlando Vera, Principal
	Concerts Open to the Public	7:00 PM 8:15 PM	The Elephant Room 315 Congress Avenue, Austin, TX 78701 512-473-2279 • Michael Mordecai, Music Director

EDITORS:

Media Day/Press Concert in Austin

Monday, March 17, 1:05 PM, McCallum High School, 5600 Sunshine Drive, Austin, TX 78756 (512-414-2519)

Media Day/Press Concert in San Antonio

Friday, March 21, 9:00 AM, Thomas Jefferson High School, 723 Donaldson Avenue, San Antonio, TX 78201 (210-736-1981)

For more information, full-length bios, and photos, or to schedule an interview with one of the artists and/or students, please contact: **JB Dyas** at jbdyas@monkinstitute.org or 323-270-3904.