



PRESS RELEASE

International Jazz Day 2026 to celebrate 15th anniversary with All-Star Global Concert live from Chicago

Paris/Washington D.C/Chicago, 27 April 2026 – Renowned musicians from around the world will gather on 30 April in the US city of Chicago for an All-Star Global Concert to mark International Jazz Day. The concert, now in its 15th edition, brings together celebrated artists and audiences to reaffirm the power of jazz in fostering intercultural dialogue, unity and artistic exchange.

The event's lineup, announced today by UNESCO and the Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz, includes musicians Gregory Porter (United States of America), James Morrison (Australia), Tiger Okoshi (Japan), Mandisi Dyantyi (South Africa), Antonio Sánchez (Mexico), Mino Cinélu (Martinique, France) and many more.

"Each year on 30 April, this global observance reminds us that jazz is a universal language that transcends borders, generations, and cultures. It invites us to listen deeply, respect each voice, and create together in harmony. It shows us how when different rhythms, perspectives, and traditions come together, something profoundly beautiful can emerge," said Khaled El-Enany, Director-General of UNESCO.

"I am thrilled to celebrate unity through music on the 15th anniversary of International Jazz Day. What we have created together with UNESCO is truly extraordinary. Bringing this global celebration to Chicago—the city where I was born and first discovered the magic of jazz—makes this moment especially meaningful, as audiences in more than 190 countries come together," said Herbie Hancock, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Intercultural Dialogue.

Honoring the city's illustrious jazz heritage—where legends such as Louis Armstrong, King Oliver and Jelly Roll Morton shaped the evolution of the music—Chicago is hosting a series of performances, educational programmes and community initiatives from 1 April to 3 May.

These initiatives are designed to showcase jazz's enduring ability, throughout history and today, to inspire a shared sense of humanity through culture.

Highlights of the Chicago programme include a performance by the Chicago Jazz Orchestra at Unity Temple on 28 April, the UNESCO World Heritage-listed architectural landmark designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. The programme will feature *Usonian Structures*, composed by saxophonist and arranger Andy Farber—the work is inspired by Wright's organic and functional design philosophy.

A special screening of *Birdman*, the Academy Award-winning film directed by Alejandro G. Iñárritu and featuring a celebrated jazz score by Antonio Sánchez, will also be presented live in concert on 27 April by the composer, highlighting the connection between jazz and cinematic storytelling. More information on the citywide programming is available at chicago.jazzday.com.



Events will take place around the world through organizing partners in over 190 countries and all 50 U.S. states. United, the International Jazz Day Global Airline Partner, headquartered in Chicago is providing air transportation and additional support for artists and educators.

Major programmes within the UNESCO Creative Cities Network expand the global footprint of International Jazz Day—with U.S. member cities such as Kansas City and the newly designated New Orleans—fostering international cultural exchange and promoting creativity as a driver of sustainable urban development.

How to follow the event:

The All-Star Global Concert in Chicago will be streamed to millions live worldwide, free of charge, in 4K on YouTube at yt.be/jazzday, where viewers can already sign up for notifications, as well as via UNESCO, UNTV, jazzday.com, Facebook, and other international media partners. Additional programs will be streamed throughout the day on 30 April.

To learn more about events taking place in more than 190 countries, visit: jazzday.com/events.

International Jazz Day

Established by the General Conference of UNESCO in 2011 and recognized by the United Nations General Assembly, International Jazz Day brings together countries and communities worldwide every 30 April. The annual International Jazz Day celebration highlights the power of jazz and its role in promoting peace, dialogue among cultures, diversity and respect for human dignity.

International Jazz Day has become a global movement reaching more than 2 billion people annually on all continents through education programmes, performances, community outreach, radio, television and streaming, along with electronic, print and social media.

The Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz is the lead nonprofit organization charged with planning, promoting and producing International Jazz Day each year. UNESCO appointed Herbie Hancock as Goodwill Ambassador in 2011 for his commitment to intercultural dialogue.

To learn more about International Jazz Day and register events on the official website, visit www.jazzday.com or www.unesco.org/en/international-jazz-day

About UNESCO

With 194 Member States, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization contributes to peace and security by leading multilateral cooperation on education, science, culture, communication and information. Headquartered in Paris, UNESCO has offices in 54 countries and employs over 2300 people. UNESCO oversees more than 2000 World Heritage sites, Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks; networks of Creative, Learning, Inclusive and Sustainable Cities; and over 13 000 associated schools, university chairs, training and research institutions. Its Director-General is Khaled El-Enany.

More information: www.unesco.org

About Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz

The Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz 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. The Institute 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.

More information: www.hancockinstitute.org

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