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D.C.'s Annual Jazz Festival Dons New Name and Brand

Festival Formerly Known as the Duke Ellington Jazz Festival Honors City's Jazz Heritage, Emphasizes City's Role as Premier Showcase for Jazz

September 21, 2009: Washington, D.C. — Festivals DC, Ltd., which created and has presented an annual jazz festival in Washington, D.C. for the past five years, today announced the renaming and rebranding of the event as the DC Jazz Festival.

Since 2004, the event had been known as the Duke Ellington Jazz Festival. It is the fastest-growing jazz festival in the country, and the largest music festival in D.C., with more than 100 performances and programs in over 40 venues around the city. Festivals DC conceived the new name to better reflect the Festival's location, rapid growth, expanded ambition, national prominence and strong connection to D.C.'s rich jazz tradition.

"We determined that our name should convey the national and international impact of the nation's capital. And there is no better place to showcase and celebrate America's singular original art form than in Washington, D.C.," said Charles Fishman, the festival's founder and executive producer. He added, "Although the festival name will change, we will continue to honor the enduring legacy of D.C. native son, Duke Ellington."

Since its inception in 2005, the festival has steadily grown — from attendance of 30,000 in its debut year to more than 100,000 in 2009. Attendees reflect a broad demographic mix of all ages and backgrounds.

"Our name change signifies a broadening of our vision for Festivals DC, which includes development of year-round programs that provide enriching and entertaining educational programs and performances that reach out to the broadest possible demographic in the community," added Fishman. "We present local, nationally and internationally renowned artists who reflect the vibrancy and diversity of our nation's capital."

Under the direction of Fishman, and nine-time Grammy Award-winner, Artistic Advisor Paquito D'Rivera, the Festival has presented such celebrated artists as Dave Brubeck, Wayne Shorter, McCoy Tyner, Randy Weston, Dr. John, Mavis Staples, Poncho Sanchez, John Scofield, Eddie Palmieri, Harry Connick, Jr., the Marsalis family, and Dee Dee Bridgewater, among numerous others. Festival programs reach every quadrant of the city — from performances on the National Mall, at the Kennedy Center, National Gallery of Art, and the Lincoln Theatre to events at more than 30 jazz clubs, embassies, hotels, galleries, and restaurants.

Education plays a central role in DC Jazz Festival programming, offering free student concerts and master classes serving more than 2,000 D.C.-area students, as well as year-round educational activities with area schools and community organizations.

The name change also aligns the DC Jazz Festival with broader efforts by D.C. civic leaders to reinforce the city's reputation as one of the world's most prominent tourism and special events destinations and to leverage world-class D.C.-based events that promote economic development and empowerment opportunities.

"The District of Columbia Government and the Council are proud to support the Festival, which further highlights D.C. as a premier cultural destination that offers unparalleled access to the nation's finest artistic treasures and events," said Vincent C. Gray, Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia.

"The Festival bridges communities by reaching across demographic and socioeconomic lines to unite our city's business, civic and educational institutions," said Jack Evans (Ward 2), Chairman Pro Tempore of the Council of the District of Columbia.

The 2010 DC Jazz Festival, scheduled for June 1 – 13, 2010, will highlight Chicago and its unique, rich and diverse musical heritage. Confirmed artists to date include: Freddy Cole, Kurt Elling, and Ramsey Lewis, as well as Eddie Palmieri, Poncho Sanchez, and the ubiquitous Paquito D'Rivera. For more information, visit the Festival's new Web site at www.dcjazzfest.org.

About the DC Jazz Festival

With more than 100 performances in dozens of venues across the city, the DC Jazz Festival is the largest music festival in Washington, D.C. and has become one of the most highly-anticipated cultural events in the nation's capital. The Festival presents year-round music programs and performances by local, national and internationally-known artists, promotes music integration in school curricula and actively supports community outreach to expand and diversify the audience of jazz enthusiasts. For more information about DC Jazz Festival and our upcoming programs, visit www.dcjazzfest.org.

The DC Jazz FestivalSM is a project of Festivals DC, Ltd., a 501(C) 3 nonprofit service organization. The DC Jazz Festival is sponsored in part with a grant from the Government of the District of Columbia, Adrian M. Fenty, Mayor; and in part by awards from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, various corporations, foundations, and individual donors. © 2009 Festivals DC, Ltd. All rights reserved.