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**THELONIOUS MONK INSTITUTE OF JAZZ PRESENTS ANNUAL COMPETITION AND GALA
MADE POSSIBLE BY CADILLAC**

Festivities Will Celebrate Women, Music and Diplomacy

All-star talent line-up includes Herbie Hancock, Helen Mirren, Tipper Gore, Billy Dee Williams, Jimmy Heath, Wayne Shorter, George Duke, Patti Austin, Nnenna Freelon, Geri Allen, Mark O'Connor, Gretchen Parlato, Lee Ritenour, Roberta Gambarini and many others, with special guests Aretha Franklin and Chris Botti

Washington, D.C. – The 25th annual Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition and “Women, Music and Diplomacy” All-Star Gala Concert will be presented by the world-renowned Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, in partnership with Cadillac, this year’s Presenting Sponsor, on September 22-23. Through the competition and its numerous educational programs, the Institute is committed to identifying and training the world’s leading young jazz musicians who will preserve the traditions of jazz while expanding the music in new directions.

"Cadillac and the Thelonious Monk Institute are a natural fit," said Don Butler, Cadillac vice president of marketing. "As Cadillac expands and elevates itself around the world, we're proud to join the Monk Institute to celebrate this great American art form and its global cultural impact."

Open to musicians under age 30 from across the globe, this year’s competition will shine the spotlight on the drums. Twelve semifinalists will compete at the Smithsonian Institution on Saturday afternoon, September 22. From this group, the judges will select three finalists who will perform in the final round at the Kennedy Center on Sunday evening, September 23. At stake is more than \$100,000 in scholarships and prizes, including a \$25,000 first place scholarship and guaranteed recording contract with Concord Music Group. This year’s competition judges include a distinguished panel of drummers: Carl Allen, Brian Blade, Terri Lyne Carrington, Jimmy Cobb, Peter Erskine, and Ben Riley.

The evening also will feature a star-studded “Women, Music and Diplomacy” Gala honoring former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright with the Institute’s 2012 Maria Fisher Founder’s Award. UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova will deliver remarks about the successes of the newly established International Jazz Day, celebrated annually on April 30th, and will address the role of jazz as a diplomatic force in uniting people around the world.

The Gala will highlight the contributions of women in jazz over the past century. Under the musical direction of George Duke, special musical segments featuring a multi-generational group of all-stars will be performed in tribute to artists including Lena Horne, Anita O’Day, Mary Lou Williams and Ella Fitzgerald. Performers will include Geri Allen, Patti Austin, Jane Ira Bloom, Randy Brecker, James Carter, Vinnie Colaiuta, Claire Daly, Akua Dixon, Nnenna Freelon, Roberta Gambarini, James Genus, Jimmy Heath, Ingrid Jensen, Mark O’Connor, Linda Oh, Gretchen Parlato, Lee Ritenour, Ada Rovatti and Wayne Shorter, along with special guests Aretha Franklin and Chris Botti. The evening’s hosts will include Tipper Gore, Herbie Hancock, Helen Mirren, Thelonious Monk Jr., and Billy Dee Williams.

“The Institute is honored to have Cadillac as our Presenting Sponsor again this year. Cadillac is the perfect match for the Institute, our jazz competition, and annual gala because jazz and Cadillac are both enduring, iconic, innovative and uniquely American brands. Their support has been critical to our success and had helped us bring jazz to millions of people across the country. We are grateful to the Cadillac family for believing in our mission to perpetuate jazz and offer it to the citizens of the world through education and performance,” said Tom Carter, Thelonious Monk Institute President.

The Gala Concert will honor Madeleine Albright, a friend of the Institute for more than 15 years. Selected by President Bill Clinton to serve as the first female U.S. Secretary of State, Albright is one of the most respected and admired women of all time. She will be presented with the 2012 Maria Fisher Founder’s Award in honor of her longtime support of jazz, music education, and the Thelonious Monk Institute. The award honors individuals who have made valuable contributions to jazz and jazz education. Past recipients include Herbie Hancock, B.B. King, Aretha Franklin, Stevie Wonder, George Benson, Wayne Shorter, Clark Terry, Jimmy Heath, George Wein, and Clint Eastwood.

Proceeds from the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Drums Competition and Gala Concert will help fund public school jazz and blues education programs throughout Washington D.C., Los Angeles, Chicago, New Orleans, and the Mississippi Delta. BET will broadcast the competition, and the semifinals will be streamed online via the Smithsonian Institution and Monk Institute websites.

Cadillac sponsored highlights of the competition weekend include:

Thelonious Monk International Jazz Drums Competition Semifinals: Saturday, September 22, noon to 5:00 pm at the Smithsonian Institution’s Baird Auditorium. The 12 semifinalists will be accompanied by pianist Geoffrey Keezer, bassist Rodney Whitaker and saxophonist Jon Gordon.

Competition Finals and All-Star Gala Concert: Sunday, September 23 at 7:30 pm at the Kennedy Center’s Eisenhower Theater. The three finalists selected at the semifinals will compete, and world-renowned jazz artists will perform as part of a “Women, Jazz and Diplomacy” tribute.

Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz is a nonprofit educational organization established in 1986 in memory of legendary jazz pianist and composer Thelonious Monk, who believed the best way to learn jazz was from a master of the music. Following that same philosophy, the Institute brings together the greatest living jazz musicians to teach and inspire young people. School programs are offered free of charge to help fill the tremendous void in arts education.
www.monkinstitute.org.

Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition, regarded as the world’s most prestigious jazz competition, features a different musical instrument each year. It has launched the careers of jazz stars including saxophonist Joshua Redman; vocalists Jane Monheit, Gretchen Parlato and Tierney Sutton; pianists Joey DeFrancesco, Marcus Roberts and Jacky Terrasson; trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire; and bassist Ben Williams.

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