

Bringing jazz into Paris's streets on Jazz Day

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On 30 April, International Jazz Day, 48 jazz events, running from 2pm to 2am, electrified the heart of Paris, uniting the city in the values of respect, freedom and peace.

Following an inaugural event in a Paris town hall with UNESCO & the Paris Jazz Club Association, the French capital continued celebrations in four of the city's most renowned jazz clubs, popularly known as "the Golden Triangle" of Lombard Street: Le Baiser Salé, Le Duc des Lombards, and le Sunrise/le Sunset. Paris Jazz Day successfully brought jazz into the streets, through free and accessible concerts and events that pulled in large crowds. Live webstreaming allowed the global public to virtually participate in the events. In France, events received live coverage on leading radio stations TSF Jazz and France Musiques. Artists participating in the Day's concerts, master classes, roundtable discussions, and evening jam sessions include saxophonists Pierrick Pédrón, Emile Parisien and Baptiste Herbian; pianists Laurent de Wilde, Rémi Panossian & Omer Klein; vocalists Leila Martia, Gregory Porter, Kellylee Evans, bassists Riccardo Del Fra & Omer Avitai, and acclaimed singer-saxophonist Manu Dibango. Jazz talks probed the historical origins of jazz in slavery & resistance, and also offer practical advice to jazz artists today, such as producing and promoting new records. Ms Evans, who is from Canada, said that Day has made a strong impact on her professionally. « This idea of the whole world all working together to celebrate jazz music, and its spirit of peace, freedom, respect – I feel nourished by it, and inspired to continue in my music. » International Jazz Day was launched by UNESCO to raise awareness about jazz's virtues as an educational tool, as a vehicle for peace, unity, dialogue, and for enhanced cooperation between peoples. Born in the United States and rooted in African traditions, jazz has taken on new shapes in cultures across the globe. The city of Paris, in particular, which wholeheartedly welcomed jazz during the 1920s and 1930s, contributed significantly to jazz's development. It is where virtuoso guitarist, Django Reinhardt, is widely credited to have created the first, "indigenous" jazz style, outside of America. Jazz is the only genre of music where « you can bring whatever influences you have from other genres or countries, and add these influences into a composition, » explained China Moses, jazz chanteuse and MTV presenter. « It's a world where everyone is really welcome to be themselves... Jazz inspires the acceptance of others & communications to people who are totally different from you. » Indeed, jazz makes the most of the world's diversity, effortlessly crossing borders and bringing people and cultures together. Making the most of cultural diversity is a task we all share. « I never knew my heart could sing, I never missed a warm embrace, till April in Paris, » Ella Fitzgerald once sung. On this last day of April in Paris, jazz resonated joyously as a force for peace, speaking to the heart.



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