

International Jazz Day celebrated all over the world

Martin
Chilton

Herbie Hancock, one of the star performers at the 2014 [International Jazz Day](#) on Wednesday 30 April, says he is pleased the annual event is being held in Japan this year because of the country's deep affection for jazz.

Hancock, 74, an American pianist, bandleader and composer, says he has performed more times in Japan than in his hometown of Chicago during his half century in music. He will headline an all-star concert at Osaka Castle Park, in a line-up that includes Wayne Shorter, Kenny Garrett, Terumasa Hino, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Gregory Porter, Roy Hargrove, Marcus Miller, Esperanza Spalding, Earl Klugh and John Scofield.

The concert will be streamed live on the Jazz Day website (11am GMT) and will also be shown in London on big screens at Ronnie Scott's club in London.

Hancock, a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, says the event is an opportunity to show appreciation for Japanese jazz fans, who have been among the world's greatest supporters of the music. He first performed in Japan with Miles Davis' quintet in 1964, and has toured there with his own electric and acoustic groups for decades.



Esperanza Spalding will play at the special 2014 International Jazz Day concert

"Japanese audiences are very loyal," Hancock told AP. "In Japan, art is really placed on a high level, and jazz is really honoured and accepted as being a fine music – much more in comparison to the States."

Osaka played a leading role in the early days of jazz in Japan. During World War II, the government tried and failed to ban jazz, but the music flourished during the American occupation. There are more than 100 jazz clubs in the Tokyo area alone now.

Pianist-composer Toshiko Akiyoshi, who will be performing with her husband, saxophonist-flutist Lew Tabackin, at the Osaka concert, says: "I was introduced to jazz while playing in a dance hall as a teenager during the American occupation by a Japanese jazz fan and record collector. He played Teddy Wilson's Sweet Lorraine, and I was hooked."

UNESCO expect Jazz Day events to be held in all 196 member countries, in this the fourth year of the annual festival. In the UK, events range from record nights for fans to share jazz records, to concerts from Andy Sheppard and Kristian Borring.

UK JAZZ DAY EVENTS:

- Debs Hancock and The Jazz Dragons celebrate International Jazz Day 2014 at Cafe Jazz Cardiff
- Pepper's Aberjazz Club (Fishguard, Pembrokeshire) presents International Jazz Day Record Night.
- Ode To The Human Spirit 2014: SGI UK celebrate International Jazz Day at Kings Place, London (from 7.30pm)
- The Jazz Debate with James Pearson and Joe Stilgoe (Dartmouth House, London, 7pm)
- Kristian Borring Quartet (The Vortex , London)
- IJD Concert Screening (Upstairs Bar at Ronnie Scott's Club in London). They also have [Frank Sinatra Jr](#) in concert.
- Andy Sheppard/John Parricelli (606 Club, London, from 8:30pm)
- The [JAZZ] Blindfold Test by Chris Searle (Bonington Theatre, Nottingham, 7.30pm)
- Apex Jazz & Swing Band in concert (Sutton Coldfield Trad Jazz Club, West Midlands, from 8.30pm)
- Jim Mullen with the Neil Burns Trio (Riviera Cafe Bar, Teignmouth, Devon, from 8pm)

For details of all International Jazz Day events see the website jazzday.com