

Music

International Jazz Day hits home at the local level



Composer Herbie Hancock will host the invitation-only concert at the White House for International Jazz Day.
(Douglas Kirkland)

By **Michael J. West**

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International Jazz Day

Shows: Saturday, at various locations and times around the District. The opening ceremony takes place at 10 a.m. in Dupont Circle. Go to jazzday.com for the full schedule.

International Jazz Day is indeed international — but it's also hyper-local. The first four years of the UNESCO-designated celebration were hosted in as many countries, each offering the best of its local jazz scene in addition to world-renowned headliners. It's designed to demonstrate how jazz has infiltrated, united and at times mingled with cultures around the world. Its fifth year finds International Jazz Day returning to the United States, where it began in 2012 in New Orleans. This year it's centered in Washington, where the music has, almost from its inception, been woven into the fabric of the city. (Remember: Duke Ellington was born here.)

The centerpiece of the District's festivities is an invitation-only concert at the White House (which actually takes place Friday). That said, there are dozens of events taking place around the city and many are free, including the opening ceremony in Dupont Circle. Hosted by legendary composer Herbie Hancock, it will feature such nationally known artists as saxophonist David Sanchez and vocalist Dee Dee Bridgewater, plus performances by D.C.-based drummer Nasar Abadey; two local high school jazz bands (from Duke Ellington and Woodrow Wilson high schools); and the popular Dupont Brass Band.

Elsewhere in the city are events for the whole family, such as an interactive performance and workshop for children, led by vocalist Rochelle Rice at the Petworth Recreation Center; another program of student jazz ensembles, this one lasting all day, at the Sylvan Theater on the Mall; and pop-up appearances by alto saxophonist Herb Scott, taking place throughout the day.

The evening brings more traditional club and bar performances, including iconic bassist Buster Williams at Blues Alley; D.C. bassist/vocalist Nicole Saphos at Twins Jazz; and tenor saxophonist Jordon Dixon at Acacia Bistro.

You also can get a pass of sorts to the White House concert: It will be broadcast at 8 p.m. Saturday on ABC.

— **Michael J. West**