



United Nations kicks off International Jazz Day in Congo Square

Posted on April 30, 2012 at 12:11 PM

By Bill Capo / Eyewitness News

From Rio De Janiero, to Capetown, South Africa, to Paris, the world's focus was on a dawn concert in New Orleans' Congo Square, kicking off the first International Jazz Day, organized by UNESCO, the United Nations education division, to use the uniquely American music born in New Orleans to inspire the teaching of jazz, and cultural exchange worldwide.

"International Jazz Day is already becoming a world event," said UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova. "At this very moment we have in more than fifty countries in the world jazz events. Jazz is what unites different cultures and people together."

Starting International Jazz Day in Congo Square was jazz legend Herbie Hancock's idea.

"If you think about the fact that New Orleans was really the birthplace of jazz, and particularly Congo Square, there is no other place that would truly represent the birthplace and sunrise and so forth," said Hancock.

Four students joined him on stage, including two from the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, who found it the chance of a lifetime.

"It was amazing," said Miles Berry and Glenn Hall. "It was unbelievable. Playing with Herbie Hancock that was like a lifetime achievement. Yeah."

The United Nations plans International Jazz Day to be an annual event to bring jazz into classrooms worldwide, turning it into a universal language of freedom.

"Jazz is the perfect music to do exactly that, because jazz has the music that brought a lot of different cultures together from around the world," said New Orleans Jazz Musician Terence Blanchard.

And how much fun did they have? Well, when the concert ended, the drummers kept going, the audience didn't want to leave, and it is being memorialized for posterity. This is Scramble Campbell the artist: so what's the theme here? Campbell: International Jazz Day, celebrating the birth of jazz right here in New Orleans and Congo Square. Thanks very much. And it ends tonight with a sunset concert believe it or not at the United Nations.

Source: <http://www.wwltv.com/news/local/United-Nations-Kicks-Off-International-Jazz-Day-In-Congo-Square-149503325.html>