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Putting Adelaide on the world jazz stage

BY SUZIE KEEN | APRIL 26, 2017 |

Adelaide could follow in the footsteps of cities such as Washington DC, Paris, Tokyo and Havana by becoming a global host city for International Jazz Day if musician James Morrison gets his wish.

Morrison, who took part in last year's International Jazz Day Global Concert on the lawns of the White House in Washington DC, says securing the honour would bring significant international attention to Adelaide and its status as a UNESCO City of Music.

While Havana in Cuba is this year's designated host city, holding an [all-star event](#) with more than 20 musicians such as Quincy Jones and Herbie Hancock that will be live-streamed across the world, no host has yet been named for next year.

"There's a bit of lobbying to be done but I've spoken to a number of people and they are all very keen," says Morrison.

“Obviously there are a lot of cities around the world that would like to have it because it does mean quite an entourage descends upon the city.

“Some of the people that were at the Jazz Day in Washington last year were Aretha Franklin and Sting, and it was emceed by Morgan Freeman. If you looked around the musicians, it was almost like a who’s who of the last few decades of not just jazz, but music.”

Morrison says events in South Australia – including an International Jazz Day Gala at the Festival Theatre on April 30 and the [Generations of Jazz](#) event which will see around 5000 teenagers descend on Mount Gambier a week later – add weight to the Adelaide case. The [State of Jazz](#) initiative, running from April 16 to May 7, also encompasses around 40 events in a range of venues.

“What I’m really saying to them is that it might be in Havana this year, but have a look at what we’re doing in Adelaide and we’re not even the designated city.

“We definitely want it to be in Australia and I’d love it to be in Adelaide.”

Morrison says if the bid is successful, satellite jazz events could potentially be hosted in other Australian cities such as Melbourne and Sydney.

International Jazz Day is a UNESCO initiative with the stated aim of promoting jazz and “its diplomatic role of uniting people in all corners of the globe”. In addition to the major concert in the global host city, there are hundreds of other events held internationally.

This year’s Adelaide International Jazz Day Gala will feature a range of jazz styles ranging from orchestral and fusion to swing and big band, with both original music and jazz classics.

A highlight will be the premiere of a specially commissioned jazz concerto by Grammy-winning composer and musician Gordon Goodwin called “Possibilities for Trumpet and Orchestra”, performed by Morrison and the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. Other artists include trumpeter Mat Jodrell, singer Darren Percival, jazz guitarist James Muller (*pictured below*), pianist Bruce Hancock, and violinist and composer Julian Ferraretto.



"I'm really proud that in South Australia we have one of the more amazing events that's happening for International Jazz Day," Morrison says.

"Apart from having a real cross-section of styles of jazz – everything from swinging real big band ... to the sort of things that James Muller is going to do, to the concerto – it really does celebrate the genre rather than a particular style.

"It also celebrates the international aspect of it with all our guests, and the home-grown aspect with some of Adelaide's finest."

The gala will see six students from the James Morrison Academy of Music in Mt Gambier combine with visiting students from the Julliard School of Music in New York to play both some original compositions and what Morrison describes as hard-swinging jazz that allows the soloists to shine.

"That's celebrating something wonderful – that my academy here in South Australia has an association with Julliard in New York, which is really the most prestigious music school in the world ... to have them come together for International Jazz Day is really special."

The International Jazz Day Gala is at the Festival Theatre on April 30.