

International Jazz Day 2025 Worldwide Celebration Culminates with Thrilling All-Star Global Concert from Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Thousands of Performances and Events Presented in More Than 190 Countries

Chicago to Host 15th Anniversary International Jazz Day in 2026

Abu Dhabi, May 1, 2025 — The 14th annual International Jazz Day culminated in a rousing All-Star Global Concert from Etihad Arena in the host city of Abu Dhabi, UAE. The concert, hosted by Academy Award-winning actor **Jeremy Irons** and led by **Herbie Hancock**, featured world-renowned artists from 14 countries including **Dee Dee Bridgewater**, **Etienne Charles**, **Kurt Elling**, **Ruthie Foster**, **José James**, **John McLaughlin**, **Hélène Mercier**, **Danilo Pérez**, **John Pizzarelli**, **Dianne Reeves**, **David Sánchez**, **Arturo Sandoval**, **Janis Siegel**, **Varijashree Venugopal** and others. Watch for free at jazzday.com.

At the All-Star Global Concert, UNESCO officials announced that Herbie Hancock's hometown of Chicago, USA will host the 15th anniversary International Jazz Day celebration in 2026.

On the morning of April 30, a remarkable Opening Ceremony was held at Qasr Al Watan, the Palace of the Nation. Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chairman of the Department of Culture and Tourism, officially welcomed International Jazz Day to Abu Dhabi. The event featured remarks by UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture Ernesto Ottone and Jeremy Irons, acclaimed stage, film and television actor. Highlights included a moving solo performance of "Maiden Voyage" by Herbie Hancock and a stirring presentation of traditional Arabic music by local artists.

Highlights of the All-Star Global Concert included Dee Dee Bridgewater performing a groove-driven version of "The Thrill Is Gone" with John McLaughlin and John Pizzarelli. World-renowned concert pianist Hélène Mercier of Paris and emerging talent A Bu of Beijing united two continents in a dazzling duo piano performance of George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue"—a classical tribute to the spirit and rhythm of jazz. Arturo Sandoval, David Sánchez and Danilo Pérez honored Dizzy Gillespie with their electrifying performance of "Tin Tin Deo."

John McLaughlin brought his mind-blowing jazz fusion to his original composition "As The Spirit Sings." Dianne Reeves, known for her emotive vocal prowess and jazz interpretations, delivered a poignant rendition of "Someone to Watch Over Me." José James infused The Rolling Stones' classic "Miss You" with his unique blend of soul and swagger. Jazz Day 2025 concluded with its traditional finale of John Lennon's "Imagine," the universal anthem for peace, bringing the audience to its feet in a celebration of unity through music.

Jazz Day 2025 celebrations in Abu Dhabi included dozens of community outreach programs, bringing the magic of jazz to young children and aspiring professionals at venues including Berklee Abu Dhabi, Bait Al Oud and the Cultural Foundation. In partnership with the Culture Summit Abu Dhabi, the program included a special concert at the Louvre Abu Dhabi and a thought-provoking panel conversation between Herbie Hancock and *Financial Times* CEO John Ridding. Around the world, thousands of performances, masterclasses, jam sessions, education and community programs took place in more than 190 countries.

Each year on April 30, International Jazz Day brings together countries and communities worldwide to promote peace and unity, dialogue among cultures and respect for human dignity. International Jazz Day was adopted by the UNESCO Member Nations on the initiative of UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Herbie Hancock, who co-chairs the annual celebration with UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay.

The Department of Culture and Tourism Abu Dhabi served as the International Jazz Day 2025 Host City Partner, with major global support provided by the Doris Duke Foundation. United, the International Jazz Day Global Airline Partner, provided air transportation and additional support for artists and educators.

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