



CHICAGO CHOSEN FOR 2026 INTERNATIONAL JAZZ DAY, UNITING WORLD SOUNDS IN THE BIRTHPLACE OF BLUES

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CHICAGO— The City of Chicago is proud to announce it has been selected as the official host city for **UNESCO's International Jazz Day 2026**, the world's largest celebration of jazz and its power to unite communities across the globe. The announcement, made by UNESCO and the Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz, sets the stage for a historic celebration on **April 30, 2026**, spotlighting Chicago's legendary contributions to jazz, blues, and global music culture.

Since its inception in 2012, International Jazz Day has traveled the world—from Paris to Havana, Sydney to St. Petersburg—connecting people through the language of music. Chicago's selection comes at a powerful moment in time, aligning with the **250th anniversary of the United States**, the **100th birthday of Miles Davis**, and the **anticipated opening of the Obama Presidential Center** on Chicago's South Side.

"Chicago is the birthplace of modern jazz innovation—a city where legends like Louis Armstrong, Nat King Cole, and Dinah Washington helped redefine what music could be," said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. From the clubs of Bronzeville to the airwaves that carried our sound across the nation, jazz has always been the rhythm of our resilience. Hosting International Jazz Day 2026 reaffirms our status as a cultural capital and honors the soul of our city. We're proud to welcome the world to Sweet Home Chicago."

"This is more than a concert—it's a renaissance moment for Chicago. International Jazz Day 2026 will honor our rich past and set the stage for a bold creative future," said **DCASE Commissioner Clinée Hedspeth**. "This moment is the result of months of strategic planning, advocacy, and leadership from a passionate team of cultural organizations and institutions who believes Chicago was not only ready—but destined—to lead the world in this celebration."

Spearheaded by the Chicago Jazz Alliance, in partnership with the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, International Jazz Day 2026 is a citywide collaboration made possible through the support of the City of Chicago and the State of Illinois, working in concert with an expansive group of cultural, civic, and educational partners. These include: The Auditorium, Chicago Park District, Chicago Sister Cities International, Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association, Choose Chicago, Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago, Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), The DuSable Black History

Museum and Education Center, Illinois Arts Council, Jazz Institute of Chicago, Grammy Award-winning artist Kurt Elling, Leadership Greater Chicago, Ravinia Festival, Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts at The University of Chicago, The Obama Foundation, Uniting Voices, and World Business Chicago.

Together, these partners reflect the dynamic spirit of Chicago's jazz heritage—past, present, and future—ensuring that this global celebration is rooted in authenticity, creativity, and community.

The celebration will culminate in the **All-Star Global Concert**, led by Chicago native and jazz icon **Herbie Hancock**, and broadcast in 190 countries. Leading up to the concert, a week of educational programs, community outreach, and youth engagement will take place citywide, bringing the healing and unifying force of jazz directly into neighborhoods and schools. Students will be invited to participate in the festival through performances, master classes, and workouts.

International Jazz Day 2026 will amplify Chicago's essential role in the global evolution of jazz and affirm the city's position as a forward-thinking cultural hub.

For more information and updates about International Jazz Day 2026 in Chicago, visit <https://jazzday.com> and [Chicago.gov/DCASE](https://chicago.gov/DCASE).

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Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events

The City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) supports artists and cultural organizations, invests in the creative economy, and expands access and participation in the arts throughout Chicago's 77 neighborhoods. As a collaborative cultural presenter, arts funder, and advocate for creative workers, our programs and events serve Chicagoans and visitors of all ages and backgrounds, downtown and in diverse communities across our city — to strengthen and celebrate Chicago. DCASE produces some of the city's most iconic festivals, markets, events, and exhibitions at the Chicago Cultural Center, Millennium Park, and in communities across the city — serving a local and global audience of 25 million people. The Department offers cultural grants and resources, manages public art, supports TV and film production and other creative industries, and permits special events throughout Chicago. For details, visit [Chicago.gov/DCASE](https://chicago.gov/DCASE) and [stay connected via our newsletters and social media](#).

Millennium Park

Millennium Park is the #1 attraction in the Midwest and among the top 10 most-visited sites in the U.S. It is also the anchor of an urban cultural campus (Millennium Park Campus) that includes the Chicago Cultural Center, Maggie Daley Park and The Art Institute of Chicago. Millennium Park is located on Michigan Avenue, bordered by Randolph St. to the north, Columbus Dr. to the east and Monroe St. to the south. The Park is open daily from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. Plan your visit at MillenniumPark.org; follow us on [Facebook](#) (@MillenniumParkChicago), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) (@Millennium_Park); and join the conversation on social media using #MillenniumPark.