

COVID-19 cant stop the music on International Jazz Day

United Nations
01 May 2020, 05:21 GMT+10



The artists were originally set to perform in Cape Town, South Africa, but have united for an [online concert](#) that will be streamed live starting at 4 pm Eastern Standard Time.

Audrey Azoulay, head of the UN cultural organization, [UNESCO](#), pointed out that music is bringing people together and helping to keep hope alive during the global crisis.

"It is the magic of jazz that we need now, at a time when we are all reminded of the cardinal importance of music - and indeed, of all the arts - in our lives", she said in [a statement](#) for the day.

Legendary American pianist Herbie Hancock, [UNESCO](#) Goodwill Ambassador for Intercultural Dialogue, will host the all-star concert which will feature artists from across the globe.

He said International Jazz Day embodies values such as freedom of expression, peace and human dignity.

"Keep these values alive as you play your music in your home or on your balcony, share your music through digital platforms, enjoy jazz recordings, or watch one of our past Jazz Day global concerts", he said in a video message.

This year's commemoration of the international day also has a sombre tone as it serves as a tribute to saxophonist Manu Dibango, who died from [COVID-19](#) on 24 March.

The Cameroon-born force behind the 1972 international hit 'Soul Makossa' - sampled, remixed and cited in songs such as 'Wanna Be Startin' Somethin' by Michael Jackson - had been a UNESCO Artist for Peace since 2004.

Said Ms. Azoulay: "Manu Dibango believed deeply in the power of music to bring peoples and cultures together because, as he said in a article in March 1991, music is "the most spontaneous, natural form of contact between one person and another".

[Readers can find information and guidance on the outbreak of the novel coronavirus \(2019-nCoV\) from the UN, World Health Organization and UN agencies here. For daily news updates from UN News, click here.](#)

At a time of physical distancing and other measures to halt further spread of the novel [coronavirus](#), music is indeed uniting people, according to Mr. Hancock, the UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador.

"Jazz artists and the jazz community are resilient," he said. "There is hope and solidarity in jazz music: something we all need right now."