

Ken Franckling's Jazz Notes

A special day for jazz - globally

Naysayers who claim jazz is dead or dying will find a lot of contrarians today at Congo Square in New Orleans and the United Nations Headquarters in New York City.

This is the first International Jazz Day, an official designation that was made last November by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for each April 30.

UNESCO is producing International Jazz Day activities in partnership with the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz. The UN imprimatur codifies something jazz fans already knew – that this is a “universal music of freedom and creativity.”



This ratifies its influence on music globally and vice versa, for jazz seems to have absorbed as much as it has given. The designation is aimed at raising awareness in the international community of the virtues of jazz as an educational tool, and a force for peace, unity, dialogue and enhanced cooperation among people.

Today's International Jazz Day activities in the U.S. begin with a sunrise jazz concert at Congo Square in New Orleans, where Herbie Hancock will be joined by Terence Blanchard, Ellis Marsalis, Stephanie Jordan, Kermit Ruffins, the Treme Brass Band, Jeff “Tain” Watts and others.



The UN program in New York begins with an afternoon panel discussion on “Unlearning Intolerance: Jazz as a Force for Education and Dialogue.” The event will be webcast live and can be viewed at <http://www.un.org/webcast> beginning at 3 p.m.

A jazz concert tonight at the home of the United Nations General Assembly will feature Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Stevie Wonder, Tony Bennett, Wynton Marsalis, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Esperanza Spalding and many other American musicians, as well as players from Latin America, Africa, Europe and Asia.

UNESCO headquarters in Paris jumped the gun with a warm-up series of jazz education programs and performances on Friday, April 27. That made sense due to travel challenges for UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Herbie Hancock and several other musicians.

Today's sunrise concert in the birthplace of jazz begins at 8 a.m. (ET) and tonight's concert is at 7:30 p.m. Both are being **streamed live at Jazz Day and Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz websites.**

No matter your time zone, tap your feet.

Posted by Ken Franckling at [7:06 AM](#)

