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NJPAC, JAZZ ROOTS and WBGO Jazz 88.3 FM Announce Launch of 2nd Annual

Sarah
VAUGHAN
INTERNATIONAL JAZZ VOCAL COMPETITION

Judges Include Al Jarreau, Janis Siegel and Larry Rosen

Newark, NJ – (April 2, 2013) Singers from around the world will gather online starting April 2 to compete in the for the *Sassy Award*, top honors in the *Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition*, a twenty-first century version of the amateur night at the Apollo Theater that helped launch the career of an aspiring teenager from Newark, Sarah “Sassy” Vaughan, more than seventy years ago.

“When you give yourself a challenge like this, you learn a lot,” said **Cyrille Aimée**, a 26-year-old singer from France and the Dominican Republic who won the competition last year.

“I was really impressed with the level of musicianship of all the singers, and most of all, how different everyone was,” said Aimée, who performed with four other finalists for a live panel of judges at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) as part of last year’s inaugural *TD James Moody Democracy of Jazz Festival*.

Starting today, female vocalists can submit applications online at www.sarahvaughancompetition.com. Five finalists, will perform in NJPAC’s Victoria Theater on November 10 before a panel of judges that includes world-renowned jazz singers **Al Jarreau** and **Janis Siegel**, who between them have more than two dozen Grammy Awards, and **Larry Rosen**, the co-founder of GRP Records, creator of the JAZZ ROOTS series of concerts, and producer of the competition. Two additional judges will be named at a later date.

“The competition is a way to take technology and really tie a community of musicians together,” said Rosen. “To make it a worldwide challenge gets everybody’s creative juices flowing.”

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) has partnered with JAZZ ROOTS, the Jazz Education Network (JEN), WBGO Jazz 88.3 FM and Indaba Music to offer the *Sassy Award* for a second year. Winners will receive cash prizes of up to \$5,000 and the opportunity to perform at NJPAC and on JAZZ ROOTS concerts across the country.

“We are happy to be part of in this amazing search for the next best jazz singer, and truly value the mission of this competition,” said Andrew Surmani, president of JEN.

JEN will help create awareness of the initiative by tapping into to its vast membership, which includes members in 22 countries, all fifty U.S. states, and seven Canadian Provinces, to encourage vocalists to compete for this year’s *Sassy Award*.

“There are so many talented jazz vocalists out there,” said Surmani. “Through our network of educational institutions, we are looking forward to engaging music teachers and students to help create a broad reach for this competition.”

Aimée, who has performed at jazz festivals worldwide since winning last year’s competition, returns to NJPAC on November 9 to perform with Jarreau, **Dianne Reeves**, and the **Christian McBride Big Band**, in the “Sing, Swing, Sing!” concert, part of this year’s *TD James Moody Democracy of Festival*.

“I can’t wait to get back up there at NJPAC, this time with a little less stress,” said Aimée. “It’s going to be an honor to share the stage with these legends.”

The competition is open to solo female vocalists of all nationalities who are not signed to a major record label. Singers must submit audio clips online through an interactive platform powered by Indaba Music. The public can vote online to help select the finalists who will be announced on October 5.

Singers will be judged on vocal quality, musicality, technique, performance, individuality, artistic interpretation and ability to swing.

“I love that this competition puts importance on improvising,” said Aimée. “I think as a jazz vocalist, you must be able to know a bit about that.”

Last year, 90,000 votes were received online to help select the finalists out of a pool of more than 900 submissions. In addition to the five finalists, one “Rising Star,” who also performs at NJPAC on November 10, will be selected by the judges. Last year’s “Rising Star” awardee, **Jazzmeia Horn**, wowed audiences and judges alike with her rendition of “Sweet Georgia Brown.”

Sarah Vaughan, the competition’s namesake, was born in Newark in 1924 and was known as “Sassy” throughout her life for her vibrant personality. In 1942, after winning the top prize of \$10 at the Apollo Theater’s amateur night at age eighteen, she went on to become one of the most popular singers in jazz and recorded with Count Basie, Miles Davis and countless others.

Musicians remember Vaughan as “The Divine One” for her exceptional musical gifts, and in 1989 she was named a Jazz Master by the National Endowment for the Arts, the nation’s top honor for a jazz musician.

“She has such incredible technique and huge ears to go with it!” said Aimée. “Of course, she’s one of my big inspirations.”

Vaughan was a graduate of Newark Arts High School. NJPAC and the *TD James Moody Democracy of Jazz Festival* contribute to Arts High in Vaughan's name to support the development of an enhanced jazz vocal training program.

Al Jarreau, born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, earned the first of his seven individual Grammy Awards, for best jazz vocal performance, in 1977. He has earned a dozen more Grammys with other artists, and has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. He has enjoyed crossover success in pop and rhythm 'n' blues, and is a featured singer on the 1985 song "We Are The World," along with Michael Jackson, Bruce Springsteen, and Lionel Richie.

Janis Siegel has won ten Grammys and has eighteen Grammy nominations with her jazz vocal quartet, The Manhattan Transfer, of which she has been a member for more than forty years. One of the most popular jazz groups of all time, The Manhattan Transfer has recorded twenty-nine albums and actively performs around the world, including at NJPAC for the inaugural *TD James Moody Democracy of Jazz Festival* last year.

The *TD James Moody Democracy of Jazz Festival's* title sponsor is TD Bank, America's Most Convenient Bank

JAZZ ROOTS - A Larry Rosen Jazz Series is a concert and educational program created for performing arts centers across America. The **JAZZ ROOTS** series, now celebrating its 5th Anniversary, was first launched in 2008 at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County, the series debuted in 2009 in Dallas at the AT&T Performing Arts Center, in 2010 in Carmel, IN. at the Center for the Performing Arts, and in 2012 debuts in Las Vegas at the Smith Center, in Atlanta at the Cobb Energy Centre, and in New Jersey at NJPAC, with additional PACs to be announced. Artists presented include: **Dave Brubeck, Sonny Rollins, Chick Corea, Al Jarreau, Keith Jarrett, Bobby McFerrin, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Dianne Reeves, Marcus Miller, Al Di Meola, Ramsey Lewis, Sergio Mendes, Michael Feinstein, Terence Blanchard, David Sanborn, Paquito D'Rivera, John McLaughlin, Patti Austin, Count Basie Orchestra, Arturo Sandoval, Dave Valentin, The Machito Orchestra, Ivan Lins, Buddy Guy, Dr. John, Manhattan Transfer, Jon Hendricks, Dave Grusin, Jon Secada, Eddie Palmieri, Michel Camilo**, and many more. The **JAZZ ROOTS** series includes educational and outreach programs that organically connect to local community groups, art centers, and the local board of education. Mr. Rosen, co-founder of GRP Records is the award-winning producer of the PBS TV Series *LEGENDS OF JAZZ*, producer of the Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition, and is the creator and producer of *RECORDING: The History of Recorded Music* with hosts, **Quincy Jones** and **Phil Ramone**. www.jazzroots.net. www.larryrosen.com

New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC)

New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), located in downtown Newark, New Jersey, is among the largest performing arts centers in the United States and is the artistic, cultural, educational and civic center of New Jersey -- where great performances and events enhance and transform lives every day. As *New Jersey's Town Square*, NJPAC brings diverse communities together, providing access to all and showcasing the State's and the world's best artists while acting as a leading catalyst in the revitalization of its home city. Through its extensive Arts Education programs, NJPAC is shaping the next generation of artists and arts enthusiasts. NJPAC has attracted over seven million visitors (more than one million children) since opening its doors in 1997, and nurtures meaningful and lasting relationships with each of its constituents. Visit www.njpac.org or call 1-888-GO-NJPAC for more information.

WBGO Jazz 88.3FM/WBGO.org

Founded in 1979, WBGO (Newark Public Radio, Inc.) is a publicly supported cultural institution that champions jazz at WBGO 88.3 FM in Newark, New Jersey and worldwide via WBGO.org. WBGO is the recognized world leader in jazz radio and one of the most respected jazz presenters in the country, and offers award-winning news and innovative children's programs. Beyond reaching 350,000 weekly listeners (including 17,000 contributing members) on air, online and via mobile devices, WBGO presents live broadcasts from prestigious jazz venues and produces acclaimed programs for NPR heard by millions. www.wbgo.org

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Indaba Media

Indaba Media, LLC is an entertainment technology and marketing services company. Established in 2005, the company operates Indaba Music (www.indabamusic.com), a musician community and contest platform with over 750,000 independent artists, as well as Indaba Sync (www.indabasync.com), a portal for licensing the best emerging content from the Indaba Music community. Indaba Music pioneered the online music collaboration and community space when it launched in 2007, enabling anyone with internet access to create, edit and mix studio-quality music online. Indaba Music now provides musicians with opportunities ranging from remix contests to sync and licensing opportunities to branded marketing programs. Indaba Music currently boasts musicians from 205 countries and territories. To date, Indaba Music contests have featured artists and brands including Daft Punk, Red Bull, Snoop Dogg, Peter Gabriel, Linkin Park, Yo-Yo Ma, Paul Simon, Foster The People, Bacardi and Usher.

Jazz Education Network

The Jazz Education Network is dedicated to building the jazz arts community by advancing education, promoting performance, and developing new audiences. With a home base in the United States, and members in more than 22 countries, this thriving organization hosts a popular annual conference that serves teachers, students, artists, performing arts presenters, music industry partners, and more. It runs ongoing programs of scholarships for students and educators, student composition showcases, community outreach, virtual workshops, music and instrument donations to schools in need, and mentoring with jazz pros and students.