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Danilo Pérez Foundation Announces The Fifth Annual Panama Jazz Festival January 21- 26, 2008

Pérez Declares A New Focus for the Festival Expanding the Scope of Educational Opportunities, Auditions, Clinics, Scholarships and Special Performances:

The Thelonious Monk Institute joins New England Conservatory,
Berklee College of Music, Puerto Rico Conservatory and the
International Association for Jazz Education (IAJE)
as teaching partners

Top International Artists To Teach Clinics and Perform in Ticketed and Free Concerts:

The Stanley Jordan Trio, Dave Samuels and the Caribbean Jazz
Project, The Catherine Russell Group and The Tia Fuller Quartet
Set to Participate

“According to Pérez, the Panama Jazz Festival is ‘a gathering that goes beyond music and speaks to the heart. The most powerful result we have seen is from the children. This is the reason we do this.’ Indeed the impact of this festival—produced by the Danilo Pérez Foundation—on the children of Panama is felt almost immediately.” Willard Jenkins, JazzTimes (2007)

“...the event is (...) transforming music education in the country, making jazz available to an increasing number of disadvantaged kids and hungry students. The fourth edition of the burgeoning festival (was) driven largely by the passion and commitment of pianist Danilo Pérez. ... A number of students from the New England Conservatory of Music conducted workshops with dozens of Panamanian children, many of whom lack the luxury of running water, while the professional musicians offered clinics for hopeful Panamanian jazz, students. One of them even scored a full ride to Berklee.” Peter Margasak, Downbeat (2007)

“...a glorious gathering of American and Panamanian musicians improvising upon cross-cultural themes, Mr. Pérez created a celebration worthy of staying up late—and helped usher in a new day for his native country.” Larry Blumenfeld, Wall Street Journal (2006)

Founded by **Panamanian pianist Danilo Pérez**, the **Panama Jazz Festival which celebrates its 5th birthday January 21 – 26, 2008** was created in order to exchange cultural experiences between the best musicians in the world and the Panamanian people. Perez's vision has guided the growth of the festival, which while continuing to bring top tier international artists to perform in ticketed and free events, now has as its inextricable center the need to address music education. According to Pérez, *"Each year we have been expanding the educational aspect of the Festival, bringing in more notable musicians as master teachers, additional major educational institutions, growing the audition process, reaching out to the most needy communities in Panama and increasing the amount and kind of scholarships, and the cultural opportunities we are able to make available to the young people of Panama. We now see ourselves as an educational and cultural convention, as opposed to a traditional jazz festival,"* he continued, *"Of course bringing top American and International talent to perform in the Festival continues to be a very integral and exciting part of what we do. It is the performances, the ticket sales, the government and corporate sponsorship of the Festival that makes it possible to fund our educational agenda."*

For the Fifth Anniversary of the Panama Jazz Festival several special events are planned. On Wednesday, January 23 at a formal Gala Concert at the National Theater, Pérez, with featured performers from the Festival and very special guests will perform an Evening of Boleros. On Friday afternoon January 26, a special family concert will be given from noon to five PM at the Las Huacas theatre at the Atlapa Convention Center. This concert will feature a performance created and rehearsed over the 5 days of the Festival and performed by Panamanian children. In addition, The Festival will award the Panama Jazz Festival Scholarship to a teacher working outside of Panama City for his special contribution to regional music and culture.

The Panama Jazz Festival and the Pérez Foundation have been able to grow the festival only through the cooperation of government and private support. The 2008 Festival is under the sponsorship of Ricardo Pérez, SA (Toyota Distributor of Panama), Movistar (a mobile telephone company) and relies on the continuous support of Panama's President Martin Torrijos, Panama City's Mayor Juan Carlos Navarro , Panama's Minister of Tourism Ruben Blades and the U.S. Embassy. Writing in Jazz Times, Bob Blumenthal noted, *"Perhaps the most impressive aspect of the Panama Jazz Festival and the most surprising sign of jazz education is that those in power are ... aware and supportive."*

CONCERT AND PERFORMANCE DETAILS:

The formal concerts will begin on Wednesday, January 23 with the Gala at the National Theatre, and will be followed by ticketed evening concerts held at the Anayansi Theater of the Atlapa Convention Center on Thursday, January 24 and Friday, January 25. A family concert will be held at the Las Huacas theatre at the Atlapa Convention Center on the afternoon of Friday, January 25. An all day free concert will be held at the Cathedral Plaza, in el Casco Antiguo on Saturday, January 26. The Stanley Jordan Trio, Dave Samuels and the Caribbean Jazz Project, featuring Alan Mallet, Oscar Stagnaro, Mark Walker; The Catherine Russell Group and The Tia Fuller Quartet featuring Kim Thompson will perform. In addition, Danilo Pérez, Jahaziel Arrocha, along with special guests and Panamanian and Latin American artists still to be announced will perform. For complete details on concerts, venues and ticket prices please visit www.panamajazzfestival.com.

CLINIC, EDUCATIONAL AND SCHOLARSHIP DETAILS:

The educational component of the festival will take place January 21-25. All clinics will take place in ATLAPA Convention Center. As in the past, the Festival has invited the following educational institutions to teach private and group instruction for the week of the festival: the New England Conservatory, Berklee College of Music, Puerto Rico Conservatory, International Association for Jazz Education (IAJE), and this year, the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz joins the group for the first time. The New England Conservatory, Berklee College of Music and Puerto Rico Conservatory will give auditions to Latin American students interested in admission and scholarship.

Berklee will be playing a special role by releasing a Berklee-produced recording of Pérez's *Panama Suite*, proceeds from the CD sales at the January 2008 festival will benefit the Danilo Pérez Foundation. In addition they will award two full tuition scholarships for the Summer program to a promising Latin American musician. In 2007 this scholarship was awarded to the exceptional Panamanian tenor player Jahaziel Arrocha, who comes from very limited resources, and later won a Presidential Scholarship to continue his studies. The festival searches out young talent from all socio-economic levels, but is extremely sensitive to reaching out those who do not have the access to musical education. *"We have some serious jazz students here,"* Pérez noted in an interview, *"but we also have younger kids from the country, kids who have to walk miles just to find clean water to bathe in and would never otherwise come into contact with the kind of organized instruction that American jazz students take for granted."*

Some of the teachers that will participate in January of 2008 during the week of clinics include Ken Shaphorst (composition) from the New England Conservatory; Rob Jaczko, Alejandro Rodriguez (music production and engineering), Jason Camelio (trombone and composition), Jim Odgren (saxophone), from Berklee College of Music; Marco Pignataro (saxophone and improvisation), from Puerto Rico Conservatory; The Kelly Johnson Quartet (Jazz improvisation), among others. Some of the artists that will give hourly clinics include guitarist Stanley Jordan, vocalist Catherine Russell, Vibraphonist Dave Samuels and saxophonist Tia Fuller. Every festival, the Music Production and Engineering Department of Berklee College of Music brings two representatives to teach this subject to the many producers and sound engineers of Panama. This unique program combines theory and practice in a “real life” setting. Some subjects taught by this department have included studio recording master classes and technical support and acoustic treatment advise for recording studio. Last year over 400 young Panamanian students took part in the workshops and seminars.

Robin Tomchin, the Festival’s Executive Director and Pérez’s manager notes, *“Each year we strive to bring to Panama the very best talent from the United States to play and to teach. In past years Jack DeJohnette, John Patitucci, Joe Lovano, Randy Weston, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Nneena Freelon, Kenny Barron, Regina Carter, Steve Turre, Janis Segal, David Sanchez and Edmar Castaneda have all come and what is amazing to me is how much the experience has deeply affected all of the participants—the audiences, the students and the artists themselves. I think it is the opportunity for the artists to interact in the intimate settings of teacher and student and not just as performer and audience that differentiates our Festival from any other.”* For complete details on educational programs and scholarship details please visit www.fundaciondaniloperez.com

The extraordinary Panamanian pianist and composer Danilo Pérez is among the most influential and dynamic musicians of our time. Whether leading his own ensembles or touring with renowned jazz masters (Wayne Shorter, Roy Haynes, Steve Lacy), Danilo has made a decidedly fresh imprint on contemporary music, guided, as always, by his love for jazz. His latest CD, **Live at the Jazz Showcase** was released on Artist Share. Notable for his insightful and innovative treatments of the standard jazz repertoire and as a leading exponent of Pan-American jazz music, Pérez is a shining beacon among the current generation of jazz and Latin jazz musicians. In 2006 he earned a Grammy Award and in past years has earned three Grammy® nominations, numerous awards, and critical acclaim for his recorded works and passionate live performances.

The 2008 Panama Jazz Festival is being sponsored by **Ricardo Perez, SA (Toyota's largest Distributor for almost 50 years) and Movistar, a mobile phone company.** The Festival is being supported by **Panama City's Mayor Juan Carlos Navarro and the Presidency of the Republic, the Institute of Tourism (IPAT), the National Institute of Culture (INAC), the U.S. Embassy, Copa Airlines, TVN, La Prensa, and the Yamaha Corporation of Panama.**

The Panama Jazz Festival will take place in Panama City, Panama January 21 -26. 2008. For details on all performers and on travel packages, airfares, hotel and ticket prices, please visit www.panamajazzfestival.com, www.daniloperez.com, www.fundaciondaniloperez.com and www.rubenblades.com.

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