

N E W S R E L E A S E

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The Soul of Jazz: The African Tribute to James Brown

*co-sponsored by The Boeing Company, UIC
and the Mayor's Office of Special Events*

Tuesday August 26, 2008

UIC Forum at Roosevelt and Halsted

VIP Reception 5:30

Concert 7:30

Tickets: 15 (students) 25, 35, 50 **available July 15** at Ticketmaster.com or www.jazzinchicago.org

VIP reception and concert: 150 available ONLY by calling: 312.427.1676

The mother of all American music is the blues—the common thread that ignites our soul, and moves our feet. **The Soul of Jazz: the African Tribute to James Brown** celebrates the connection between the roots of jazz and the Godfather of Soul. The concert is headlined by Brown's two horn-men **Fred Wesley** and **Pee Wee Ellis** and jazz trumpeter **Roy Hargrove**, who, in turn, will be joined by African musicians inspired by the late great JB: Senegalese vocalist **Cheikh Lo** and Malian singer and guitarist **Vieux Farka Toure**. The concert will open with Chicago's own trumpet star **Corey Wilkes**. A reception honoring Chicago history maker and Civil Rights activist Timuel Black will be held before the concert.

The Jazz Institute's Excellence in Jazz awards will be presented to pianist Earma Thompson and saxophonist Eddie Harris (Walter Dyett Lifetime Achievement Award), trumpeter, composer, educator and Chicago Jazz Philharmonic leader Orbert Davis and Delmark Records and Jazz Record Mart owner Bob Koester (Timuel Black Community Service Award) and a Special Recognition award will be presented to Timuel Black in honor of his approaching 90th birthday and his tireless efforts on behalf of peace, justice and America's original art form, jazz.

Over six decades of recording, **James Brown** touched on jazz in a variety of projects – first, as an organist with his own hard swinging group; then a couple of vocal albums, one with a cocktail trio, another with Louis Bellson's big band. There's also JB's tribute to fellow King Records artist Little Willie John that fired up his jazz influences. Brown's own unit, arguably the most influential funk band ever, also introduced trumpeter Waymon Reed, trombonist Fred Wesley and saxophonists Alfred "Pee Wee" Ellis and Maceo Parker, all of whom accumulated enviable jazz credentials. And they've been a model for countless jazz-funk outfits ever since.

PEE WEE ELLIS' distinguished career has embraced some of the most important musical movements of recent decades, from jazz to funk, via the blues and a touch of rock. After almost forty years in the music business he is one of the most acclaimed saxophonists of his generation and one of the most sought-after arrangers and MD's in the industry. His musical range and pursuit of excellence has gained him renown among his peers and the enduring respect of ensuing generations of musicians and fans.

No complete assessment of FRED WESLEY JR. as trombonist, arranger, and bandleader should begin or end with the idiom of Funk. Full *Circle: From Bebop To Hip Hop*, the title of a compilation collection, first issued in 1995, accurately reflects Wesley's scope. Uniquely and with few equals, Wesley has developed and applied his craft across the continuum of modern black vernacular music. In 1978, Wesley made his first major foray in Jazz, replacing the great Al Grey in the Count Basie Orchestra. He has followed with several recording projects that mix modern jazz and even free jazz elements with his signature funk grooves.

At 36, trumpeter ROY HARGROVE has firmly established himself as among the premier players in jazz and beyond. Ever-stretching into more challenging and colorful ways to flex his musical chops, Hargrove has left indelible imprints in a vast array of artful settings. Roy Hargrove is a hard bop-oriented "Young Lion", a fine straight-ahead player who does not sound overly influenced by any of his predecessors. After meeting Wynton Marsalis in 1987, Hargrove was soon playing with major players and in 1990 released his first of five recordings for Novus; he was 20 at the time. He continues to push musical boundaries, fusing hip hop and R&B into his own jazz equations.

Senegalese drummer and percussionist CHEIKH LÔ, is a free spirit, whose musical journey over the years has lead him to soak up styles and cultures from all over the globe. With his deep rooted spirituality Cheikh has combined these influences into a sound that is uniquely his own. He has worked and recorded with Senelangese singer and percussionist Youssou N'Dour, who has also produced Cheikh Lô's recording. Cheikh Lô draws on sounds from Burkina Faso, Mali, Congo, adding influences from Cuba, subtle reggae and blasting African funk to the mix.

Since his childhood VIEUX FARKA TOURE has been deeply inspired by the music of his father, master guitarist Ali Farka Toure. A product of both traditional and contemporary culture in Mali, Toure's compositions introduced new sounds into the tradition of desert blues from Northern Mali. Mentored by kora master Toumani Diabate, Vieux followed in his father's footsteps, taking the mantle when the elder Toure recently passed away.

A young lion with a roar being heard in several music genres; COREY WILKES burst onto the music scene in 2002 and landed in the soul of the Chicago Jazz Club scene. For his next feat he took on the ghost of Lester Bowie and filled the vacant trumpet seat in the the Art Ensemble of Chicago. Big shoes to fill for a new musician but Corey isn't an ordinary musician. He began at the age of 10, made the Illinois All State Honors Jazz Combo in high school and honed his talent at Berklee College of Music. His soulful notes can be heard gracing a variety of projects He performs extensively in Europe as well as Africa and South America. Holding down posts as an Artist in Residence and Board Member with the Jazz Institute of Chicago and a member of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians; this young lion has got a roar to listen for.

The concert is a fundraiser for the Jazz Institute of Chicago. For 40 years the Jazz Institute has supported the past present and future of jazz in Chicago by creating programs like our eleven-year-old JazzCity program which brings the city's top jazz talent into neighborhoods all over the city for free, our Chicago Public Schools Jazz Links partnership, 30 years of the free Chicago Jazz Festival in partnership with the Mayor's Office of Special Events our annual Jazz Fair and the four year-old the Made in Chicago: World Class Jazz series in Millennium Park. We undertake these endeavors because we want to ensure that new audiences continue to be developed for this great music, and that Chicago's place in its history is recognized and presented. We are committed to ensuring that the great jazz legacy of Chicago will continue to enrich and inspire all of our lives for many generations to come.