



JAZZ HERITAGE CENTER
SAN FRANCISCO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**JAZZ HERITAGE CENTER TO UNVEIL GROUNDBREAKING EXHIBIT
*MAKING ITS ONLY WEST COAST SHOWING HERE IN SF***

Opening Reception and Performance by the Brubeck Institute Jazz Quintet on Sunday, May 17

(SAN FRANCISCO – Apr 29, 2009) The Jazz Heritage Center today announced it will unveil a groundbreaking new exhibit titled *Jam Sessions: America's Jazz Ambassadors Embrace the World*, which chronicles a time when America decided to stop sending symphony orchestras and ballet companies on international tours of cultural diplomacy and to send jazz bands instead. To kick off the exhibit the **Jazz Heritage Center invites the public to a special celebration on Sunday, May 17, from 3 pm to 5 pm, with a live musical performance by the Dave Brubeck Institute Jazz Quintet**, speakers and discussion, to support the images and various documents.

The heart of this ambitious project is nearly one hundred photographs culled from various archives and collections from across the country, many of which will be premiered at the event. The exhibit explores historic exchange programs operated by the U.S. Department of State that sent jazz musicians abroad as cultural ambassadors throughout the fifties, sixties, and seventies. The names – Dizzy Gillespie, Louis Armstrong, Dave Brubeck, Duke Ellington, and Benny Goodman – are synonymous with American Jazz culture.

Jam Sessions is part of a fifteen-stop national tour which premiered at Washington, D.C.'s Meridian International Center and included the legendary Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York City. Jazz at Heritage Center Lush Life Gallery is the exhibit's only West Coast showing, and will run until June 25, daily from Noon to 10 pm. *Jam Sessions* is a free exhibit brought to the San

Francisco community through the generosity of the Koret Foundation and Friends of the Jazz Heritage Center.

“The Jazz Heritage Center is proud to bring this historic exhibit to California,” said Peter Fitzsimmons, executive director of the Jazz Heritage Center. “Jazz has long played a role in cultural exchange and diplomacy, whether through official programs or simply due to its nature as a distinctly American, flexible art form that has both absorbed influences from across the globe, and in turn impacted music internationally.”

The *New York Times* in 1955 - and again in 2008 - referred to our country's jazz diplomats as America's "Super Sonic Weapon." Visitors to *Jam Session* will have an opportunity to see and learn why. Several VIP and community events are planned throughout the duration of the exhibit including a performance and talk with jazz legend Randy Weston, visits with local schools and a special event with the World Affairs Council – Young Professionals.

(Editor's Note: For hi-resolution images please contact peter@jazzheritagecenter.org)

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About the Jazz Heritage Center

The Jazz Heritage Center, located at 1330 Fillmore Street, cross street Eddy, is the only permanent cultural and educational complex dedicated to the long history of Jazz in San Francisco and the Fillmore District. By showcasing art and historical exhibitions, concerts, films and youth programming, the JHC's mission is to preserve and promote jazz, an American national treasure, while celebrating its presence as an active, living art form in San Francisco and beyond. For more information about Jazz at Heritage Center, JHC events, educational programs and to become a member visit www.jazzattheheritagecenter.org or call (415) 255-7745.