

# JAZZ ASPEN SNOWMASS 2<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY SEASON

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## Harry Connick, Jr. & Natalie Cole to Headline JAS 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary June Festival, June 24 – July 3

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Aspen, CO, December 28, 2009 – Jazz Aspen Snowmass will kick off their 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season next June with some of the biggest names in jazz, pop and world music.

Making his first ever JAS appearance jazz pianist/vocalist **Harry Connick, Jr.** and Orchestra have been added to the June Festival lineup appearing at the Benedict Music Tent on Friday, June 25. Over the past two decades Connick has taken a very hands-on approach to his recording career, calling the shots at the numerous phases of his albums projects. Whether performing the American Songbook or in the jazz, blues or funk idiom, the process has yielded consistent success, not to mention worldwide sales of over 25 million discs. In Connick's latest release, *Your Songs*, he has expanded his vision to encompass 14 classic popular songs; his instrumental pallet through a striking integration of a string orchestra and his swinging Big Band; and his basic approach to recording, with his interpretation of such classics as Billy Joel's "Just the Way You Are," Elton John's "Your Song," and Elvis Presley's "Can't Help Falling in Love with You."

On Saturday, June 26 at the Benedict Tent JAS will present an **All Star Celebration of Jazz** featuring world-renowned bassist and JAS Distinguished Artist in Residence **Christian McBride**, along with one of the premier vocalists in the world **Dianne Reeves**, in a Grammy-like format of multiple guest artists backed by a crack Big Band. McBride, the Artistic Director of the JAS Academy Summer Sessions is a chameleonic virtuoso of the acoustic and electric bass and first-call-requested to accompany literally hundreds of fine artists ranging from Sting to Kathleen Battle to Diana Krall. Reeves, a 4-time Grammy winner, recently released her first Blue Note album of new material in five years *When You Know*, a stunning array of old and new standards along with an infectious, uplifting new original. A Sunday, June 27 concert is still to be announced.

The closing night of the JAS 20<sup>th</sup> June Festival will take place on Saturday, July 3 featuring **Natalie Cole with Big Band and Musicians from the AMFS**. Cole, who had to cancel an appearance with JAS last July due to a kidney transplant in May, is already back on stage feeling "healthy, whole and 100% again." Her last release, *Still Unforgettable*, earned her two Grammy Awards in 2009, including Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album. Cole was also the recipient of the NAACP Award for Best Jazz Artist in 2009.

The JAS Academy Summer Sessions, again with Christian McBride, will be in residence June 24-July 3. JAS' flagship music education program, the Academy is the nation's only all-scholarship jazz residency program, uniting the finest young jazz artists with the world's "jazz legends." **JAS has contributed \$5 million dollars to music education since 1996.**

Additional special concerts and events will take place throughout the June 24-July 3 Festival including free performances at the Cooper Mall Stage, Jazz performances downstairs at the Little Nell, special events featuring students from the JAS Academy and JAS After Dark shows in collaboration with the Belly Up.

Look for more announcements surrounding the JAS 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season early next year, including line-up information for the Labor Day Festival taking place Sept. 3-5 and other special events. Tickets for all events will be on-sale in February. For more information please visit [www.jazzaspen.org](http://www.jazzaspen.org).

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