

Tonight Show Bandleader Kevin Eubanks Named Artistic Director of Institute's Jazz in the Classroom Program

In conjunction with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and its Beyond the Bell after-school program, the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz is proud to announce the appointment of virtuoso jazz guitarist and Tonight Show bandleader Kevin Eubanks as Artistic Director of the Institute's Jazz in the Classroom program. In this new role, Eubanks will work with young up-and-coming middle and high school musicians in the Los Angeles public schools, many of which have seen arts programs dwindle with recent budget cuts.

"When you remove the arts from schools, you remove a sense of humanity as well," said Eubanks. "It's not only the students that suffer, the entire community suffers."

Besides teaching students about jazz, widely considered America's uniquely indigenous art form, Eubanks will discuss the important American values jazz represents: teamwork, unity with ethnic diversity, and democracy. He'll also talk about the correlation of hard work and goal accomplishment and the importance of finding a passion early in life, being persistent, and believing in yourself.

"Young people need to be able to express themselves in ways that educate, uplift, and inspire self confidence," Eubanks remarked. "It's important that everyone in the neighborhood gets to see that."

Los Angeles residents and visitors will have the opportunity to see and hear Eubanks perform in a free concert with LAUSD music students on Sunday, June 6 at the world famous Catalina Jazz Club, 6725 West Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, CA, at 2:00 pm. Student combos from seven LAUSD schools will perform jazz standards, classics, and contemporary tunes they have been working on throughout the year with guidance from the Institute's jazz educators. The finale will feature Eubanks with the LAUSD All-City Jazz Ensemble, comprised of the best young jazz musicians across the District, under the direction of Dr. JB Dyas, the Institute's Vice President for Education and Curriculum Development, and Tony White, LAUSD Beyond the Bell Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator.

"It's been a pleasure to work with these kids each week and see them grow and learn not only from JB [Dyas] and me," said White, "but more importantly, learn from each other." In so doing, the student musicians are teaching and learning from their peers not unlike virtually all great jazz players have done throughout the music's hundred-year history.

"And when you hear how great these young kids play," added Thelonious Monk, Jr., the Institute's Chairman of the Board of Trustees and son of legendary jazz pianist and composer Thelonious Monk, "you know the future of our music is in good hands."

"I am truly honored to join the prestigious Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz as Artistic Director for its Jazz in the Classroom program," concluded Eubanks. *"Please join me in not only helping but insisting that the arts remain in our schools as a vital source of nourishment for our young men and women. By supporting them, you support so much more. Without that support when I was a kid, my life would have been a completely different story."*

For more information regarding the free concert at Catalina Jazz Club on June 6, please visit www.catalinajazzclub.com or call 323-466-2210.