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Cyrille Aimée,
takes top prize in the first-ever
Sarah
VAUGHAN
INTERNATIONAL JAZZ VOCAL COMPETITION

NOTE TO EDITORS: High-resolution photos available for download at <http://yousend.it/P8ipHx>. Caption information at end of release.

Newark, NJ – An iconic panel of judges awarded Brooklyn-based French singer **Cyrille Aimée** first place in the inaugural Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition, the search for the next great female vocalist and the world’s largest competition of its kind, held Sunday, October 21st at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark, N.J.

Ms. Aimée won the **SASSY AWARD**, a \$5,000 prize, and an opening spot at a 2013 JAZZ ROOTS concert. First runner-up **Ashleigh Smith** of Lewisville, Texas won \$1,500 and second runner-up **Sandra Booker** of Sherman Oaks, Calif. won \$500. **Jazzmeia Horn** of Dallas, Texas won *The Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition Rising Star Award*. The competition – presented by JAZZ ROOTS, WBGO JAZZ 88.3 FM and the New Jersey Performing Arts Center – was produced by award-winning producer **Larry Rosen** and powered by Indaba Music (IndabaMusic.com), the leading online community of musicians and marketplace for music opportunities.

Ms. Aimée, a 2007 winner of both the first and public prizes in the Montreux Jazz Festival Competition, has released four CDs, recorded songs for feature films and fronted France's electro-swing/gypsy jazz band Caravan Palace on its European tour. She was among five finalists and a “Rising Star” award winner

who performed on October 21st at NJPAC's Victoria Theater before a live audience and judges **Dee Dee Bridgewater**, the Grammy and Tony Award-winning jazz vocalist; vocalese and scat pioneer **Jon Hendricks**, vocalist and Executive Director of Jazz House Kids **Melissa Walker**, WBGO radio host and jazz journalist **Michael Bourne**, and producer of JAZZ ROOTS and co-founder of GRP Records, **Rosen**.

“Our first annual SASSY Award winner, Cyrille Aimée is a very unique artist. She was exposed to music as a child sitting around campfires with gypsies playing music in France. Next she studied jazz by listening to every Django Reinhardt and Stephan Grapelli record and learning every solo. She has the soul of a Gypsy, the swing of a horn player, and the intimate sound of an angel,” said competition producer, Larry Rosen... “And our first Raising Star Awardee, Jazzmeia Horn, who brought the entire theater to their feet with a standing ovation, are examples of just how vibrant jazz vocalists are today... and this is a very good thing.”

NJPAC President and CEO **John Schreiber**, who presented Vaughan at dozens of domestic and international jazz festivals through the years, said: “What an incredible array of talent we witnessed last Sunday afternoon at NJPAC. With shades of Edith Piaf and Billie Holiday in her voice, but possessing a sound uniquely her own, Cyrille Aimée proved that the legacy of Sarah Vaughan is alive and thriving.”

“We heard six wonderful vocalists who sang their hearts out in front of an enthusiastic audience,” said **Cephas Bowles**, President and CEO of WBGO JAZZ 88.3 FM. “Our congratulations to all of the singers and to Cyrille Aimée who won bravely while singing with bass accompaniment only. This was one of Newark's finest and most exciting jazz moments, and WBGO was pleased to be part of it.”

The finalists were made up of exceptional singers from around the nation including **Sandra Booker** of Sherman Oaks, Calif., who has performed with Lalo Schifrin, Wynton Marsalis & The Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, Ernie Watts and Billy Higgins; **Alexis Cole** of New York, N.Y., winner of the NY Jazzmobile and Montreux Jazz Festival vocal competitions; **Hilary Kole** of New York, N.Y., the youngest singer to ever grace the Rainbow Room stage and the first singer since Ella Fitzgerald to record a duet with jazz legend Oscar Peterson; and **Ashleigh Smith** of Lewisville, Texas, winner of the prestigious Downbeat Student Award for Best Undergraduate Jazz Vocal Performance in 2011 and the Outstanding Undergraduate Vocal Jazz Soloist in 2012.

Also performing during the finals was Ms. Horn, the outstanding young artist chosen for the *The Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition Rising Star Award*. The award created for the purpose of

discovering young talented jazz vocal artists that deserve wider recognition and mentoring in their career as a jazz singer, while keeping in the tradition of Sarah Vaughan. Horn attended the prestigious Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts and currently attends The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music in New York City,

A distinguished panel of musicians, music industry executives, NJPAC leadership and online voters culled through nearly 900 submissions from around the globe to narrow the field to the five finalists and Ms. Horn. Contestants were judged on vocal quality, musicality, technique, performance, individuality, artistic interpretation and ability to swing. Online voters listened to songs submitted to the contest nearly 90,000 times.

At the October 21st competition, Vaughan's daughter, Paris Vaughan-Courtnall, announced that NJPAC was instituting the **Sarah Vaughan Vocal Scholarship Residency**, a six-week program to take place this spring at Arts High School in Newark – Sarah Vaughan's alma mater. Sixteen "Sarah Vaughan Vocal Scholars" have been chosen from among Arts High vocal students to participate in this 12-session residency, where they will conduct an in-depth study of Vaughan's unique talent, style and legacy.

The competition was part of *The TD James Moody Democracy of Jazz Festival*, a celebration of jazz and the musical legacy of longtime Newarker and beloved jazz saxophonist and composer James Moody. Presented by NJPAC and WBGO Jazz88.3FM, the Moody Festival ran from Oct. 15-21st at NJPAC and in other venues around the region.

The Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition was presented as part of NJPAC's JAZZ ROOTS series with producer Larry Rosen. The *TD James Moody Democracy of Jazz Festival's* title sponsor is TD Bank, America's Most Convenient Bank®, and is sponsored, in part, by The Prudential Foundation, Verizon, Audible.com, The Women's Association of NJPAC, PSEG and Whole Foods.

New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC)

New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), located in downtown Newark, New Jersey, is among the largest performing arts centers in the United States and is the artistic, cultural, educational and civic center of New Jersey -- where great performances and events enhance and transform lives every day. As *New Jersey's Town Square*, NJPAC brings diverse communities together, providing access to all and showcasing the State's and the world's best artists while acting as a leading catalyst in the revitalization of its home city. Through its extensive Arts Education programs, NJPAC is shaping the next generation of artists and arts enthusiasts. NJPAC has attracted over 6 million visitors (more than one million children) since opening its doors in 1997, and nurtures meaningful and lasting relationships with each of its constituents. Visit www.njpac.org or call 1-888-GO-NJPAC for more information.

JAZZ ROOTS - A Larry Rosen Jazz Series is a concert and educational program created for performing arts centers across America. The JAZZ ROOTS series, now celebrating its 5th Anniversary, was first launched in 2008 at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County, the series debuted in 2009 in Dallas at the AT&T Performing Arts Center, in 2010 in Carmel, IN. at the Center for the Performing Arts, and in 2012 debuts in Las Vegas at the Smith Center, in Atlanta at the Cobb Energy Centre, and in New Jersey at NJPAC, with additional PACs to be announced. Artists presented include: Dave Brubeck, Sonny Rollins, Chick Corea, Al Jarreau, Keith Jarrett, Bobby McFerrin, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Dianne Reeves, Marcus Miller, Al Di Meola, Ramsey Lewis, Sergio Mendes, Michael Feinstein, Terence Blanchard, David Sanborn, Paquito D'Rivera, John McLaughlin, Patti Austin, Count Basie Orchestra, Arturo Sandoval, Dave Valentin, The Machito Orchestra, Ivan Lins, Buddy Guy, Dr. John, Manhattan Transfer, Jon Hendricks, Dave Grusin, Jon Secada, Eddie Palmieri, Michel Camilo, and many more. The JAZZ ROOTS series includes educational and outreach programs that organically connect to local community groups, art centers, and the local board of education. Mr. Rosen, co-founder of GRP Records is the award-winning producer of the PBS TV Series *LEGENDS OF JAZZ*, producer of the Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition, and is the creator and producer of *RECORDING: The History of Recorded Music* with hosts, Quincy Jones and Phil Ramone. www.jazzroots.net. www.larryrosen.com

WBGO Jazz 88.3FM/WBGO.org

Founded in 1979, WBGO (Newark Public Radio, Inc.) is a publicly supported cultural institution that champions jazz at WBGO 88.3 FM in Newark, New Jersey and worldwide via WBGO.org. WBGO is the recognized world leader in jazz radio and one of the most respected jazz presenters in the country, and offers award-winning news and innovative children's programs. Beyond reaching 350,000 weekly listeners (including 17,000 contributing members) on air, online and via mobile devices, WBGO presents live broadcasts from prestigious jazz venues and produces acclaimed programs for NPR heard by millions. www.wbgo.org

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Indaba Media

Indaba Media, LLC is an entertainment technology and marketing services company. Established in 2005, the company operates Indaba Music (www.indabamusic.com), a musician community and contest platform with over 750,000 independent artists, as well as Indaba Sync (www.indabasync.com), a portal for licensing the best emerging content from the Indaba Music community. Indaba Music pioneered the online music collaboration and community space when it launched in 2007, enabling anyone with internet access to create, edit and mix studio-quality music online. Indaba Music now provides musicians with opportunities ranging from remix contests to sync and licensing opportunities to branded marketing programs. Indaba Music currently boasts musicians from 205 countries and territories. To date, Indaba Music contests have featured artists and brands including Daft Punk, Red Bull, Snoop Dogg, Peter Gabriel, Linkin Park, Yo-Yo Ma, Paul Simon, Foster The People, Bacardi and Usher.

Jazz Education Network (JEN)

The Jazz Education Network (JEN) is dedicated to building the jazz arts community by advancing education, promoting performance, and developing new audiences. With a home base in the United States and members in more than 20 countries, this thriving organization hosts a popular annual conference that serves teachers, students, artists, performing arts presenters, music industry partners, and more. It runs ongoing programs of scholarships for

students and educators, student composition showcases, community outreach, music and instrument donations to schools in need, and mentoring between jazz pros and students. www.jazzednet.org/

Note to editors: High-res photos available for download at <http://yousend.it/P8ipHx>. IDs and caption information is below.

alltheparticipants3.jpg

Posing after the first ever Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition, October 21st, 2012 at NJPAC: Producer and judge Larry Rosen; finalist Alexis Cole; finalist Hilary Kole; finalist Sandra Booker; winner Cyrille Aimée; finalist Ashleigh Smith; Rising Star winner Jazzmeia Horn and NJPAC President/CEO John Schreiber. Photo by Amanda Brown/For NJPAC.

allthe participants6.jpg

Finalists Sandra Booker and Ashleigh Smith; producer and judge Larry Rosen; judge Dee Dee Bridgewater; Sarah Vaughan's daughter, Paris Vaughan-Courtnall; finalist Hilary Kole; finalist Alexis Cole; judge Melissa Walker; judge Michael Bourne; judge Jon Hendricks; winner Cyrille Aimée; Rising Star winner Jazzmeia Horn. After the inaugural Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition, held Sunday, October 21st at NJPAC. Photo by Amanda Brown/For NJPAC.

cyrilleaimee7crop.jpg: Cyrille Aimée poses with her first-place award after winning the top prize in the inaugural Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition, held Sunday, October 21st at NJPAC. Photo by Amanda Brown/For NJPAC.