



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
SEPTEMBER 3, 2008

Contact: Liz Stark (Media Inquiries)
202-682-5744, starke@arts.gov
Katja von Schuttenbach (Program Inquiries)
202-682-5711, vonschuttenbach@arts.gov

National Endowment for the Arts to Honor 2009 NEA Jazz Masters at Awards Ceremony & Concert at Jazz at Lincoln Center

Events also include pre-concert conversation with 2009 NEA Jazz Masters

Washington, DC – The National Endowment for the Arts will sponsor its annual NEA Jazz Masters Awards Ceremony & Concert on October 17, 2008, at Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York City. The event will begin at 8 p.m. in Rose Theater at Frederick P. Rose Hall, home of Jazz at Lincoln Center at Broadway at 60th Street and feature the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis in a program dedicated to the honorees' works. The concert also will include brief video biographies on each 2009 NEA Jazz Master.

In addition, a pre-concert conversation with the 2009 NEA Jazz Masters moderated by NEA Chairman Dana Gioia will be held at 6:15 p.m. in Rose Theater. The conversation will explore the careers, influences, and ideas from the Masters experiences in jazz. Each year, this conversation with the Masters is an occasion for light moments, stories, and personal insights from six distinguished lives in music.

Earlier that day, the NEA Jazz Masters from past and current classes will gather for an extraordinary photo opportunity. More information on this photo opportunity will be available at a later date.

The 2009 NEA Jazz Masters include: vocalist and guitarist **George Benson**, drummer **James “Jimmy” Cobb**, saxophonist **Lee Konitz**, harmonica and guitar player **Jean-Baptiste “Toots” Thielemans**, and trumpeter **Eugene Edward “Snooky” Young**. The A.B. Spellman NEA Jazz Master Award for Jazz Advocacy is awarded to recording engineer **Rudolph “Rudy” Van Gelder**.

“The NEA is delighted to partner with Jazz at Lincoln Center,” said NEA Chairman Dana Gioia. “The nation’s top honor in jazz is now being celebrated at the nation’s preeminent center for jazz education and performance.”

“Jazz at Lincoln Center is honored to be given the opportunity to celebrate the outstanding contributions made by the 2009 NEA Jazz Masters and to produce this concert devoted to their achievements,” said Adrian Ellis, Executive Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center

Members of the press who want to attend the concert or panel discussion or who would like to participate in the photo opportunity on Friday, October 17, must reserve a place in advance. Please contact Rebecca Bell at 612-968-0772 or beccabe@hotmail.com or Liz Stark at the National Endowment for the Arts (202-682-5744 or starke@arts.gov).

About NEA Jazz Masters: NEA Jazz Masters are selected from nominations submitted by the public. Musicians selected as NEA Jazz Masters receive a one-time grant award of \$25,000, are honored at a public awards ceremony, and may participate in NEA-sponsored promotional, performance, and educational activities under the NEA Jazz Masters National Initiative program. All of the NEA Jazz Masters are profiled in an NEA publication, which includes brief biographies, selected discographies, and an hour-long audio CD of NEA-produced Jazz Moments, radio shorts of interviews with NEA Jazz Masters. Only living musicians or jazz advocates may receive the NEA Jazz Masters honor.

The National Endowment for the Arts has supported jazz artists and organizations since 1969, providing millions of dollars in grants and awards. In 2004, the NEA significantly expanded its NEA Jazz Masters program and in 2005 created the NEA Jazz Masters Initiative, a comprehensive program of jazz support that includes the NEA Jazz Masters Award; NEA Jazz Masters Live, a series of multiple event engagements in selected communities, featuring NEA Jazz Masters; radio programming featuring NEA Jazz Masters; a compilation CD produced by Verve Music Group; educational resources through the NEA Jazz in the Schools program produced by Jazz at Lincoln Center; and publications and reports. For more information on NEA Jazz Masters, the public is invited to visit the web site, at www.neajazzmasters.org.

About Jazz at Lincoln Center: Jazz at Lincoln Center is dedicated to inspiring and growing audiences for jazz. With the world-renowned Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and a comprehensive array of guest artists, Jazz at Lincoln Center advances a unique vision for the continued development of the art of jazz by producing a year-round schedule of performance, education and broadcast events for audiences of all ages. These productions include concerts, national and international tours, residencies, hall of fame induction ceremony, weekly national radio and television programs, recordings, publications, an annual high school jazz band competition and festival, a band director academy, jazz appreciation curriculum for students, music publishing, children's concerts, lectures, adult education courses, student and educator workshops and interactive websites. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Wynton Marsalis Jazz at Lincoln Center will produce nearly 3,000 events during its 2008-09 Season in its home in New York City, Frederick P. Rose Hall, and around the world. Please visit our website at www.jalc.org.

###