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Message from Ms Irina Bokova,
Director-General of UNESCO,

on the occasion of *International Jazz Day*

30 April 2013



On *International Jazz Day*, the world comes together, in peace and harmony, to share a passion for music and to join forces for freedom and creativity.

This is why UNESCO created *International Jazz Day*, celebrated for the first time in 2012, working with our Goodwill Ambassador and jazz giant, Herbie Hancock.

Jazz draws roots from a great mix of peoples and cultures -- from Africa, Europe, and the Caribbean. Nurtured in the United States, it is now woven into the fabric of every society, played across the world, enjoyed everywhere. This diversity makes jazz a powerful force for dialogue and understanding. Jazz provided the soundtrack for past struggles for dignity and civil rights. It remains today a force for social transformation, because it tells a story of freedom that all people share.

One of the greatest cultural expressions of the 20th century, jazz is already capturing the spirit of the 21st. In times of change and uncertainty, we need the power of jazz more than ever before to bring people together and to strengthen respect for shared values. Young women and men, especially, need new tools of peace that speak to the heart. UNESCO is here to strengthen these tools and make the most of our cultural diversity, including through arts education to foster creativity and innovation. Jazz is here for us all, to give shape to our aspirations for respect, tolerance and freedom.

This year, Istanbul will host the main celebration of *International Jazz Day*, reflecting this city's unique history as a crossroads of cultures. For 24 hours straight, celebrations will occur across the world, through master classes, workshops, jazz talks and jam sessions, from Beirut to Beijing, Dakar to Rio.

International Jazz Day is the moment for all of us to express our passion for peace. Everyone is invited and should join in...

Irina Bokova