

On International Day, UNESCO spotlights power of jazz to promote dialogue among cultures

30 April 2017 – Marking International Jazz Day, the United Nations cultural agency today stressed the power of jazz to unite people and its contribution to peace.

“Today, we celebrate the international art form of jazz and its power to promote dialogue among cultures, to make the most of diversity, to deepen respect for human rights and all forms of expression,” said UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Director-General Irina Bokova in her [message](#) on the Day.

Ms. Bokova quoted Nina Simone as saying that “jazz is not just music, it is a way of life, it is a way of being, a way of thinking.”

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“The story of jazz is written into the quest for human dignity, democracy and civil rights,” Ms. Bokova said, noting that its rhythms and variety have given strength to the struggle against all forms of discrimination and racism.

The Cuban capital of Havana is hosting this year’s celebration of International Jazz Day, reflecting the city’s profound ties to jazz. Hometown of renowned bandleaders, Mario Bauzá and Frank ‘Machito’ Grillo, the city and, more broadly, Cuba’s thriving musical culture gave birth to the Afro-Cuban jazz movement, inspired by a great mix of cultures and peoples across the region.

The celebration features an all-star global concert that displays the world’s greatest talents from Cuba, Latin America and around the world, including legendary jazz pianist and composer UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Intercultural Dialogue, Herbie Hancock, and Cuban jazzman, Chucho Valdés.