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MSU Music celebrates Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with jazz concert

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EAST LANSING, Mich. – Michigan State University College of Music’s annual *Jazz: Spirituals, Prayer and Protest* concert honoring the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. will take place on **Sunday, Jan. 19, 2025, at 3 p.m.** in Fairchild Theatre.

Free and open to the public, the concert is part of MSU’s [annual university-wide celebration](#) commemorating the civil rights leader. *Jazz: Spirituals, Prayer and Protest* is among several events in a week-long slate of activities themed “*The Progress for Civil Rights Continues: Celebrating 45 years of Dr. Martin Luther King’s Legacy*” coordinated by MSU’s Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives. [Activities and events](#) run Jan. 16 through 24 on MSU’s campus.

“Jazz has always been a voice for social change and a reflection of the struggles and triumphs of humanity,” said [Rodney Whitaker](#), University Distinguished Professor of Jazz Bass and director of MSU Jazz Studies. “We have titled this year’s program ‘*I Have a Dream for the World.*’ The music highlights the transformative role of jazz in the civil rights movement while also inspiring hope and unity for today’s challenges.”

Conducted by Whitaker, the program will feature MSU Jazz Orchestra I performing a compelling selection of works by iconic artists such as Pharaoh Sanders, Abbey Lincoln, Billie Holiday, and Arthur Herzog Jr., alongside music by contemporary legends like Lauryn Hill, Stevie Wonder, and Nickolas Ashford. The timeless pieces will showcase the enduring ability of jazz to inspire social change through its rich tradition of storytelling and emotional depth.

The 45th Annual Celebration of MLK activities features a student committee ecumenical service, march, unity dinner, film series, lectures and discussions, and more. Visit the [MSU Office of Inclusion website](#) for more details.

Jazz: Spirituals, Prayer and Protest is generously sponsored by the Patrick and Victoria McPharlin Guest Artist Endowment for Jazz Studies in the College of Music, Robert Last and Jill Canny, and a special thank you to the MSU Office for Institutional Diversity and Inclusion for supporting this event.

The event is free, but tickets are required for admission. Tickets are available over the phone at 517-353-5340 or for pick-up from the College of Music Main Office in Room 102 of the Music Building, 333 W. Circle Drive, East Lansing, M-F, 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Remaining tickets will be made available at the door. Please note that unclaimed will-call tickets will be released 10 minutes before the event.

Information on this and other concerts, recitals and performances can be found on the MSU College of Music website: www.music.msu.edu.