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The Jazz Museum in Harlem
104 East 126th Street
New York, NY 10035
www.jazzmuseuminharlem.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

THE JAZZ MUSEUM IN HARLEM'S
***Harlem Speaks* SERIES SWINGS INTO THE FALL**

- * **Oscar Hernandez (September 9)**
- * **Kenneth J. Knuckles (September 23)**
- * **Patience Higgins (October 7)**
- * **Larry Ridley (October 21)**

New York, NY (August 30, 2004) The Jazz Museum in Harlem's bi-weekly series, *Harlem Speaks*, continues on Thursday, September 9, 2004, featuring a discussion with pianist and arranger Oscar Hernandez, musical director of the award-winning Spanish Harlem Orchestra.

The composer of the theme to the hit show *Sex in the City*, **Oscar Hernandez** has long been considered one of the most gifted and prominent pianist/arrangers on the contemporary Latin, Latin-Jazz and Salsa music scene. Since its inception in the early 1980's, Oscar has been responsible for charting the musical course of the Ruben Blades Band. Increasingly in demand as a pianist, arranger and producer, the Bronx native has produced such artists as Ruben Blades/Willie Colón, *Carabali*, Daniel Ponce, Rafael Dejesus, Eddie Torres, Phil Hernandez, Steve Kroon as well as "The Spanish Harlem Orchestra," whose debut recording, "Un Gran Dia En El Barrio" (One Great Day in the Neighborhood) was a 2003 Grammy nominee for "Best Salsa Album," and winner of the 2003 *Latin Billboard* Award for "Salsa Album of the Year<Best New Group."

In addition to being Ruben Blades' pianist, arranger and musical director, Hernandez has enjoyed a prolific musical career recording and performing with such world renowned artists as Latin music king Tito Puente, Queen of Salsa Music Celia Cruz, Latin Pop Star Julio Iglesias, Juan Luis Guerra, Ray Barreto, Earl Klugh, Dave Valentin, Johnny Pacheco, Ismael Miranda, Pete "Conde" Rodríguez, Oscar De'leon, Luis "Perico" Ortiz, *Libre*, *Grupo Folkorico Experimental*, Willie Colon, Kirsty MacColl, and many others.

Every set of four honorees over each two-month period will accentuate the contribution of one non-musician for whom jazz remains a vital inspiration, and who has also helped advance the music in Harlem. On September 23, 2004, the museum will host a discussion with long-time jazz supporter and CEO of the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone, Ken Knuckles. Long-time mainstay of the St. Nick's Pub in Harlem, multi-reed man

Patience Higgins will speak on October 7th. Higgins, who has been featured with Wilson Pickett, Muhal Richard Abrams, Hamiett Bluiett, and the new Cab Calloway and Duke Ellington Orchestras, led his own live recording date in 1998: "Sugar Hill Quartet: Live in Harlem."

October 21st will honor Schomburg Center artist-in-residence Larry Ridley, one of the top jazz educators in the nation. Professor Emeritus of Music at Rutgers University, bassist Ridley gigged with Freddie Hubbard and Wes Montgomery back home in Indiana, and moved to New York in the 1960s, where he served as bassist for Thelonious Monk, and many other top professionals. He currently leads the Jazz Legacy Ensemble.

Loren Schoenberg, Executive Director of the Jazz Museum in Harlem, and co-producer (along with Greg Thomas Associates) of *Harlem Speaks*, says: "We have been thrilled at the response of the local community with these events. Not only are the discussions fun, but the meet and greet portions before and after the talk are also a very enjoyable. What better way the celebrate Harlem's legacy than through these living legends. This quartet really represents the breadth of this great tradition and it's relevance to today's culture." Greg Thomas adds: "This series is rapidly becoming a major event in Harlem, and in addition, the proceedings are videotaped for the Museum's Archives, so future generations will be able to share the insights our guests share."

During the months of July and August 2004, *Harlem Speaks* honored the trumpeter Joe Wilder; former Apollo dancer and dance historian Jacquie "Tajah" Murdock; the late alto sax legend Benny Carter; and long-time Harlem jazz writer Clarence Atkins.

The series, co-produced by the Jazz Museum in Harlem and Greg Thomas Associates, will be held at the offices of the Jazz Museum in Harlem, located at 104 East 126th Street, between Park and Lexington Avenues, from 6:30pm-8:00pm on alternating Thursdays, resuming on September 9th.

The series is free to the public. Please call for reservations: 212 348-8300.