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Virtual Detroit Jazz Festival Presented by Rocket Mortgage Tops 2M Viewers

High-Quality Jazz Event Surpasses Expectations, Grows Global Audience

DETROIT – The Detroit Jazz Festival presented by Rocket Mortgage attracted a virtual global audience of more than two million viewers/listeners during Labor Day weekend, doubling the number of jazz fans who clicked on last year’s first-ever virtual jazz festival.

The Festival also saw a nearly 40 percent increase in the number of countries with viewers around the globe that enjoyed the high-quality jazz festival, streamed and broadcast for free.

“We recognized last year this was more than presenting jazz concerts to a local audience,” said Chris Collins, president and artistic director, Detroit Jazz Festival Foundation. “This was producing and exporting a jazz experience from Detroit at a high-quality level for a worldwide audience of true jazz enthusiasts; highlighting the creativity, ingenuity, craftsmanship and tenacity our city is known for around the world.”

The Festival, which was held without audiences, was streamed and broadcast live and free (no replays or on-demand) from three large indoor sound stages at the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center. Each stage was identical to the size, sound, lighting, crew and gear of traditional Festival stages. All performances ran contiguously.

With the goal of supporting inclusive events and programming that attract diverse audiences, spark new connections between people, place and culture, and contribute to the economic growth of Detroit – Rocket Mortgage has been a long-time supporter of the Festival including as the presenting sponsor for the past six years.

“The Detroit Jazz Festival is one of our biggest traditions that shines a bright light on Jazz artists from across the globe while showcasing the vibrancy of this great city,” said Jasmin DeForrest, director of community sponsorships at the Rocket Community Fund. “Jazz Fest brings a global audience to the heart of Detroit and we are excited we were able to celebrate safely this year

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through the reimagined format. I am incredibly thankful to our partners that made this event such a big success.”

Each soundstage was captured by a three-camera shoot in HD audio/video. Broadcast specialists, directors and specialized crews maintained the excellence in artist and audience experiences for which the Festival is known and what Detroit and jazz audiences around the world deserved.

The programming included opening night followed by nearly 12 hours per day of live/real-time continuous jazz performances and programming streamed to various formats including a free public video/audio stream, maintaining our mission to keep the Festival free and available to everyone.

Jazz enthusiasts were able to view or listen to performances for free in a number of ways including: The Festival’s Facebook LIVE, YouTube and web page (www.detroitjazzfest.org); on Detroit’s Arts & Entertainment Channel 22, WDET 101.9 FM, WRCJ 90.9 FM, WEMU 89.1 FM, dptv.org; and on the DetroitJazzFest LIVE! app.

This year’s Artist-in-Residence Dee Dee Bridgewater headlined multiple performances during the festival including an opening set with protégé group, the Woodshed Network Ladies, and a closing night performance with her all-female big band. Other highlights included performances from Herbie Hancock, Gregory Porter, Keyon Harrold, Omar Sosa and the Havana-Detroit Jazz Project; Kurt Elling’s The Big Blind featuring Dee Dee Bridgewater: A Jazz Radio Play written by Kurt Elling and Phil Galdston; The Summit: Take 6 Meets the Manhattan Transfer, Monty Alexander HKX, and our world-class Detroit hometown artists.

“We’re very appreciative for Rocket Mortgage’s support along with the many sponsors and donors who continue to believe in our mission of free jazz to not only Detroit, but now the world,” said Collins. “We also are very thankful to our Angel of Jazz Gretchen Valade who continues to be our leader and our inspiration.”

“We are excited about the work we do to seek out new talent, promote excellence, produce everything jazz and celebrate all of it at the Detroit Jazz Festival on Labor Day weekend in an environment that is safe for everyone,” said Gretchen Valade, chair, Detroit Jazz Festival Foundation Executive Board.

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About the Detroit Jazz Festival Foundation

Known as the Angel of Jazz, Gretchen C Valade is the Chair of the Board of Directors. Gretchen’s vision and love of jazz guides the Foundation’s year-round activities including the signature event, the Detroit Jazz Festival.

Under the leadership of President and Artistic Director Chris Collins, the Detroit Jazz Festival Foundation is an independent, non-profit organization that presents jazz and educational workshops throughout the year. The Foundation produces the Detroit Jazz Festival, which is the signature event for the Foundation and the largest free jazz festival in the world. The Festival is also a major tourist attraction for the City of Detroit, with 26 percent of its audience coming from out of state. For more information, visit detroitjazzfest.org.

The Foundation receives grant funding from the Rocket Community Fund, The Gretchen C. Valade Endowment for the Arts, Kresge Foundation, Erb Family Foundation, The Carolyn and Mel Wanzo Music Legacy Endowment, Michigan Council for Arts & Cultural Affairs, National Endowment for the Arts, and the D'Addario Foundation. Hundreds of individuals also contribute to the Festival through membership and donations.

Major corporate partners include presenting sponsor Rocket Mortgage, J.P. Morgan Chase & Co., DTE Foundation, Carhartt Inc., Mack Avenue Music Group, Dirty Dog Jazz Cafe, Absopure, Bingham Legal Group, Central Michigan University, George Johnson & Company, MGM Grand Detroit, and Michigan Hispanic Collaborative.

For more information, visit:

Website – www.detroitjazzfest.org

Facebook -- @DetroitJazzFestival

Twitter -- @DetroitJazzFest

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About Rocket Mortgage

Detroit-based Rocket Mortgage, the nation's largest home mortgage lender, enables the American Dream of homeownership and financial freedom through its obsession with an industry-leading, digital-driven client experience. Rocket Mortgage closed \$320 billion dollars of mortgage volume across all 50 states in 2020. In late 2015, it introduced the first fully digital, completely online mortgage experience. Currently, 99% of all home loans originated by the company utilize Rocket Mortgage technology.

Rocket Mortgage moved its headquarters to downtown Detroit in 2010. Today, Rocket Mortgage and Rocket Companies employ 24,000 full-time team members nationwide. The company generates loan production from web centers located in Detroit, Cleveland and Phoenix and operates a centralized loan processing facility in Detroit. Rocket Mortgage ranked highest in the country for customer satisfaction for primary mortgage origination by J.D. Power for the past 11 consecutive years, 2010 – 2020, and also ranked highest in the country for customer satisfaction among all mortgage servicers the past seven eight years, 2014 – 2021.

Rocket Companies, Rocket Mortgage's parent company, ranked #5 on Fortune's list of the "100 Best Companies to Work For" in 2021 and has placed in the top third of the list for 18 consecutive years.

For more information and company news visit pressroom.rocketmortgage.com.