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BY GAIL MITCHELL



AIRBNB PARTNERS WITH CITY OF L.A. FOR INAUGURAL 'WORLD-CLASS' LOS ANGELES JAZZ FESTIVAL

In addition to the upcoming NBA All-Star Weekend and the World Cup, the city of Los Angeles has added another high-profile event to its 2026 calendar: the inaugural Los Angeles Jazz Festival (LAJF). Airbnb has signed on as title sponsor for the 25-day festival that will culminate with a weekend of live music (Aug. 22-23) on Dockweiler Beach.

The Black-owned Los Angeles Jazz Festival is the brainchild of founder & CEO Martin Ludlow. “We are establishing a world-class festival that honors those historic human beings who gathered in Congo Square, New Orleans and – through their ‘strange sound called Jasm’ – have impacted the world to this day and beyond,” said Ludlow in the press announcement issued during Black History Month.

“We are ready to celebrate jazz as America’s classical music, drive significant regional economic activity and champion social justice; all while partnering with world-class companies like Airbnb, whose values align perfectly with our mission.”

LAJF’s aforementioned closing weekend of live music on Dockweiler Beach is being billed as Jazz on the Beach. It’s one of six tentpoles comprising the 25-day festival. Its additional components include a multi-cultural Caribbean Street Festival in downtown El Segundo featuring four stages (Cuba, Brazil, New Orleans, Afro-Caribbean); Jazz in the Park, presenting 25 free concerts in urban parks including all 15 L.A. council districts; Jazz After Dark, consisting of 150 shows in “woman- and person-of-color-owned venues and community-based restaurants” across the city; Coastal Cultural Tours,

“offering two days of visits to Black cultural landmarks in L.A. like The Inkwel and Bruce’s Beach; and The State of Jazz Conference, a two-day summit focusing on the global jazz industry that will take place on the Burton Chase Peninsula in Marina Del Rey.

As we prepare to welcome the world for upcoming major events, we are also determined to unite Los Angeles through community celebrations like the Los Angeles Jazz Festival,” commented Los Angeles Mayor Karen R. Bass. “This will be a powerful and beautiful act of cultural storytelling, rooted in the African diaspora that is so important to L.A.’s history. I’m looking forward to joining Angelenos from across the region this summer at the festival.”

“A Necessary And Beautiful Act of Cultural Storytelling”

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Performers and guest speakers for LAJF’s multiple components will be announced in the coming weeks. All told, festival organizers are expecting the 25-day celebration to attract 250,000 attendees. According to the press announcement, the festival will also be “one of the ‘greenest’ mega festivals globally with a commitment to ban all fossil fuels and run green technologies across the entire event.”

Justin Wesson, Airbnb’s senior public policy manager in California, commented, “Airbnb is proud to be the inaugural title sponsor of the Los Angeles Jazz Festival, an event that celebrates jazz as America’s classical music while investing directly in the culture and communities that created it. This festival reflects the kind of tourism we at Airbnb believe in: one that brings people into neighborhoods, supports local and community-owned businesses, and keeps culture rooted where it belongs. We’re honored to partner with the City of Los Angeles to help welcome people from around the world in a way that is inclusive, authentic and centered around community.”