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New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival 2025



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New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival 2025

Celebrating 55 Years of Music and Culture



Tarriona “Tank” Ball



PJ Morton

Benjamin Bates
Data News Weekly Contributor

The 2025 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, presented by Shell, will return to the Fair Grounds Racecourse from April 24th to May 4th, marking its 55th Anniversary as one of the city’s most beloved

cultural traditions. Known as “Jazz Fest,” the event continues to showcase the sounds, flavors, and artistic spirit that define New Orleans and Louisiana.

This year’s lineup offers a diverse mix of international headliners and local legends, blending genres from jazz and blues to hip-hop, gospel, and rock. Major acts include Pearl Jam, Dave Matthews

Band, Luke Combs, Lil Wayne & The Roots, Lenny Kravitz, and Santana, alongside hometown favorites like Harry Connick Jr., Irma Thomas, Big Freedia, Preservation Hall Jazz Band, and members of the Marsalis family.

In addition to the music, more than 65 food vendors will serve up signature dishes like crawfish

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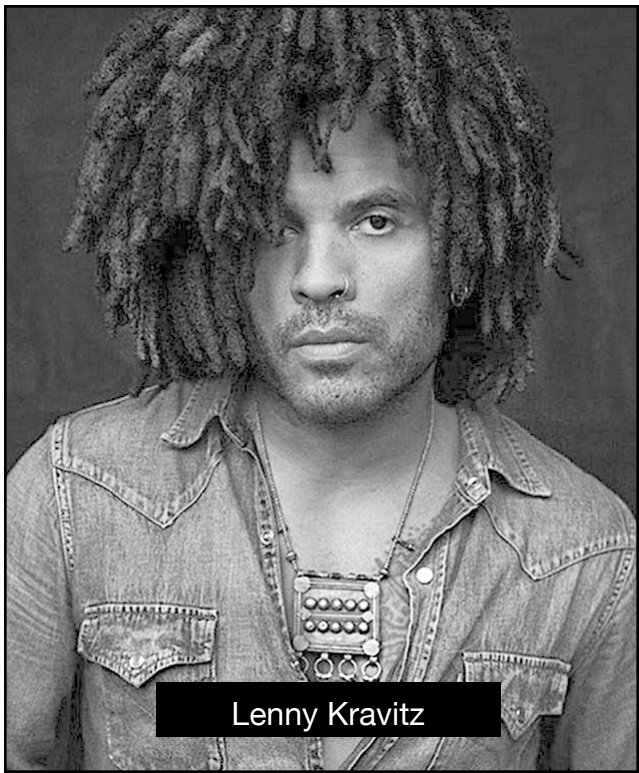
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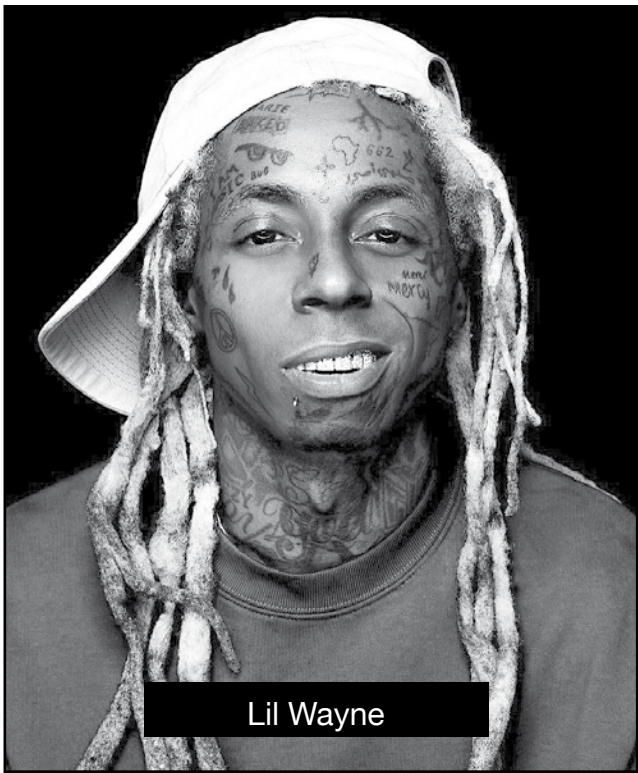
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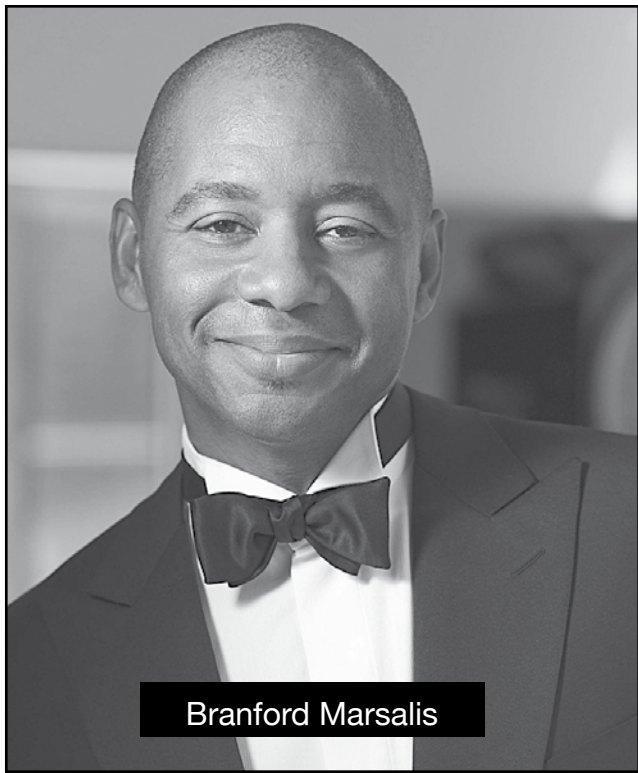
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Lenny Kravitz



Lil Wayne



Branford Marsalis

bread, cochon de lait po'boys, and soft-shell crab po'boys, with a new vegan booth making its debut this year. Cultural exhibits include the Congo Square African Marketplace, Louisiana Marketplace, and the Expedia Cultural Exchange Pavilion, which

will spotlight Mexican music and traditions through performances and artisan displays.

This year's festival also deepens its commitment to sustainability and accessibility, with enhanced public transit options, improved accommodations for guests with

disabilities, and expanded eco-friendly initiatives throughout the festival grounds. Organizers have also added new wellness spaces and community engagement booths that invite attendees to connect with local nonprofits, cultural

organizations, and heritage preservation initiatives.

With over 650 performances across 14 stages, parades, crafts, and cultural showcases, Jazz Fest 2025 promises an immersive celebration of the rich heritage that has made New Orleans a

global capital of music. Discounted "Locals Thursday" tickets will be offered on April 24th and May 1st, giving Louisiana residents special access to the festivities.

For full schedules, ticket options, and more information, visit www.nojazzfest.com.

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Jazz Fest Fashion FITS!



Tracee Dundas
Fashion Stylist

Photo Credit: Retailers

As the rhythms of Jazz Fest take over the Fairgrounds, festivalgoers know it's not just about the music—it's about showing up in style. With New Orleans' signature flair and the season's rising temperatures, fashion at Jazz Fest is a carefully curated mix of comfort, function, and statement-making FIT.

This year, flowy dresses, breezy rompers, and wide-leg linen pants are among the top choices, offering both ventilation and effortless elegance. Lightweight fabrics like cotton and rayon are festival favorites, helping you stay cool under the beaming New Orleans sun. Earth tone and tropical prints are always trending, echoing the laid-back, vibrant vibe of the festival grounds.

Accessories aren't just for flair—they're essentials. Wide-brim hats and stylish sunnies shield against the sun, while crossbody bags or fanny packs keep hands free for dancing and po-boy holding. Can't forget about footwear—opt from boots on the ground to fashion-forward sneakers, or comfy sandals that can handle mud, miles of walking, and spontaneous dance-offs.

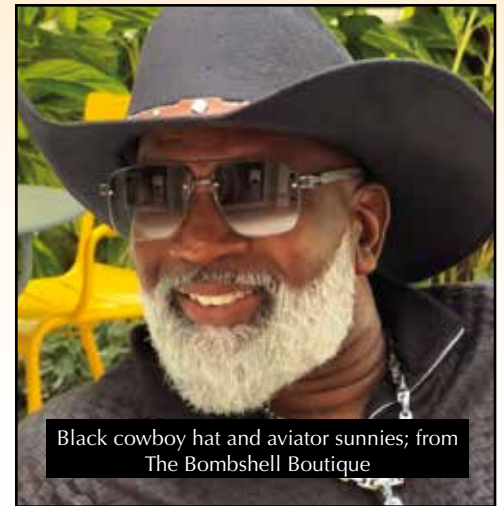
At Jazz Fest, fashion is as much a celebration as the music itself—expressive, eclectic, and full of soul. Just remember: 1) dance-ready, 2) weather-prepped, and 3) comfort-conscious is the true dress code. Have the best time at Jazz Fest—let the good vibes (FITS) roll!



Purple tie-dye dashiki dress; from AfricanFabs



Fringed suede jacket, maroon dress with lace detailing, and floral bandana; from Free People



Black cowboy hat and aviator sunnies; from The Bombshell Boutique



Multi-color block maxi dress, from Indigo Boutique



White lace dress with crocheted wrap belt; from Free People



Purple and green graphic block printed shirt, from Friend



Maple Jena Sunnies; from Krewe du Optic



Purple feathered jacket with ripped jeans, from Pop Culture NOLA



Golden pullover Dashiki, bronze statement pendant; from Friend



Wide brim straw hat; from Meyer the Hatter

Visit www.ladatanews.com for more photos from these events.

Celebrating International Jazz Day

A Global Tribute to Unity Through Music

Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief
Data News Weekly

In November 2011, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) officially declared April 30th as International Jazz Day to recognize jazz not only as a treasured art form, but also as a global force for peace, dialogue, and unity. The annual celebration is chaired by UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay and led by legendary Jazz Pianist and Composer Herbie Hancock, who serves as a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Intercultural Dialogue and Chairman of the Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz, the nonprofit organization that plans and produces the event.



Fleur De Lis,
Continued on page 7.

Grammy Award winner Delfeayo Marsalis stresses the significance of International Jazz Day stating, "Jazz artists have contributed a great deal to humanity as both musicians and cultural ambassadors. International Jazz Day is especially important this year, as it both energizes and unites people from all walks of life."

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Xavier University of Louisiana Celebrates 100 Years and Honors Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament and Dr. Norman C. Francis

Xavier University of Louisiana

"Image Courtesy of Xavier University of Louisiana, Archives & Special Collections"

Founded in 1925 by Saint Katharine Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, Xavier University of Louisiana has made momentous strides in just 100 years.

At the root of Xavier's impact is the enduring vision of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for educational excellence and social justice, which has prepared this leading HBCU and top Louisiana university for 100 years of good work. The order, founded by Saint Katharine Drexel, changed society by implementing its mission to challenge all forms of racism and other deeply rooted injustices in the world. Establishing a significant university in the Deep South in the 1920s presented numerous challenges, but the Sisters persevered and continue to serve and nurture the university even to this day.

Over two decades after Xavier's founding, a young Norman C.



Dr. Norman C. Francis presided as President of Xavier University of Louisiana for over four decades. During his tenure, his visionary leadership not only elevated Xavier's academic standing, but also left a lasting impact on civil rights, education and social justice across the globe.

Francis left his home in Lafayette, Louisiana, for the adventure of a lifetime. A class of 1952 Mathematics graduate, Francis returned to Xavier in 1955, where he held various roles, but none more important than a 47-year tenure as University President, which began on April 4, 1968. Under his leadership, Xavier became a leader in sending Black

students to medical school. The campus community expanded, enrollment tripled, and the university's historic legacy began to shape. Dr. Norman C. Francis is celebrated as a trailblazer in education and civil rights who has made profound contributions to the nation. Still, most significantly, he is a son of Xavier.

A legacy such as Xavier's



Xavier University of Louisiana Bachelor of Arts Graduates from the Class of 1928. This is the first graduating class of students after the official designation of Xavier University of Louisiana as a "College." Students are identified as Irma Parnell (Front, 2nd from Right), Archie Arnaud (Top, Middle), Frederic White (Top Left), Maude Dedeaux (Front, 2nd from Left), and Lawrence Chenier (Top Right). Reverend Edward J. Brunner SSJ (Far Left) and Father Casserley (Far Right) join them.

requires celebration. As part of its yearlong 100th-Anniversary Fête, a Centennial Gala will be held on May 8th at the Hyatt Regency New Orleans, presented by Ochsner Health. The gala is set to pay homage to a century of excellence and community impact and honor the historic legacy and ongoing contributions of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament and President

Emeritus Dr. Norman C. Francis. Renowned Actor and Comedian Bill Bellamy will host, R&B/Soul Legend Jeffrey Osborne will perform, and Journalist Bryant Gumbel will bring greetings at the special occasion, whose proceeds will benefit student scholarships.

For more information about the Centennial Gala, please visit XULA.edu.

State & Local News

The Watson Memorial Legacy Continues in Algiers

Story by Eric Connerly
Data News Weekly
Contributor

Recently, Bishop Tom Watson and the Board of Directors of Watson Memorial Teaching Ministries re-opened their Westbank Church at 1709 Casa Calvo Street in Algiers with a rebranding of its vision for that location as "The Watt Center." Yes, it will be a place of worship, but it will go beyond the four walls of the typical Sunday Morning worship experience. It now becomes a microcosm of its well-known Family Center of Hope, social services, and education agency located at 4137 Washington Avenue in the Broadmoor area of New Orleans where Pastor Pat Watson serves as the CEO. The Watt Center is projected to provide an array of social, cultural, educational, mental health, economic development, and other needed outreach services to



Bishop Tom Watson, Senior Pastor of Watson Memorial Ministries.

the Algiers Community. During the overpacked re-opening celebration, Bishop Watson was quoted as saying, "we are building the plane as we fly it" and further stated "but

this plane will not crash because we are walking by faith."

Apostle Terry Gullage, Pastor of the Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Westwego was the Keynote

Speaker and gave a dynamic keynote address that inspired the attendees. Councilman Freddie King shared a Proclamation from the City of New Orleans and congratulated Bishop Tom and Pastor Pat Watson for their many years of leadership and unselfish service to the community. Dr. Gail Thomas, Board President, provided a resolution officially confirming the re-envisioning of this location.

The standing room only crowd made this historical ceremony a great success as several invited ministers shared in the event with Bishop J.D. Wiley of Life Center Cathedral shared expressions relative to the late Bishop T.B. Watson, the Founder of the Church (formerly St. Joseph Helping Hand Divine Spiritual Church of Christ) in the 1940's in Algiers on Bringier Street, now Mardi Gras Blvd. New Orleans Juvenile Court was represented by Judge Reynard Darendburg, who has worked closely with the Family Center of Hope and Watson Memorial for several years and currently supports its Evening Reporting Center, where many vulnerable youths and families are served. The well-known Watson Memorial Choir, under the direction of Rev. Thiffani Watson provided melodious gospel singing for the audience. The Watt Center will continue to keep the rich Legacy of Watson Memorial Teaching Ministries alive and well for many years to come, as it stands on its

Pope Francis Dies at 88; Remembered for Compassion and Reform

Glenda Bell
Data News Weekly
Contributor

Pope Francis, the 266th Head of the Roman Catholic Church and the first pontiff from Latin America, died on April 21, 2025, at the age of 88. Born Jorge Mario Bergoglio in Buenos Aires, Argentina, he was elected Pope in 2013 and became known for his humility, progressive voice on social justice, and deep concern for the marginalized.

Throughout his papacy, Pope Francis championed issues such as poverty, climate change, and interfaith dialogue. Despite declining health in recent years, he remained active, delivering a final public blessing on Easter Sunday from a wheelchair in St. Peter's Square.

His passing resonates deeply



Pope Francis, the first Latin American pope, dedicated his life to serving others with humility, compassion and a deep commitment to social justice. He leaves a legacy of mercy, inclusivity and peace that will inspire generations to come.

in cities like New Orleans, where Catholicism is interwoven into the cultural and spiritual fabric. Home to one of the largest Catholic populations in the American

South. New Orleans maintains a rich tradition of Catholic worship, festivals, and community rooted in centuries-old French and Spanish influence.



Pope Francis leaves a global legacy of compassion and a call for the Church to be a place of mercy, inclusion, and service to the vulnerable.

Fleur De Lis, Continued from page 5.

International Jazz Day brings together communities, schools, artists, historians, and enthusiasts from around the world to celebrate jazz's rich legacy, its global impact, and its role in advancing intercultural understanding. The day fosters international cooperation and highlights jazz's power to promote peace, diversity, freedom of expression, gender equality, and respect for human rights and dignity. It also serves as the capstone of Jazz Appreciation Month, observed throughout April to honor the genre's historical and cultural contributions.

As part of this year's global celebration, New Orleans—widely regarded as the birthplace of jazz—will host a special event featuring acclaimed Trombonist Delfeayo Marsalis and the Uptown Jazz Orchestra at Snug Harbor Jazz Bistro on April 30, 2025, with two showtimes at 7:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. The performances will pay homage to the city's jazz legacy and its continuing influence on music worldwide. With deep family roots in New Orleans' musical tradition, Marsalis continues to uphold and innovate the sound of traditional jazz while inspiring new generations.

"Jazz artists have contributed a great deal to humanity as both musicians and cultural ambassadors. International Jazz Day is especially important this year, as it both energizes and unites people from all walks of life. New Orleans musicians share in unique experience that begins with the brass band and includes every other style of American music. When we play, the spirit of Louis Armstrong, Mahalia Jackson, Fats Domino, and so many others who played or sang the blues comes through - as well as those everyday heroes who shaped our sense of what it means to honor and celebrate life," says Marsalis.

"This year, we are delighted to share the bandstand with the Prince of New Orleans, Davell Crawford, Grammy Award Winning Trumpeter, Randy Brecker, and World Music Sensation Mahmoud Chouki. We plan to have an international Jazz Party, all night long!"

International Jazz Day is more than a concert—it's a worldwide movement affirming that music can transcend boundaries and bring people together through shared creativity and respect.

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A photograph of a man and a woman in graduation attire. The man, wearing a blue graduation gown, is smiling and adjusting a purple graduation cap on the woman's head. The woman is wearing a red dress and looking up at him. The background is a blue textured wall.

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