

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
GROUND ZERO BLUES CLUB, NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO AND WGBO TO USHER
IN 2005 LIVE FROM CLARKSDALE, MISSISSIPPI

CLARKSDALE, Miss. -- Ground Zero Blues Club today announced plans to partner with National Public Radio on a New Year's Eve House Party Celebration to be broadcast live worldwide.

The broadcast is presented in conjunction with WGBO radio's annual New Year's program, *Toast of the Nation*. This year's event marks the 25th anniversary of the program. It will air on National Public Radio stations, NPR International, and Armed Forces Radio.

The program will welcome 2005 from various time zones, beginning in Paris then going to Boston, Washington, D.C. and New York, to Clarksdale, then Denver and on to Oakland, California. The Clarksdale segment will begin at 11 p.m. on Dec. 31 and continue until shortly after midnight.

Artists scheduled to appear at Ground Zero Blues Club are: James Mathus Knockdown South, Cedell Davis, Big George Brock, Wesley Jefferson, Terry "Harmonica" Bean and Mr. Tater. The Delta blues artists will be joining top jazz, swing, funk, African-Cuban, and Latino artists from across the world as part of *Toast of the Nation's* programming.

"The blues is at the heart of all American music," said Mathus, who in addition to his solo work also tours and records with Buddy Guy "We are thrilled to be included in this impressive lineup of artists. I have just launched a Clarksdale-based record label, Knockdown South Records, which in the upcoming year will release CDs by all of the artists appearing at Ground Zero Blues Club on New Year's Eve.

"This broadcast is perfect timing for us in terms of exposure."

Ground Zero Blues Club is co-owned by actor Morgan Freeman, businessman and attorney Bill Luckett and entertainment executive Howard Stovall. It has garnered international attention for the Mississippi Delta since opening over three years ago.

WGBO, located in Newark, NJ, is operated as a non-profit, 501(C)3 organization in the public trust. As such it is funded, in the main, by listener donations or memberships, as well as a combination of corporate, business, foundation, and governmental grants. The station champions jazz and other American musical art forms through radio, other technology and events. The station serves as cultural beacon that educates and entertains a wide local, national and international audience with high-quality broadcast programming

"We are excited about being included as part of WGBO's *Toast of the Nation* 25th anniversary broadcast," said Luckett. "The worldwide exposure this broadcast brings is not only great for Ground Zero Blues Club but also for the Mississippi Delta and the entire state. It is a magnificent opportunity to show the world the wealth of talent and culture we have here in Clarksdale."

Advance tickets for the GZBC event will go on sale Friday, Nov. 19 at Cat Head Delta Blues & Folk Art, located at 252 Delta Avenue in Clarksdale. Tickets are \$17.50 plus \$1.00 handling, \$20.00 on the day of the show. Tickets are also available by mail or credit card purchase via calling 662-624-5992.

"The Mississippi Delta is a strange and beautiful place united by the almost otherworldly strength and grace of its people," said Mathus. "We are proud to represent Clarksdale and Mississippi on this special night and to be able to share with the world our unique brand of joy."

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Photos of artists and club available from Robin Rushing

From NPR and WBGO:

Toast of the Nation Welcomes 2005

NPR and WBGO, Jazz 88 in Newark present the 25th anniversary edition of *Toast of the Nation*, **13 lucky hours of jazz & blues from Europe and across the USA on New Year's Eve! From 5 pm to 6 am Eastern, the party is bigger, better, and longer than ever before!**

ALL TIMES EASTERN

5:00 pm - Toast of the Nation All Night Long: A look back in music at the Jazz year of 2004 and a special preview of the night ahead

5:30 - Live from Paris: The Olivier Témime Lombards All Stars

Midnight in Paris: Champagne and cool jazz! In association with *Le Jazz Club* and Radio France, we'll take you to a legendary Paris jazz spot - **Club Sunside** on la Rue des Lombards - to ring in the New Year Parisian style! Saxophonist **Olivier Témime's** band includes trumpeter **Stéphane Belmondo**, whose recent CD *Wonderland* celebrates Stevie Wonder. Belmondo also plays on Dee Dee Bridgewater's CD *Love and Peace: A Tribute to Horace Silver*. When you hear the French play jazz, you may never want to come home again!

7:00 - Live from Boston: The Donald Harrison Quintet at the Berklee College of Music - in association with WGBH Radio, Boston

The Sox win the World Series, and the party still hasn't stopped! So we'll take you to a place with plenty to celebrate, for our first-ever Toast of the Nation stop in Boston. (Hey, it only took us 25 years - not 86!). Not far from Fenway Park, we'll take you to one of the great jazz schools of the world - the Berklee College of Music - for a by-invitation-only concert featuring New Orleans alto saxophonist **Donald Harrison**, with young trumpeter **Christian Scott** for an hour of swinging jazz and Crescent City funk in Beantown.

8:00 - From the John F. Kennedy Center in Washington, DC: A Tribute to Shirley Horn: "The Music Never Ends"

An all-star lineup of jazz singers pay homage to Washington native **Shirley Horn**, she of the velvet vocals and swinging piano. Miss Horn will sing, and be sung to by such admirers as **Dee**

Dee Bridgewater, Sheila Jordan, Kevin Mahogany, and Lizz Wright.

10:00 From New York: *A Great Night in Harlem: The Apollo Theatre Tribute to Ray Charles*

Brother Ray is remembered in a memorial concert sponsored by the Jazz Foundation of America. Pianist **Kenny Barron** and violinist **Regina Carter** team up for a soulful version of "*Georgia on My Mind*," actor/sing **Danny Aiello** fronts the **Chico O'Farrill Afro-Cuban Jazz Orchestra** in "*One For My Baby (And One More For The Road)*", **Diane Schuur** does her own take on "*Hit the Road Jack*," guitarist extraordinaire **James Blood Ulmer** offers "*Aren't You Glad to Be in America*," and much more.

11:00 - Live from New York: Cyrus Chestnut and Friends including Frank Morgan, alto saxophone, at the new Jazz at Lincoln Center

We'll take you inside the new House of Swing on Columbus Circle for the first New Year's Eve celebration from the brand-new Jazz at Lincoln Center. Pianist Cyrus Chestnut and special guests ring in 2005 in the friendly confines of Dizzy's Club Coca Cola, one of the three performance spaces devoted to jazz 365 days a year.

12:15 am - Live from Clarksdale, Mississippi: New Year's Eve House Party at Ground Zero Blues Club

New Year's Eve in genuine Delta juke joint! The *James Mathus Knockdown South* (memorably profiled by NPR's Steve Inskeep) and special guests ring in 2005 in a club co-owned by actor **Morgan Freeman, Bill Lueckert and Howard Stovall** that exists to celebrate *today's* Mississippi blues! Don't miss this one!

1:15 - Live from Denver: Latin Giants of Jazz (formerly the Tito Puente Orchestra) with Special Guest Eddie Palmieri - in association with KUVU, Jazz 89

After partying with the 200 people crammed into the Ground Zero Blues Club, dance with a couple THOUSAND people! Mambo and cha cha your way into the New Year, with a cooking 20+ member orchestra playing music by Latin Jazz masters **Machito, Tito Puente, Eddie Palmieri, and Tito Rodriguez**

2:15 - Live from Yoshi's in Oakland, CA: Joshua Redman Elastic Trio with Sam Yahel, organ, and Brian Blade, drums - in association with KCSM

We're back at our favorite club in the Bay Area for a band that stretches the sound of the traditional jazz organ trio, calling to mind Weather Report, James Brown and John McLaughlin. Groove-based electric jazz for a California midnight.

3:30 - Encore: Live from Paris

5:00 - Encore: A Great Night in Harlem

6:00 - Go to Bed!

Come back to nprstations.org for updates and any changes in the program.