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For Immediate Release:

**Chicago Southland's "Let Them Eat Jazz" Festival Celebrates a Century of Jazz  
with Music, Visual Arts, Food and More**

Park Forest, IL, January 17, 2017 - 1917 was the birth of many jazz masters, and the birth of a new era of sound. Ella Fitzgerald, "Dizzy" Gillespie, Lena Horn, Thelonious Monk, and so many more forever changed the musical landscape with their soulful, improvisational styles.

Today, nearly 100 years later, their groundbreaking vocals and instrumentals continue to shape the experience of artists and fans alike. It would take an event of monumental proportion to adequately represent the vast influence of these centennial masters. So, in spring 2017, a new group in Chicago's Southland is rising to the challenge. The Southland Arts, Municipalities and Business Alliance (S.A.M.B.A.) will present the Chicago Southland's "Let Them Eat Jazz" Festival as their inaugural project-bringing together over 15 organizations, 9 venues, 5 hotels and multiple restaurants in a 72-day festival of jazz and food.

"We are thrilled to be working as an organized creative force, in conjunction with the Southland Convention & Visitors Bureau and sponsors, to bring this important festival to Chicago Southland residents and tourists. I have a long-standing belief in the power of arts and business collaborations to transform communities into vibrant economic and cultural centers," says Eugene Varnado founder and President of the South Suburban Small Business Association (SSSBA). "We are excited to see the impact of the festival on local restaurants, businesses and arts participation." SSSBA's Business/Arts Cooperative's mission to generate synergy between business and arts led to the formation of S.A.M.B.A.

The festival will kick off with the 29th Annual Prairie State College Jazz Festival on February 17, 2017, and close at Governors State University's Center for Performing Arts with the Orbert Davis' Chicago Jazz Philharmonic on April 29, 2017. The 70+ days in between will showcase events, all celebrating 100 years of jazz in unique ways, through visual arts, sculpture, choral and instrumental ensembles, themed jazz dinners, brunches and more.

Orbert Davis said, "I am honored and humbled that Chicago Jazz Philharmonic will be closing out the Southland's "Let Them Eat Jazz" festival with our performance "The Monk Meets the First Lady" at Governors State University. Being born and raised in the Kankakee area, and serving as a clinician at the

Prairie State Jazz Festival for over 20 years, my affinity for the Southland runs deep. CJP concerts in the Southland have always felt like 'coming home'."

S.A.M.B.A. is partnering with area hotels to accommodate out-of-town guests or locals who wish to plan a weekend stay-cation. Festival attendees will receive discounted rates at select hotels by using the Password EATJAZZ.

For a complete schedule of events, hotel booking and area information, visit **[CSJazzFestival.org](http://CSJazzFestival.org)**.

The Chicago Southland's "Let Them Eat Jazz" Festival is generously sponsored by BMO Harris Bank, Providence Bank and Standard Bank & Trust and a tourism grant from the Chicago Southland Convention & Visitors Bureau.

**About S.A.M.B.A.**

The Southland Arts, Municipalities, and Business Alliance (S.A.M.B.A.) is an economic and community development organization formed in 2014. Its mission is to build stronger communities, neighborhoods, and economies by uniting wide-ranging cultural resources with an expanding business community to enrich the lives of the diverse population of Chicago's southern suburbs.