



MEDIA ALERT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Producers of Jazz Documentary
partner with
DCA's Music LA Program
and
Berklee College of Music
to host
Youth Jazz Clinic for 50 Los Angeles Area Students**

**Berklee's Hailey Niswanger Quartet
to Lead the Clinic on Friday, November 11, 2011**

Los Angeles, CA - The producers of the forthcoming documentary film, *...but can she play?*, in partnership with the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA), Berklee College of Music, and Berklee's Global Jazz Institute (BGJI) will host a free jazz artists' clinic and workshop for 50 Los Angeles-area middle and high school music students enrolled in DCA's Music LA Program and other local music students on Friday, November 11, 2011, at the Lincoln Heights Youth Arts Center, 2911 Altura Street, Los Angeles, CA, 90031. Registration opens at 9:30 a.m. The clinic begins at 10:00 a.m.

As *...but can she play?* Director/Producer Janice Rhoshalle Littlejohn says: "One of the goals of this documentary is to encourage girls towards careers in jazz and to support organizations and institutions that provide music programs for students in underserved areas where funding for music education is lacking or non-existent. Through this association, aspiring music students from Music LA will have an opportunity to study with, and be mentored by, some of the finest young jazz talents from the prestigious Berklee College of Music in Boston."

Music LA is a DCA program that coordinates resources and local non-profit organizations to provide quality music instruction for young people throughout the City of Los Angeles. It is a groundbreaking partnership between local government, music providers, parents, and corporate donors like The Walt Disney Company, Title Sponsor of Music LA for the City's Heritage Month Celebrations. Music LA gives children and teens year-round after-school programming in conjunction with the annual Heritage Month Celebrations, as well as at Music LA summer camps that offer instrumental and vocal music training in a challenging and creative environment where learning, focus, and discipline are cultivated.



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Music LA provides professional music education programming in areas of the city where few or no music education programs exist. Music LA creates points of access between young people, creative communities, and local government to support musicians and arts organizations as music education providers.

For more information on Music LA, please visit:
<http://www.culturela.org/musicla/index.html>.

Berklee College of Music alto and soprano saxophonist, Hailey Niswanger, a charter member of BGJI and a featured artist in *...but can she play?*, will conduct the clinic along with members of her band, The Hailey Niswanger Quartet. The other band members, who are also from Berklee and members of BGJI, are: Takeshi Ohbayashi (piano), Joseph "Joey" Allan Lefitz (drums), and Shin Sakaino (Bass). The Hailey Niswanger Quartet will make its Southern California performance debut at the documentary's benefit auction, raffle, and concert event at NOOR in Pasadena on Sunday, November 13, 2011.

About *...but can she play?*

...but can she play?, currently in production, is the first feature-length film chronicling the lives and music of women saxophone, trumpet, and trombone players in jazz. The story chronicles a year-in-the-life of 21-year-old Niswanger as she completes her studies at Berklee and prepares the follow-up CD to her acclaimed 2009 debut, *Confeddie*, which established her throughout North America as a leading new talent in jazz.

Woven into the narrative thread of the film are the stories of other female horn players who are challenging the age-old gender biases of the genre's boys' club. Among them: saxophonists Tia Fuller, Claire Daly, and Lauren Sevian; trumpeters Linsey McDonald and Christine Fawson; trombonists Robynn Amy, Aubrey Logan, Jennifer Wharton, and Stephanie Baird; and others who are pushing themselves – and their art – on the road and in the classroom, and becoming prominent in the transformation of contemporary American improvisational jazz.

About Berklee College of Music

Berklee College of Music was founded on the revolutionary principle that the best way to prepare students for careers in music is through the study and practice of contemporary music. For more than half a century, the college has evolved to reflect the state of the art of music and the music business. With more than a dozen performance and nonperformance majors, a diverse and talented student body representing more than 70 countries, and a music industry "who's who" of alumni, Berklee is the world's premier learning lab for the music of today – and tomorrow.



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About the Berklee Global Jazz Institute

The Berklee Global Jazz Institute (BGJI) is a performance program designed to foster creativity and musicianship through various musical disciplines, with pianist and composer Danilo Pérez as its artistic director. The BGJI provides a comprehensive contemporary music environment where students are given opportunities to explore their creativity to the highest level possible, advance the power of music as a tool for the betterment of society, and connect musical creative thinking with the natural environment.

The BGJI is designed to help instrumentalists and vocalists with unique talent and wide-ranging musical interests achieve their artistic goals through an experiential and interdisciplinary approach. Developing artists who seek to evolve to the highest levels—as both musicians and human beings—will find a true home in the BGJI environment, which will provide both the support and range of challenges necessary for sustained creative growth.

About Hailey Niswanger

At 21, Niswanger's musical gifts and accomplishments far exceed her years. In May 2011 the alto saxophonist returned from a tour of Ethiopia with the internationally acclaimed [Either Orchestra](#), having been selected as the first female member in the history of this 25-year-old alternative big band in 2009, occupying the chair previously held by Miguel Zenon and Jaleel Shaw.

She has shared the stage with jazz greats Dee Dee Bridgewater, George Duke, Phil Woods, James Moody, Christian McBride, McCoy Tyner, Maceo Parker, Wynton Marsalis, and Mark Whitfield, among others.

Niswanger's June 2009 recording debut, *Confeddie*, established her throughout North America. The album was well reviewed in *Jazz Times* and *Jazziz* and inspired veteran jazz critic Nat Hentoff to profile her in the [Wall Street Journal](#). *Confeddie* appeared on the *Jazz Week* Top 50 chart three times and was among the top 100 jazz CDs in the country for two months.

In 2008, Niswanger was a featured artist at the Mary Lou Williams Women in Jazz Festival at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., where she won the festival's saxophone competition. At [Berklee](#), where she attends school on a full scholarship, Niswanger is a charter member of the Berklee Global Jazz Institute (BGJI), led by Grammy-winning jazz pianist Danilo Pérez. She has been featured in performances by the BGJI at the [Newport](#), Monterey, Puerto Rico, and Panama jazz festivals.



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About the Department of Cultural Affairs

DCA generates and supports high-quality arts and cultural experiences for Los Angeles' 4 million residents and 25 million annual visitors. DCA advances the social and economic impact of the arts and assures access to arts and cultural experiences through grant making, marketing, public art, community arts programming, arts education, and partnerships with artists and arts and cultural organizations in neighborhoods throughout the City of Los Angeles.

DCA's operating budget and managed portfolio totaled \$36.7 million in fiscal year 2009/10. It consisted of: \$9.6 million in Transient Occupancy Tax funds; \$12.2 million in funds from the Public Works Improvements Arts Program; \$8.6 million from the Private Arts Development Fee Program; \$4.9 million in City related and indirect cost allocations; and \$1.4 million in private and public funds raised during the year. DCA grants approximately \$3 million annually to over 280 artists and nonprofit arts organizations through its long-established Grants Administration Division. DCA provides arts and cultural programming in its numerous neighborhood arts and cultural centers, theaters, and historic sites, and manages several arts and education programs.

The Department also administers the City's Private Arts Development Fee and Public Works Improvements Arts Programs, a portfolio of approximately \$20.8 million in fiscal year 2009/10. In addition, DCA raises outside public and private funds, over \$15 million since fiscal year 2007/08, used to re-grant to LA-based arts and cultural organizations for special grant initiatives and to support DCA's special programming and facilities. DCA markets the City's cultural events through development and collaboration with strategic partners, design and production of creative promotional materials, and management of the culturela.org website visited by over 2.7 million people annually.

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