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Monty Alexander Jazz Festival Namesake Nominated for 2012 Grammy Award

Internationally acclaimed jazz pianist Monty Alexander has received a Grammy nomination for best reggae album for his recording, "Monty Alexander HARLEM-KINGSTON EXPRESS: LIVE!" Mr. Alexander is the artistic director and namesake of Easton's Annual Labor Day Jazz Festival, which enters its third year this September. Alexander, whose music bridges the worlds of American jazz, popular song, and Jamaican reggae, twice topped the USA and world jazz charts with his recordings this past fall. The Grammy nomination caps a phenomenally successful year for this jazz icon.

Born on D-Day (June 6, 1944) and raised in Kingston, Jamaica, the largely self-taught jazz pianist was inspired as a teenager by Louis Armstrong and Nat "King" Cole who toured in his hometown.

Alexander's early career included recording sessions with Bob Marley's first backing band, the Skatalites. He has toured the globe over the last five decades and collaborated with vocalists such as Natalie Cole and Bobby McFerrin.

James Hall, in reviewing the Monty Alexander Jazz Festival in Jazzabout.com, noted, "With a pedigree to rival any jazz musician's – including stints with the likes of Milt Jackson and Ray Brown – Monty Alexander's credibility is undisputed. What sets his music apart, though, is not its excellence, but its exuberance. After just over two hours of music, it was not the complexity or beauty of the music that had the audience raving, but the overwhelming experience of having encountered a personality whose joys and sorrows, past and present, were so eloquently and convincingly expressed in his music

as to evoke empathy in an audience for a man they'd never met.”

Al Sikes, chairman of The Monty Alexander Jazz Festival, comments, “Chesapeake Chamber Music is exceedingly fortunate to be collaborating with a legendary jazz artist.” The Monty Alexander Jazz Festival will enliven Easton, MD once again from August 31 through September 2, 2012. For further information, visit ChesapeakeChamberMusic.org/jazz.

CUTLINE: Pictured is internationally acclaimed jazz pianist Monty Alexander, artistic director and namesake of Easton’s Monty Alexander Jazz Festival, who recently received a Grammy nomination for best reggae album for his recording, “Monty Alexander HARLEM-KINGSTON EXPRESS: LIVE!”

