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**JAM @ MAC**

**Free concert, Regional Essentially Ellington Festival and National History Day exhibits make up month-long celebration of Jazz**

**For Immediate Release**

April 10, 2015

**Mesa, AZ – Jazz at Lincoln Center** guitarist **James Chirillo** will perform at Mesa Arts Center (MAC) in a free concert with Tucson's national award winning **Jazz Institute Ellington Big Band** on Wednesday, April 22 at 7:30 p.m., as a culmination of the 2015-16 season of *Jazz from A to Z*. Tickets are available now and must be reserved in advance through Mesa Arts Center's Box Office, or by calling 480-644-6500.

Celebrations commenced in April with an exhibition of jazz projects prepared for the **National History Day** Competition, which is using the theme "Leadership and Legacy." With the help of the *Jazz from A to Z's* community of jazz and history scholars, students studied history through the lens of jazz music and then generated exhibit, performance, documentary and website projects to be displayed along MAC hallways for the month before entering the national competition.

Throughout the day on Wednesday, April 22, the **Regional Essentially Ellington Festival, a program of Jazz at Lincoln Center** will take place. The festival offers high school jazz bands of all levels the opportunity to perform the music of Duke Ellington and other big band composers while they receive professional feedback from *Jazz at Lincoln Center* clinicians and professionals, here in their own community. This year's adjudicators from *Jazz at Lincoln Center* in New York are James Chirillo and Jim Gasior. Local jazz educator Will Goble will also be on hand for the day of intensive workshops which aim to elevate musicianship, broaden perspectives and inspire performances.

The Tucson Jazz Institute's Ellington Big Band has been featured on The Jerry Lewis MDA Telethon, The New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, The Telluride Jazz Festival, Next Generation Jazz Festival, Monterey Jazz Festival and EE Festival in New York. As for James Chirillo, Jazz Times Magazine writer, Jim Ferguson said "If you dig jazz guitar that's particularly smooth and cool, then you'll want to check out James Chirillo, who's performed with Tiny Grimes and Benny Goodman."

A part of Mesa Arts Center's robust arts education outreach programming, ***Jazz from A to Z*** is funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and support from the Boeing Foundation. This program provides opportunities for students and educators to enrich cultural knowledge and enhance critical thinking skills as participants discuss the role music plays as a cultural mirror and as an agent for social change.

To reserve tickets, contact Box Office at 480-644-6500. For more information, contact [outreach@mesaartscenter.com](mailto:outreach@mesaartscenter.com), or visit [www.JazzfromAtoZ.MesaArtsCenter.com](http://www.JazzfromAtoZ.MesaArtsCenter.com).

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### **About Mesa Arts Center**

The Mesa Arts Center, owned and operated by the City of Mesa, is a unique, architecturally stunning facility located in the heart of downtown Mesa. Arizona's largest arts center is home to four theaters, five art galleries, and 14 art studios. Guests, patrons, and students come to Mesa Arts Center to enjoy the finest live entertainment and performances, world-class visual art exhibitions, and outstanding arts education classes. The Mesa Arts Center mission is to inspire people through engaging arts experiences that are diverse, accessible, and relevant. For more information, visit [mesaartscenter.com](http://mesaartscenter.com).