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PIANIST CYRUS CHESTNUT CLOSES SHELDON JAZZ SERIES

ST. LOUIS – The Sheldon presents **Cyrus Chestnut: African Reflections**, Saturday, May 7 at 8 p.m. in the perfect acoustics of the Sheldon Concert Hall. Pianist Cyrus Chestnut’s hard swinging, soulful sounds have become a staple in the jazz community. Blending contemporary and traditional jazz and gospel, plus the occasional seasonings of Latin and samba, Chestnut’s prowess as a soloist has led him to become a “first call” pianist in big bands including the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, Dizzy Gillespie Alumni All Star Big Band and the Carnegie Hall Jazz Orchestra. His new program filters jazz through the rich music and rhythms of Africa.

After graduation from Berklee College of Music, Chestnut honed his craft as a sideman with legendary and leading musicians such as Terence Blanchard, Wynton Marsalis, Branford Marsalis, Freddie Hubbard, Chick Corea, James Moody, Isaac Hayes, Kathleen Battle, Dizzy Gillespie and Betty Carter. His association with Betty Carter, which began in 1991, significantly affected his outlook and approach to music, confirming his already iconoclastic instincts as she advised him to “take chances” with the way he played. As he was absorbing experiences as a sideman, he was also developing as a leader, recording and playing live around the world. In the summer of 1993, Chestnut signed with Atlantic Records, releasing a series of critically acclaimed albums. In 2001, he released *Soul Food*, which was included in *Down Beat’s* list of the best records that year and ascended to the Top 10 on the *Billboard Jazz* charts.

Cyrus Chestnut continually tours with his trio, playing at jazz festivals around the world as well as clubs and concert halls, using the trio format to extend, elaborate and refine the basic conception of the jazz rhythm section. With his hectic schedule, he finds the time to educate, doing seminars worldwide and also, on occasion, educating students in jazz at Middlebury College in Vermont.

Single tickets are \$45 orchestra/\$40 balcony/\$15 student. Tickets are on sale now through MetroTix at 314-534-1111, through The Sheldon’s website at TheSheldon.org, or in person at The Fox Theatre Box Office, 534 N. Grand Blvd. For a VIP concert experience, All-Access tickets are available by calling 314-533-9900, ext. 17. For more information, call The Sheldon at 314-533-9900 or visit TheSheldon.org.

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Welcomed by WSIE 88.7 The Jazz Station

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