

JAZZ

SOUTH BEACH STYLE

SOUTH BEACH JAZZ RETURNS WITH HEADLINER BRANFORD MARSALIS

By: James Cubby



After a successful inaugural festival last year, the South Beach Jazz Festival returns for a weekend of classic, Latin, and New Orleans-style acts on January 5th. Founded by David New, this unique festival features talented musicians with disabilities. Most of the acts on this year's schedule will showcase at least one person with a disability. Last year, internationally renowned jazz singer and pianist Diane Schuur, who has been blind since birth, was one of the headliners of the festival.

Branford Marsalis, credited as “arguably the most respected living U.S. jazz instrumentalist,” kicks off the festival with “An Evening with Branford Marsalis” at the Colony Theater. Other acts will be performing at various stages including: Tal Cohen Jazz Ensemble, Ignacio Berroa Trio, Carlos Averhoff Jr., The Glyn Dryhurst Dixieland Band, Rachele Coba Band, and Carlos Puig. On Sunday, Dr. Ed Calle – a three-time Latin Grammy nominated performer himself – will showcase some of his premier students from FIU, UM and MDC. That's four days of music.

This year, founder David New joins forces with Kimberly Chmura of KCC Productions to produce the festival. David, who himself is visually impaired, works tirelessly to break down barriers and more importantly educate about living and working with people with disabilities.





Kimberly's company will supply full production for the festival including curating the music program. David New – activist, fundraiser, artist – has spent the past 15 years without sight or full mobility and has dedicated his life to being an advocate for those with disabilities. David has produced a series of events in the Miami area that have helped bring greater awareness to those living with disabilities.

Kimberly Chmura, producer of the event, says last year's festival received nothing but kudos. "The reaction was very positive! The public was really excited we were coming back this year. This year is our second year so this will now become an annual event." Kimberly has also worked with David on other events with his company Power Access, Inc. and feels very strongly about the purpose behind this jazz festival. "The importance of South Beach Jazz Festival is the message Power Access is giving through this event. The event is bringing awareness to persons with disabilities." Jazz fans will flock to these events for the music of these talented performers, however the festival's primary goal is to highlight the fact that these performers should be defined by their ability rather than disability.

The South Beach Jazz Festival comes to Miami Beach January 5 – 7 at various venues. For a complete schedule of events and ticket information go to www.southbeachjazzfest.com.