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Monday Night Jazz Lives Again ***Nation's Longest-Running Free Jazz Concert Series to return to Bushnell Park***

Hartford, CT — A dedicated, creative partnership of jazz supporters has come together to ensure that the longest-running free jazz concert series in the U.S. will return to Bushnell Park this summer for its 41st season. The popular Monday Night Jazz series was in jeopardy when series founder Paul Brown announced his retirement from the program in December. But fast work and innovative planning by the Greater Hartford Arts Council, Prudential Financial and The Hartford Jazz Society guaranteed that Monday nights will continue to be filled with jazz during July and August.

In 2006, Prudential Financial and the Arts Council partnered to bring the series back to Bushnell Park after budget constraints had forced it into a smaller indoor venue the year before. When the series again was challenged by the retirement of its founder, the two organizations teamed up again and asked The Hartford Jazz Society to take over management of the series.

With financial and technical support from Prudential and the Arts Council, along with a grant from the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism, "Prudential Financial presents The Hartford Jazz Society's Monday Night Jazz" will perform four concerts in the park: July 7, July 14, July 28 and Aug. 4.

Two jazz groups will perform in the park during each concert, beginning at 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. The focus will be on new and emerging artists, mostly from New York, Boston and the Northeast corridor. New to the series this year is a post-park jazz event inside nearby Black-eyed Sally's restaurant. One of the jazz groups will perform there beginning at 9:30 p.m., followed by a jam session with jazz students from throughout the region.

The series artistic director is Joe Morris, a seasoned jazz professional from Connecticut who has been called "one of the most profound improvisers at work in the U.S." by Will Montgomery (The Wire).

In addition to this new series, The Hartford Jazz Society produces an annual concert series at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art. Its focus is on presenting jazz, promoting up-and-coming jazz musicians and providing educational opportunities for young jazz performers.

"We are thrilled that Monday Night Jazz will be taking on a new life, and adopting such an exciting format," said Christine Marcks, President, Prudential Retirement.

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“Our support, both in funding the series and our employee volunteer efforts, stems from the fact that the arts enhance the region’s economic health and quality of life. From a business perspective, these programs are invaluable in creating a vibrant community that help us attract and retain talented professionals.”

“While challenging to pull together in such a short time this season, this series is very much in keeping with our mission, and a great way to expand our programming,” said Daniel Feingold, HJS President. “We’re grateful that Prudential and the Greater Hartford Arts Council cared enough about the series to put up the majority of the funding and are providing us with additional marketing and technical assistance to ensure the success of Monday Night Jazz.”

“This series is a beloved tradition in our city, and one of the foundations of Greater Hartford’s vibrant jazz scene,” said Ken Kahn, Executive Director of the Greater Hartford Arts Council. “Monday Night Jazz brings together suburbanites and city residents in a truly beautiful setting filled with top-notch music. It’s important that we foster this kind of free, first-rate cultural programming that gives our city its distinctive character.”

More information about “Prudential Financial presents The Hartford Jazz Society’s Monday Night Jazz” will be available soon at www.HartfordJazzSociety.com.

Founded in 1960, The Hartford Jazz Society is the oldest continually operating jazz society in the country. Its mission is to keep jazz alive. This all-volunteer organization produces jazz concerts by internationally known and up-and-coming jazz musicians, encourages and assists in the education of young jazz performers, and works to educate and expand the audience for jazz.

Prudential Retirement, a business of Prudential Financial, Inc. (NYSE: PRU), delivers retirement plan solutions for public, private, and non-profit organizations. Services include state-of-the-art record keeping, administrative services, investment management, comprehensive employee investment education and communications, and trustee services. With nearly 85 years of retirement experience, Prudential Retirement helps meet the needs of nearly 3.4 million defined contribution participants and defined benefit participants and annuitants. Prudential Retirement has \$164 billion in account values as of December 31, 2007. For more information, please visit www.prudential.com.

The Greater Hartford Arts Council enlivens the spirit and economy of Connecticut’s Capital Region by planning, promoting and raising funds for cultural programs that are building one of our nation’s most vibrant communities. It is the largest independent arts council in New England, runs the 8th largest United Arts fund in the country and is a national leader in diversified services and cultural promotions. The Greater Hartford Arts Council has raised and invested nearly \$50 million for the arts over 36 years, helping to rank Greater Hartford in the top 6 percent of metropolitan areas in North America for its arts and culture. More information about the Greater Hartford Arts Council may be found at www.LetsGoArts.org.

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