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Art & Soul Program Travels to Indy Airport to Perform Musical Series

Local musicians to help welcome the 2019 National Urban League Conference

INDIANAPOLIS (July 23, 2019) – The Arts Council of Indianapolis, Indianapolis Urban League and the Indianapolis Airport Authority are partnering to welcome travelers arriving for the 2019 National Urban League Conference at the Indianapolis International Airport (IND). The public is welcome to attend a two-day, free performance of the Art & Soul series located in Civic Plaza today and tomorrow.

The Art & Soul Summer Series will feature nine performances from groups like Bashiri Asad, Premium Blend, The Phelps Connection, and Rob Dixon.

This is the first time the Arts Council has taken the Art & Soul program out as a traveling series. For more than 20 years, the Arts Council has presented the Arts & Soul program as part of Black History Month celebration activities at the Indianapolis Artsgarden.

“These are some of the region’s best performers, and the Indy airport is honored to host them in providing a warm welcome for the National Urban League conference attendees and the Indianapolis community,” said Indianapolis Airport Authority Executive Director Mario Rodriguez. “Our partners at the Arts Council and Indianapolis Urban League are tuned into our commitment to provide an excellent customer experience, and present passengers and airport guests with diverse local art and music throughout the year. This is an excellent opportunity for all to come together and enjoy the fellowship of music.”

All musical performances will be held in Civic Plaza at the Indy airport beginning today at 11 a.m. and ending at 7 p.m. Performances tomorrow will also take place from 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.

"We are thrilled to partner with the Indianapolis International Airport to present the Art & Soul Summer Series," said Shannon M Linker, Arts Council of Indianapolis vice president. "What better way to welcome national leaders and guests of the National Urban League Conference to our city than to immediately immerse them in Indianapolis' rich and vibrant African American music scene, as soon as they arrive?"

Performances will kick off with the following lineup today:

- **The Phelps Connection**, led by lead-vocalist Valerie Phelps and drummer Kenny Phelps, will play from 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. The Phelps Connection makes regular appearances at The Jazz Kitchen, Indy Jazz Fest, countless clubs, and studios, and regularly host events at the Indiana Landmarks Center with their organization, OWL Music Group. Valerie and Kenny Phelps will be joined by saxophone player Rob Dixon and keyboard player Steven Jones.
- **Premium Blend**, a modern jazz saxophone lead group, will perform from 12:30 – 2 p.m. The group was formed in 2007 and is led by saxophonist Jared Thompson. Alongside Thompson will be guitarist Ryan Taylor, drummer Brian Yarde and keyboard player Steven Jones. Premium Blend performs regularly in the Indianapolis area and has released three albums.
- **Bashiri Asad Trio** will play from 4 – 5:15 p.m. Bashiri Asad has been in the Indianapolis music scene for only a short time, but his blend of jazz, soul, and funk music is fast becoming a regular practice among the local musicians. With his unique style Asad continues to become one of Indianapolis' premiere vocalist.
- **Brenda Williams Quartet** will perform from 5:30 – 7 p.m. Brenda Williams, an Indianapolis-based singer and actress, has an extensive resume that includes playing for three U.S. Presidents and opening for headliners such as Ray Charles and The Beach Boys, among many others. She is a Creative Renewal Arts Fellow and has been recognized by the Indianapolis Woman Magazine for their Local Female Musician Choice Award and the Indianapolis Star as one of the top people to watch in the city.

Tomorrow's performances will include:

- **Rob Dixon Quartet**, led by saxophonist Rob Dixon, will perform from 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. Dixon graduated from Hampton University, then continued his education in the Jazz Studies program at Indiana University with renowned Jazz educator David Baker. Dixon has played with well-known artist Count Basie Orchestra, Tony Bennett, The Ellington Band and Ray Charles among others. Dixon is signed with OWL Studios, an Indianapolis-based jazz/jam label.
- **Renee King** will perform from 11 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. King, an Indianapolis native, made her debut in 2014 as a soul singer. As she continues to grow as a singer, she often performs with a diverse group of musicians while exploring various genres of music.
- **Kim Kenny Trio**, a group led by Indianapolis-based singer, songwriter Kimberly Kenny, will perform from 12:30 – 2 p.m. Kimberly first showcased her unique blend of Gospel, Opera and Jazz nationally with a performance on amateur night at the famed Apollo

Theater in New York. Kenny is an alumna of Marian University and teaches show choir at Charles Tindley Accelerated High School in Indianapolis.

- **Bill Myers and the Trash Collectors**, will play from 4 – 5:15 p.m. This Indianapolis-based group is a newly formed band with a fresh sound combining Jazz, Blues and R&B.
- **Yvonne Allu Quartet**, will perform from 5:30 – 7 p.m. Allu’s musical style is a mix of jazz, soul, pop, funk and rock. Allu often performs in and around Indianapolis. Her vocal range celebrates the great jazz songstresses of the past with some of her musical influences being Ella Fitzgerald, Aretha Franklin, Nancy Wilson, Chaka Khan, Sade and Nina Simone.

The Art & Soul Summer Series is one part of the welcome for National Urban League Conference attendees. Compelling art displays, welcome signage, and volunteer tables will be set up at the Indy airport to pay tribute to the nearly 20,000 conference attendees.

“The hospitable airport welcome and Art & Soul music performances align with our commitment to not only engage attendees from across the country, but also to make the conference a community event,” said Indianapolis Urban League CEO Tony Mason. “For additional community opportunities, the public can also attend the free N.U.L. Experience & Expo for three dynamic days of community, culture, connection and change, as well as the Back to School Community & Family Day.”

The National Urban League Annual Conference is taking place in Indianapolis from July 25-July 27, and it’s been 25 years since Indianapolis hosted this impactful event.

[Click here](#) to access photos of the musicians.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the National Urban League Annual Conference.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the Arts Council’s Art & Soul program.

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About the Arts Council of Indianapolis

The Arts Council of Indianapolis is a nonprofit service organization dedicated to fostering meaningful and equitable engagement in the arts by nurturing a culture where artists and arts organizations thrive. The Arts Council allocates public funding to arts and cultural organizations through a competitive grant program; offers fellowship opportunities including the Creative Renewal Arts Fellowship, the Robert D. Beckmann, Jr. Emerging Artist Fellowship, and the DeHaan Artist of Distinction Award; provides programs, services, and technical assistance for artists and arts organizations; manages the city’s public art program including the Public Art for Neighborhoods initiative; supports arts education and arts integration in partnership with

Indianapolis Public Schools; and owns/operates the Indianapolis Artsgarden, Gallery 924, and IndyArtsGuide.org.

About the Indianapolis Airport Authority

The Indianapolis Airport Authority owns and operates Indiana's largest airport system in the Indianapolis metropolitan area. In addition to the Indianapolis International Airport (IND), its facilities include the Downtown Heliport, Eagle Creek Airpark, Hendricks County Airport-Gordon Graham Field, Indianapolis Regional Airport and Metropolitan Airport. IND generates a \$5.4 billion total annual economic impact for Central Indiana – without relying on state or local taxes to fund operations. More than 10,000 people work at the airport each day, and 22,600 area jobs have a connection to the airport. IND serves more than 9 million business and leisure travelers each year, averaging 145 daily flights – seasonally and year-round – to 50 nonstop destinations. IND is consistently ranked, year after year, as the best airport in North America and the nation, based on ease of use, passenger amenities, customer service, local retail offerings and public art. The airport is home of the world's second largest FedEx operation and the nation's eighth-largest cargo facility. IND is committed to becoming the airport system of choice for both passenger and cargo service. For more information, visit IND's Facebook page at [Indianapolis International Airport](https://www.facebook.com/IndianapolisInternationalAirport) and Twitter page at [@INDairport](https://twitter.com/INDairport).