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Star-Studded Grand Opening Planned April 30-May 1 for Oberlin's New, Iconic Music Building

Stevie Wonder, Drs. Bill and Camille Cosby, Avery Brooks, James McBride, and More
Lend their Talents to Celebrate Jazz at Oberlin



Stevie Wonder

OBERLIN, OHIO (April 23, 2010) — Jazz at Oberlin is getting a sleek new makeover.

Music legend Stevie Wonder, philanthropists and educational activists Drs. Bill and Camille Cosby, actor Avery Brooks '70, and author James McBride '79 will be among those in attendance Friday, April 30, and Saturday, May 1, at the celebration of the grand opening of the Bertram and Judith Kohl Building, the Oberlin Conservatory of Music's new home for jazz studies, music history, and music theory. The weekend-long event will feature a dedication ceremony, exciting performances, building tours, a panel discussion, screening of jazz-themed films, and exciting performances.

Formerly the Litoff Building, Oberlin's newest facility is now the Bertram and Judith Kohl Building, and is named in their memory by their son, Oberlin College Trustee Stewart Kohl '77. In December 2005, with his wife Donna, Stewart Kohl contributed the lead gift, \$5 million, for Oberlin's building project. Their gift is believed to be the largest ever given specifically for the support of jazz education at a U.S. college.

The official dedication of the Kohl Building will take place on Saturday, May 1 at 11 a.m., and will be followed by an open house and a series of afternoon self-guided tours. The weekend will also feature events that highlight the innovative new building, honor jazz as an art form, and celebrate Oberlin's position as a national fixture in jazz education and the many contributions of its faculty and alumni.

Events throughout the weekend include:

- A kickoff ceremony featuring the conferring of honorary degrees upon Oberlin supporters Stevie Wonder and Drs. Bill and Camille Cosby on Friday, April 30 at 4 p.m. in Tappan Square.
- Screenings of two jazz films at the Apollo Theatre: *Mo' Better Blues* at 7 p.m. on April 30 and *'Round Midnight* at 1 p.m. on May 1. Tickets are \$5 and can be purchased at the box office.
- The dedication of the Bertram and Judith Kohl Building, which will take place in the conservatory's Warner Concert Hall at 11 a.m. on May 1. No tickets are required, but seating is limited and is only available on a first-come, first-served basis.

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- A conversation on the arts between Avery Brooks '70 and Chair of the African American Studies Department Caroline Jackson Smith at 2 p.m. on May 1 in the conservatory's Warner Concert Hall.
- A panel discussion on green building and architectural design at 4 p.m. on May 1 in the conservatory's Warner Concert Hall, featuring architects from Westlake Reed Leskosky, the firm that designed the Kohl Building.
- Two private events: "An Evening with Bill Cosby" on April 30, and a concert on May 1 featuring Stevie Wonder, members of Oberlin's jazz studies faculty and Oberlin graduates and students. Both events are sold out.

The Bertram and Judith Kohl Building is the new home of the Oberlin Conservatory's acclaimed Department of Jazz Studies and highly respected academic programs in music history and music theory. In line with Oberlin's commitment to environmental sustainability, it utilizes green building practices and sustainable strategies—when completed, it is expected to receive the first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold rating for a facility exclusively dedicated to music. The Kohl Building is a crucible for Oberlin's innovative curriculum and extensive intellectual resources—which includes gifted and dedicated Grammy Award-winning faculty members, the James and Susan Neumann Jazz Collection (the largest privately held collection of jazz recordings and ephemera in the U.S.), the Frank Kuchirchuk Collection of Jazz Photography, and a robust bank of innovation and creativity.

"The Bertram and Judith Kohl Building will be the premier facility of its kind anywhere in the world," says Dean of the Conservatory David H. Stull. "It is brilliantly conceived to emulate who we are and what we stand for. It is about bringing us together, pursuing great art, fostering harmony within our community, and reminding all of us of the imperative need to steward our environment. It will constantly inspire us in our mission to seek perfection while achieving excellence. It is highly innovative in both form and function, which is emblematic of the conservatory's approach to all of its endeavors."

The Kohl Building is part of the Oberlin Conservatory complex, designed by Minoru Yamasaki, the architect who planned the World Trade Center. The conservatory's design, which architectural historian Geoffrey Blodgett called "a characteristic Yamasaki blend of modern Gothic and classical allusions," was dedicated in 1964, and is located at the corner of West College and South Professor streets.

On Friday, April 30, public parking will be available in designated off-campus lots located at 297 South Main Street, 95 West Hamilton Street, and at the Lorain County Joint Vocational School at 15181 State Route 58. Shuttles will run between the lots and event locations from 2 p.m. to 11 p.m. On Saturday, May 1, parking will be available at on-campus lots, and shuttles from on-campus lots to event locations will run continually from 9 a.m. until 2 a.m.

For more information about the weekend's events, please visit the Bertram and Judith Kohl Building website or contact the Office of Public Programs at 440-775-6785.

For calendar listings please visit: <http://www.oberlin.edu/kohl/celebrate.html>

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