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JAZZ ST. LOUIS APPOINTS ADARON “POPS” JACKSON AS DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The educator, musician, composer, and clinician brings a wealth of experience to a position paramount to fulfilling the organization’s mission of advancing the uniquely American art of jazz through performance, education, and community engagement.

ST. LOUIS, August 11, 2023 – Jazz St. Louis is pleased to welcome Adaron “Pops” Jackson as the organization’s new Director of Education and Community Engagement. Pops will oversee Jazz St. Louis’ flagship Jazz Academy and JazzU programs, Jazz St. Louis Artist Residency bands, Emerson Jazz for our Schools events, the Regional Essentially Ellington Festival, the early-childhood jazz education program WeBop, and the music motor therapy program Music Heals. These programs facilitate musical excellence, leadership skills, and cultural appreciation while creating lifelong memories through unique live jazz experiences. Jazz St. Louis Education programs have positively impacted over 180k St. Louis area students, 60% of whom are from underserved communities. In addition to these enriching education programs from Jazz St. Louis, Pops will also advance the organization’s community engagement efforts via the inclusive and open-to-the-public Whitaker Jazz Speaks performance and lecture series, Jazz St. Louis book club events, and our partnership with The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Washington University.

“Adaron is the right person for this position at the right time,” states Victor Goines, Jazz St. Louis’ President and CEO. “Adaron’s training and professional experiences have provided the foundation necessary for him to lead and succeed in the Director of Education and Community Engagement position. He is St. Louis-made, soulful, and visionary. The right person!”

Adaron served for four years as Director for the David and Thelma Steward Institute of Jazz Studies at the University of Missouri – St. Louis, as well as Artistic Director for the Greater St. Louis Jazz Festival. Originally from East St. Louis, IL, Pops has performed and toured nationally and internationally with a diverse array of artists and ensembles including the Birch Creek Academy Band, Frank Morgan, Victor Mendoza, Steve Houghton, Clay Jenkins, Red Holloway, The Temptations, Wallace Roney, Ellis Marsalis, Arturo Sandoval, Greg Tardy, Slide Hampton, and a host of others. Performances include appearances at Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola at Jazz at Lincoln Center, the Chicago Jazz Festival, the Capitol Jazz Festival, and the Kansas City Blues and Jazz Festival, among others. As a composer and arranger, Adaron has written works for various ensembles ranging from small to large, most recently for the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra (SLSO). He has been a teaching artist with Jazz St. Louis’ education programs since 2012. Pops has served faculties of Washington University in St. Louis and Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. He currently serves on the Birch Creek Music Academy faculty. As an educator, Jackson teaches master classes and remains an active clinician/adjudicator at numerous festivals nationwide.

“Jazz St. Louis has been a part of my life for many years, and I have personally witnessed the transformative nature of this place,” says Jackson. “Jazz serves as a canvas for musicians and audiences to explore the nuances of human emotion, identity, and connection. It provides a space where individuality and collective experiences harmoniously coexist, making it a powerful artistic expression that continually enriches our understanding of ourselves and others. As a cultural hub, Jazz St. Louis brings

people together uniting the community and I look forward to contributing more directly to that legacy.”

About Jazz St. Louis

Jazz St. Louis is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to lead our community in advancing the uniquely American art of jazz through performance, education, and community engagement.

Each year, Jazz St. Louis presents over 270 performances in its internationally acclaimed concert series. Jazz St. Louis Education programs cultivate leadership and cultural appreciation in the next generation of musicians and listeners through training, educational resources, and transformative engagement with local and touring professional musicians. Jazz St. Louis has an extensive portfolio of education programs for elementary through college students in the greater St. Louis area and beyond. The organization provides field trip experiences, hands-on training programs, in-school clinics and masterclasses, and curricular resources for teachers, all at no cost to participants.

For more information about Jazz St. Louis, visit jazzstl.org.