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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tickets & Information: 212/854-7799; www.millertheatre.com

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"This is an inspiring venue." — Jazz Times

MILLER THEATRE AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

kicks off its 2009-2010 *Jazz* series with a return favorite:

Cyrus Chestnut Trio

Friday, October 9, 8:00PM

Single Tickets: \$25 • Students \$15 with valid ID

From Miller Theatre's new Director Melissa Smey:

"I am very pleased to open our Jazz series with a leading Jazz light and his special guests. Pianist Cyrus Chestnut, well-known to Miller audiences from past sold-out performances, returns to our stage with his stellar trio—Dezron Douglas on bass and Neal Smith on drums, who recently received a nod in *The New York Times* for keeping the 'swing strong and clear.'"

Jazz at Miller Theatre

New York's jazz heart wasn't always located downtown. Once upon a time it was found on 52nd Street and before that on 125th, and for many decades its most powerful radio voice has been WKCR-FM on the campus of Columbia University. Just a few yards away, Columbia's Miller Theatre continues its focus on great jazz artists, collaborating closely with them on concerts the same way it does with Steve Reich or George Crumb. This season, Miller's *Jazz* series welcomes back five luminaries to the stage—**Cyrus Chestnut, Marty Ehrlich, Eric Reed, Carla Cook, and Damien Sneed.**

Friday, October 9, 8:00PM

Cyrus Chestnut Trio

Hailing from Baltimore, pianist **Cyrus Chestnut** seamlessly blends styles in his playing, from folk and pop to Gospel and hip-hop. He returns to Miller with his dynamic trio, featuring **Dezron Douglas** on bass and **Neal Smith** on drums.

ARTISTS: Cyrus Chestnut Trio

Cyrus Chestnut, piano

Dezron Douglas, bass

Neal Smith, drums

BIOS:

Cyrus Chestnut started his musical career at the age of six in his hometown of Baltimore, Maryland. By age nine, he was studying at Peabody Institute. In 1985, Chestnut earned a degree from Boston's renowned Berklee College of Music. While at Berklee, Chestnut was awarded the Eubie Blake Fellowship, the Oscar Peterson Scholarship, the Quincy Jones Scholarship, and The Basie Award. He then began working as a sideman with some of the leaders in the music scene including Wynton Marsalis, Chick Corea, Dizzy Gillespie, Jon Hendricks, and Betty Carter. He also developed as a leader, recording and playing live around the world. In 2000, Chestnut collaborated with Vanessa Williams, Brian McKnight, The Manhattan Transfer, and The Boys' Choir of Harlem

on *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. The versatile pianist has also collaborated with Kathleen Battle, Freddy Cole, Bette Midler, Jimmy Scott, Isaac Hayes, and Kevin Mahogany.

Dezron Douglas began playing the bass at age nine. Graduating from the Jackie McLean Institute where he studied with Nat Reeves, Steve Davis, and McLean, he has gone on to perform and record with such jazz luminaries as Michael Carvin, Pharoah Sanders, Nicholas Payton, Joe Farnsworth, Eric Alexander, Andy Bey, Kevin Mahogany, and others. In 2000, while in college, he co-founded a septet of equally minded musicians called The New Jazz Workshop of Hartford, Connecticut. Douglas has also been heard at the 50th Monterrey Jazz Festival with Cyrus Chestnut (October 2007); on tour to Germany, Austria, and Poland with Abraham Burton and Eric McPherson's Quartet (February and March 2008); at the Cape May Jazz Festival with the Neal Smith Sextet (April 2008); and at Spoleto USA with Cyrus Chestnut (May 2008).

Born and raised in Ohio, **Neal Smith** has been playing drums since the age of five. By the time he completed high school he had achieved a remarkable list of performance accomplishments and earned an impressive array of awards. Smith studied at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music where he received a bachelor's degree in music and was the first African-American to earn a degree in Jazz studies from the Conservatory. In addition to his academic training, Smith has studied with Vernell Fournier, Greg Bandy, Paul Samuels, Michael Carvin, Tom Freer, Bruce Collie, and Michael Rosen. Neal performs regularly in clubs and concert halls, at colleges and universities, and at national and international Jazz Festivals. Smith also leads his own group, which performs original compositions as well as classic arrangements of jazz standards, and performs regularly with internationally recognized artists. Recognizing the need for a record label that focuses exclusively on the production of jazz recordings, Neal founded the NAS label. His two most recent recordings are *Swingin' is Believin* and *Some of My Favorite Songs Are....*

Upcoming Jazz concerts at Miller Theatre:

Single Tickets: \$25 • Subscription: \$100; \$60 for 3 concerts

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| Cyrus Chestnut Trio | Friday, October 9 |
| Marty Ehrlich Rites Quartet | Saturday, October 24 |
| A Christmas Journey with Eric Reed | Friday, December 11 |
| The Carla Cook Quintet | Friday, February 12 |
| Damien Sneed Gospel Extravaganza | Friday, February 26 |

Columbia University's Miller Theatre is located north of the Main Campus Gate at 116th St. & Broadway on the ground floor of Dodge Hall.

For tickets, the public should call the Miller Theatre Box Office at 212/854-7799, M-F, 12-6PM. Tickets can also be purchased online at www.millertheatre.com.

For further information, press tickets, and to arrange interviews, please contact Aleba Gartner Associates at 212/206-1450 or a@alebagartner.com.

For photos, please contact Christy Pill at 212/854-1488 or cp2234@columbia.edu.

Major support for Miller Theatre's 2009-10 season is provided by the Peter Jay Sharp Foundation, the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, the Francis Goelet Charitable Lead Trusts, and The Reed Foundation, Inc.

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