

Concert Celebrates Monk, Battiste and Modern Jazz

November 02, 2010 11:00 AM Kathryn Hobgood Ray
khobgood@tulane.edu

New Orleans, known as the birthplace of jazz, is often thought of as a place to hear the sounds of traditional jazz and Dixieland. Yet as the form has evolved over the last century, the city has continued to produce innovative musicians.



Shown in this illustration are Thelonious Monk, left, and Harold Battiste, right, whose music will be honored in a concert on Friday (Nov. 5) on the Tulane uptown campus.

Some of the most highly regarded modern jazz musicians in the city will give a performance on the Tulane uptown campus on Friday (Nov. 5) at 8 p.m., including Harold Battiste, Nicholas Payton, Herlin Riley, Delfeayo Marsalis, Wessell Anderson and Jesse McBride.

The [concert](#), which will be held in Dixon Hall, honors the music of Monk and New Orleans' own Battiste — two progressive jazz musicians.

Performing with them on piano will be Robin D. G. Kelley, professor of American studies and ethnicity at the University of Southern California and a leading historian of African American culture and politics. Kelley is the author of the prize-winning biography *Thelonious Monk: The Life and Times of an American Original*.

On stage during the concert, Kelley will talk about Monk and will interview Battiste about his recently published autobiography, *Unfinished Blues*. Battiste, who was born in New Orleans in 1931, is a saxophonist widely respected for his work as a composer and studio arranger, as well as for starting the first African American musician-owned record label, AFO Records.

“My basic effort in modern music and jazz has been to awaken the people in New Orleans to how the music keeps progressing,” Battiste says. “There are some music promoters in the city who may be stuck on our history, which is great — the Louis Armstrong and the Jelly Roll Morton. But my interest has always been to keep people aware of those cats that keep coming.”

While in New Orleans, Kelley will present a lecture about the role of community and neighborhood in shaping the work and lives of jazz musicians on Thursday (Nov. 4) at 6:30 p.m. in Freeman Auditorium.

Both the lecture and concert, sponsored by the [Newcomb Department of Music](#) and other campus organizations, are free and open to the public.