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## **History Center honors jazz legend with Sam Rivers 100**

*Downtown Orlando musical performance caps off daylong event*

**ORLANDO, Fla. (August 21, 2023)** – On Saturday, October 7, 2023, the [Orange County Regional History Center](#) will present Sam Rivers 100, a celebration of the 100th birthday of the jazz icon who spent the latter part of his life and career in Central Florida. The day's events culminate with a special downtown performance by the 16-piece Sam Rivers Rejuvenation Orchestra – an experience Rivers fans won't want to miss.

Born September 25, 1923, Sam Rivers grew up in Chicago in a family with deep musical roots: in 1882, his grandfather published one of the first hymnals for Black congregations after emancipation. A multitalented performer, composer and arranger, he has been hailed as one of the leading figures in postwar avant-garde jazz. During his long career, he played with such legends as Miles Davis, Billie Holiday, and Dizzy Gillespie. He found an entirely new audience when he moved to the Orlando area, where he played with a group of talented local musicians. After his death in 2011 at the age of 88, his orchestra has continued to perform for audiences still eager to hear his unique compositions played live.

The October 7 celebration features a 2 p.m. panel discussion at the History Center moderated by Matt Gorney, the musician's manager and producer in Central Florida. Panelists include special guest Monique Rivers Rencher, Rivers's daughter; Doug Mathews, bandleader of the Sam Rivers Rejuvenation Orchestra; Rick Lopez, author of *The Sam Rivers Sessionography*; and Michael Heller of the University of Pittsburgh Department of Music, home of the Sam Rivers Archive.

Also at the History Center, a pop-up exhibition of images of Sam Rivers in Central Florida by noted Orlando-based photographer Jim Leatherman will be on display, and copies of *The Sam Rivers Sessionography* by Rick Lopez will be available for purchase. Visitors can also experience the museum's nationally award-winning exhibition, *Figurehead: Music & Mayhem in Orlando's Underground*, which includes information on Rivers. All daytime activities are included with museum admission.

Capping off the celebration, the Sam Rivers Rejuvenation Orchestra takes the stage at The Social, 54 N. Orange Ave., a key venue in the Rivers legacy in Central Florida. Doors open at 6 p.m. for the 7 p.m. performance. Tickets are \$10; a presale for museum members begins August 21, with ticket sales to the general public starting August 25. More information is available at [TheHistoryCenter.org/SR100](http://TheHistoryCenter.org/SR100).

**About the Orange County Regional History Center:** Housed in a historic courthouse at 65 E. Central Blvd. in downtown Orlando, the Orange County Regional History Center features four floors of permanent and special exhibitions. The History

Center is a Smithsonian Institution Affiliate and accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. It is funded in part by Orange County Government through the Community and Family Services Department under Orange County Mayor Jerry L. Demings and the Board of County Commissioners. The Historical Society of Central Florida Inc. is supported by United Arts of Central Florida and sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture. For more information, visit [www.thehistorycenter.org](http://www.thehistorycenter.org).