FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

University of Minnesota to Host 32nd Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute featuring Oleta Adams, 1/20/13

MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL (12/19/12) -- On Sunday, January 20, 2013, from 4-6 p.m., the University of Minnesota will host the 32nd Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute featuring the musical stylings of Oleta Adams plus performances by Walker West Music Academy’s Jazz Ensemble and Ahmad Lewis. Lewis will present a spoken-word piece called “Out of the Ashes of the Past.” The concert will take place at the University’s Ted Mann Concert Hall (2128 4th Street South, Minneapolis, MN 55455, U of M West Bank campus). This program honors Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Dr. Reginald Buckner, founder of the MLK, Jr. Concert. Jazz 88 FM (KBEM) is a Community Partner for this event.

When the University of Minnesota’s Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute began more than 30 years ago, it was the only tribute of its kind in Minnesota. The late Reginald Buckner, School of Music professor and an accomplished performer and composer, founded the concert and began the tradition of celebrating the life and accomplishments of Dr. King through the performing arts. After professor Buckner’s death in 1989, the University continued to honor Buckner’s memory and artistic genius by carrying on the inspiring legacy of this annual program. The Martin Luther King Celebration is now a joint program of the University of Minnesota’s Office for Equity and Diversity and the School of Music.

The concert is free of charge and open to the public; no advance tickets or reservations are required. For more information about the program, or for disability accommodations, contact the Office for Equity and Diversity at oed@umn.edu or 612-624-0594. Visit z.umn.edu/MLK2013 for more information.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Oleta Adams’ 1990 debut album, Circle of One, went platinum, and over the years she has toured with Tears for Fears, Phil Collins, Michael Bolton and Luther Vandross. Her music draws deeply from her roots in gospel, while crossing effortlessly into the realms of soul, R&B, urban, and popular music. She’s received four Grammy nominations and sold more than 2.5 million records.

U of M alumnus and St. Paul native Ahmad Lewis has competed in many spoken word competitions and is a former member of the “Vibin Collective,” a group of artists that performed social, political, and culturally conscious spoken word pieces at local venues. He holds Bachelor of Science degrees in both accounting and applied economics and is currently working for the City of Bloomington’s Finance Department.

The Walker West Music Academy Jazz Ensemble Program provides students with the opportunity to develop their artistic skills through engaging with their peers in a collaborative, performance based ensemble program. This ensemble program creates an environment where jazz instruction and performance are explored in traditional and modern contexts, maintaining improvisation as its foundational focus, recognizing it as not only a creative means of affirmation and celebration of the identity of the individual but also as a communicative tool to be utilized out of necessity in an increasingly complex and diverse world.
As a performance based program, Academy jazz ensembles perform publicly on a regular basis for non-profit organizations, community organizations, government agencies and at musical festivals throughout the Twin Cities. Recent performances include the 2012 General Mills Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast at the Minneapolis Convention Center, the 2012 Winter Carnival Coronation, the inauguration of Saint Paul Mayor Chris Coleman and the main stage of the Twin Cities Jazz Festival.

**Walker West Music Academy** is a 501c(3) non-profit community school of music dedicated to instruction and performance reflective of the African American experience. WWMA is a quality, well-rounded community school of music as well as an outreach institution whose artistic purpose is committed to the recognition, education and celebration of diverse cultures through the study of their unique expression and contributions to the language of music.

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