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Kansas City, Missouri

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

2011 Kansas City Yardbird Jazz & Film Festival to take place at American Jazz Museum Complex and Gem Theater on August 27th

The Reel Images Film and Video Group announces plans for a community music and film festival to celebrate Kansas City's jazz heritage and the musical genius and legacy of Kansas City native son, Charlie "Yardbird" Parker on Saturday, August 27th in the historic 18th & Vine Jazz District from Noon until 6pm – two days before what would have been Parker's 91st birthday.

In 2009, the inaugural Yardbird Jazz & Film Festival held on Saturday, August 29th showcased area jazz groups such as the Elder Statesmen of Kansas City Jazz, the Horace Washington Quartet and the All City Gold Star Youth Jazz Band along with featured screenings of documentary jazz films which included "The Last of the Blue Devils and Confessin' the Blues – The Music of Jay McShann.

"It was great to see our community come out to hear the music and see the films. Both young and old were on hand for the Charlie Parker commemorative events that took place in the Jazz District that weekend" states Reel Images Boardmember Celeste Reed, adding "For the 2011 celebration – our goal is to engage more of our city's jazz performers, especially our elder musicians and young "up and coming" musicians to come together to make the Yardbird Festival a true music and learning collaboration."

All of the day-time activities scheduled from 12Noon until 6pm are offered free to the public. These include jazz band performances at the American Jazz Museum complex and jazz film screenings in the Gem Theater. In addition to the music and film presentations, a series of "jazz talks" will be presented featuring long-time friends and music admirers of Charlie Parker sharing their memories of one of the world's best known alto saxophone players.

A special salute will be given during this year's Yardbird presentation to honor Ahmad "The Dean of Swing" Alaadeen who passed away in August, 2010. A noted and highly-respected Kansas City jazz saxophonist, composer and educator who mentored many local musicians, Alaadeen led the annual "21 Sax Salute" that took place each year during the last weekend of August at Parker's Lincoln Cemetery gravesite.

"With this being the second Yardbird Festival presented by The Reel Images Film and Video Group, it is our hope to establish it as an annual community event to celebrate Parker and the living legacy of his music and what it represents to not just Kansas City, but the entire world", states Reel Images Board President, Alex Ellison, adding "This is a great event for the organization to present, especially considering the documentary film component coupled with the jazz band performances".

"We want all of Kansas City to come out for what promises to be a memorable, fun-filled and entertaining time" says Rodney Thompson, Reel Images Film & Video Group Project Director.

Support for the 2011 Yardbird Jazz & Film Festival is being provided in part by the City of Kansas City, Missouri Neighborhood, Tourist and Development Fund. Organizations or companies interested in sponsoring this year's festival program, can call the Reel Images offices at 816/561-9877.

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