



PRESS RELEASE

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On Tuesday, September 25, 2007 the ***African American Chamber of Commerce*** will host its **Annual Golf Invitational (GI)** at the **Doral Arrowwood Resort** in Rye Brook, NY.

The Chamber's GI is an all day networking opportunity for budding and experienced golfers. Non-golfers are invited to participate and will be able to use the state of the art gym, swim in the luxurious pool, play bid wis, play tennis or have a spa treatment.

The Chamber's **Golf Invitational** is designed to give new exposure and networking opportunities to members of the Chamber, local businesses and corporate partners in a relaxed and entertaining atmosphere.

This year, **NY State Assemblyman James Gary Pretlow** will serve as host and Honorary Chair of the event. Jazz great Marcus Johnson will provide the attendees with an after golf Jazz concert.

Marcus Johnson - "The measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience," Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." Throughout his 10-year career odyssey, jazz keyboardist, composer and producer Marcus Johnson continues to stand steady and unbowed.

Johnson's artistic journey with music reflects his entrepreneurial spirit, his maverick approach to composing and performing as well as his principled dedication to God, family and community.

His latest CD, "The Phoenix" (released July 2007) is aptly named as the work represents Johnson's struggle in building his brand within the music industry and his conviction to rise above the setbacks and disappointments. Widely lauded by jazz critics and aficionados alike, "The Phoenix" is his best work yet. But then again, Johnson, a ubiquitous performer and consummate businessman, planned on delivering nothing less to his loyal fans worldwide.

At quick glance, observers note that Johnson's previous five CDs have all peaked in the top 20 of Billboard's Contemporary Jazz charts for sales and predict that "The Phoenix" will surely rise and eclipse that mark.

During the past decade, Johnson has developed a reputation as a stellar showman, wowing audiences with his emotive displays of keyboard dexterity, while mixing his jazzy beats with R&B, go-go, Latin funk, a taste of salsa and a sip of hip hop. It's an unbridled genre that has allowed him to cultivate both mature smooth jazz fans as well as the younger urban-contemporary audiences.

Born in Ohio, Johnson was raised in Washington, D.C. and grew up sampling a cornucopia of musical styles. His mother was a classical pianist and his father purveyed the funk. After Johnson witnessed his first live show – Earth, Wind and Fire – with his father, his musical chariot was in motion. His step-father, using his winnings from a Maryland Pick-3 Lottery game, bought Johnson his first keyboard and the noodlin' began.

With private lessons from an aunt and direction from his high school music director, Johnson's keyboard fetish flared into a passion particularly knowing he couldn't sing nor rap.

The young mogul soon began studying both contemporary and traditional jazz and cites Thelonius Monk and Joe Sample as early influences through high school and his undergraduate studies at Howard University. While pursuing both a JD and MBA at Georgetown.

University, Johnson decided to independently produce and distribute his own album. The product, *Lessons in Love* (1997), went on to sell 40,000 units, a phenomenal success for an unknown artist's debut release. It also helped him launch his career as a jazz musician and chief executive of Marimelj Entertainment Group LLC (MEG).

During the next decade, Johnson would release more critically-acclaimed music: *Inter Alia*, *Chocolate City Groovin'*, *Coming Back Around*, *Urban Groove*, *In Person: Live@ Blues Alley*; *Just Doing What I Do*, *Smooth Jazz Christmas*, and *In Concert For a Cause*.

He's shared the stage with many musical legends including Boney James, Kim Waters, Peabo Bryson, Diana Krall, Eryka Badu, Peter White, Miles Jaye, Rick Braun, Norman Brown, Chaka Khan, Arturo Sandoval, Chuck Magione, Marion Meadows, Rachelle Ferrell, Mike Phillips, George Duke and Jeffrey Osborne among others.

And he's played at many of the world's famous festivals and venues including The Capital Jazz Fest, Bermuda Jazz Fest, Atlantic Artscape, Huntington Beach Jazz Fest, The National Smooth Jazz Awards and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Noting Johnson's business savvy and musical ambition, Black Entertainment Television (BET) founder and businessman Robert L. Johnson (no relation) invested in MEG and became Marcus' business partner. Under this partnership, MEG's label Three Keys Music – based in the Washington, D.C. metro area – established its own full-service recording studio, Studio 8121; and two music publishing companies, Marimelj Music Publishing and Three Keys Music Publishing.

And now for the foreseeable future, Johnson plans to "keep doing what I do. I love jazz and there's a huge demographic of folk out there that I intend to expose and let them know "I'm their man!" Johnson says humbly but confidently.

Bringing jazz to the masses is a challenge that any lesser man might wince as too daunting. But to Johnson, his faith, his music and his ideas are the rock from which he plans to stand and raise jazz steady and unbowed.

Now is the time for you to join us and sponsors Entergy, Washington Mutual Bank, Bermuda Tourism and African American Golfer Digest at one of New York's most exciting and profitable outings presented to the Black business community in this state.

Prizes for the 2007 invitational include: A Hole-in-One prize and a sports memorabilia silent auction.

Invitational attendees will receive: Refreshments served on the course, Bermuda Tourism gift bag, Golf Invitational fedora, a welcome lunch, club house games – bid wis, etc., 19th hole reception and cigars, dinner and awards, a silent auction, A one year paid subscription to African American Golfers Digest and a live Jazz by recording artist **Marcus Johnson**.

The '07 GI's confirmed celebrity guests include: CBS News Anchor **Maurice DuBois** and retired Basketball player **Rick Burton**. Visit our website at www.aaccnys.org to keep up with GI highlights and celebrity attendees.

The 2007 Golf Invitational will cost \$350.00 per person. Hole and Tee sponsorships are available for \$250.00 per hole or tee. Individual who have interest in attending the New England Clambake reception Jazz concert and awards dinner, the cost is \$150.00 per person. For additional information about the 2007 GI visit us online at www.aaccnys.org. To confirm your paid reservation call 914-699-4749. Master Card, Visa, Discover Card and American Express are accepted.

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