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Preeminent Master of American Classical Music Ahmad Jamal Releases ‘It’s Magic’ Out on June 10th on Birdology/Dreyfus

**Legendary Pianist and Composer’s First New Album in Three-Years
Following the Critically Acclaimed ‘After Fajr’**

At once majestic and familiar, the soon-to-be 78-years-old maestro, who was a major influence on Miles Davis, continues to expand his fan base, selling out concerts and garnering awards and honors.

New York, NY — **Birdology/Dreyfus Jazz** is proud to release **Ahmad Jamal**’s tenth US release on the French label, ***It’s Magic***, on June 10, 2008. It has been three years since ***After Fajr***, the critically acclaimed album ***The New York Times*** declared “one of his best” (Ben Ratliff, May 30, 2005), and Ahmad Jamal has been keeping very busy.

The 77-years old pianist, composer, arranger, producer, manager, and *officier* (more on that later) has been touring the world, writing new compositions, selling out concert halls, and discovering, producing, and nurturing new talent. Mr. Jamal, who has always known how to get attention and keep it, has been continuously improving his repertoire, never once resting on his laurels.

The eagerly awaited new album, from one of the most revered pianist on the international music scene, is all about remembering the past while continuing to develop new territory. Dedicated to **Jean-François Deiber**, his friend and producer who passed away just before *After Fajr*’s release, *It’s Magic* features six originals, two of which have never been recorded, and three standards with celluloid connection.

From the opening track, “**Dynamo**,” Ahmad Jamal signals a new direction almost immediately. Often cited for his brilliant and expansive work in a trio format, Ahmad augments his sonic landscape with the percolating beats of percussionist **Manolo Badrena**, backed by his long-time rhythm section featuring drummer **Idris Muhammad** and bassist **James Cammack**. He revisits “**Swahililand**,” his hauntingly beautiful composition, a concert favorite previously heard on *After Fajr* (also on 1974’s *Jamal Plays Jamal* and 1987’s *Crystal*), with exquisite styling and impressive command. Rarely heard “**Back to the Island**” is dynamic, showcasing Ahmad’s faultless technique.

Ahmad Jamal delivers an unforgettable interpretation in the title track, “**It’s Magic**,” the Academy Award nominated song by **Sammy Cahn** and **Jule Styne** from the film ***Romance on the High Seas***. Ahmad shines, stunningly backed by his trio, traversing the comic highs and lows in a romance of mistaken identities, and elevates the breezy musical number to a lyrical poem.

No stranger to hit songs (Ahmad is one of the few jazz artists to score a Top 10 Pop hit with an instrumental – “Poinciana”), Ahmad has also been sampled extensively by hip-hop artists such as **Jay-Z**, **Nas**, and **Common**, among others. On “**Wild is the Wind/Sing**,” Ahmad sends up a rollicking take on the popular song “Wild is the Wind” by **Ned Washington** and **Dimitri Tiomkin** from ***Wild is the Wind*** and “**Sing**” written by **Joe Raposo** for ***Sesame Street*** (a hit for The Carpenters); and offers an inventive and unusual interpretation of the Academy Award winner for Best Original Song “**The Way You Look Tonight**” by **Jerome Kern** and **Dorothy Fields** from the Fred Astaire and Ginger Roger’s film ***Swing Time***.

Ahmad Jamal may be one of the last living titans of jazz's so-called-Golden-Era who continues to redefine modern jazz. Nowhere is this more evident than in "**Fitnah**" and "**Papillon**", two new compositions which have never been recorded.

True to the art form, Ahmad Jamal turns every concert into an event of the year. Even after more than half a century in the music industry, every performance is profound and thrilling, and it only gets better, night after night.

Last year, the French government has inducted Ahmad Jamal, for his exceptional accomplishments in "American Classical Music," into its prestigious Order of the Arts and Letters, naming him *Officier de L'Ordre Des Arts et Des Lettres* (Officer, Order of Arts and Letters). The Order of Arts and Letters, established in 1957 to recognize distinguished artists and writers and others who have contributed significantly to furthering the arts in France and around the world, is one of four French ministerial orders and the highest distinction for artistic or literary contributions. In being nominated to the rank of Officer, Mr. Jamal joins some of the most important American artists and writers including Ornette Coleman, Ralph Waldo Ellison, William Faulkner, Ella Fitzgerald, Allen Ginsberg, Richard Meier, Toni Morrison, Jackson Pollock, Patti Smith, Susan Sontag, and Charles Wadsworth.

Ahmad Jamal is not just a living legend of jazz; he is one of the most inspired and inspiring artists in music today. An important and influential figure in jazz history (he was a key influence on **Miles Davis** in his formative years, and countless others), he introduced the concepts of *space*, *silence* and dramatic dynamics into jazz performance. He continues to influence diverse generation of artists from Herbie Hancock, Hiromi to Matthew Shipp.

Mr. Ahmad Jamal, a National Endowment for the Arts American Jazz Masters Fellowship recipient, is an exclusive Steinway piano artist.

Ahmad Jamal: It's Magic North American Tour

4/18	Jazz at Symphony Center	Chicago, IL
4/25	Greeley Jazz Festival - UNC	Greeley, CO
5/1 - 4	Manchester Craftsmen's Guild	Pittsburgh, PA
5/6 - 11	Blue Note Jazz Club	New York, NY
5/15 - 17	Regattabar	Cambridge, MA
5/30	Puerto Rico Heineken Jazzfest	San Juan, PR
6/4 - 6	Yoshi's (Jack London Square)	Oakland, CA
6/7 - 8	Yoshi's (Filmore Heritage Center)	San Francisco, CA
6/11	Glenwood Springs Summer of Jazz	Glenwood Springs, CO
6/23	Toronto Jazz Festival	Toronto, ON (Canada)
8/1	Caramoor Jazz Festival	Katonah, NY
8/7 - 10	Jazz Alley	Seattle, WA
9/18 - 20	Jazz at Lincoln Center	New York, NY
10/4	Vassar College - Skinner Hall	Poughkeepsie, NY

AHMAD JAMAL • It's Magic

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