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N E W S R E L E A S E

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“New Harmonies” exhibit opens Oct. 15 in Omaha

“New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music,” a traveling exhibit developed by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibit Service and presented in the state by the Nebraska Humanities Council (NHC), opens Oct. 15 at Loves Jazz & Arts Center in Omaha, where it will be on display through Dec. 31.

Through roots music, “New Harmonies” celebrates the quintessential American values of freedom, democracy, independence, diversity, and ingenuity. Roots music embraces folk, country, blues, gospel, jazz, bluegrass, rock and roll, rap, and more.

This is the sixth and final stop of the statewide tour, which began in March in Alliance. Each site has developed public humanities programming related to the exhibit’s theme and created events and activities to encourage public participation.

Among special activities planned in Omaha is an opening event at 6:30 p.m. Oct. 15, featuring the music of Omaha jazz icon Luigi Waites. A drummer, vibraphonist and music educator, Waites played in the house bands of Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan and Dinah Washington, and his band opened for the likes of Dizzy Gillespie and Lionel Hampton.

In addition to his own contributions to the jazz scene, Waites has been instrumental in teaching Omaha’s young musicians. One of his early protégés was Victor Lewis, now a world-renowned jazz drummer living in New York City.

In 1996, Waites was named Nebraska artist of the year by the Nebraska Arts Council. He was inducted into the Omaha Black Music Hall of Fame in 2005.

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