

## **MEDIA ALERT**

### **Contact:**

Tia Powell Harris  
202.298.1777 x 2664  
tiahari@gmail.com

Ronald Newman  
202.337.4825

### ***“Why Ellington?” Documentary Showcased by Arts Club of Washington Screening of popular student film on April 12th***

**Who:** Duke Ellington School of the Arts and the Arts Club of Washington

**What:** “Why Ellington/Why Not Western?” documentary screening

Screening of original documentary “Why Ellington?”, a student film about the history of Western High School and its evolution into Duke Ellington School of the Arts. The screening will include short films created as part of the “Stories of Song” workshop with the National Black Programming Consortium. and readings of responsive fiction, essays, and poetry by Duke Ellington seniors and a performance by the R Street Collective, the school’s popular spoken word performance group. Special guest, Peggy Cooper Cafritz, co-founder of Duke Ellington School of the Arts; reception to follow.

*Cost:* Free, but reservations are required: Mark Williams, mwill209@yahoo.com

**When:** Monday, April 12, 2010, 8 p.m.

**Where:** The Arts Club of Washington  
2017 “I” Street, NW, Washington, DC

**Why:** This documentary, produced by 10th grade students in the Literary Media and Communications department at Duke Ellington School of the Arts and premiered before a sold-out audience on March 12th, is an examination of the different schools that have occupied the building at 3500 R Street, with an emphasis on the four-year span when both schools occupied the same building in the early 1970s. Featuring interviews with former Western High School students as well as Peggy Cooper Cafritz, co-founder of Duke Ellington, the film explores the curriculum and leadership changes that led to creating one of the top arts high schools in the nation. In light of recent controversy surrounding the proposed removal of Duke Ellington to another facility, “Why Ellington?” is also a timely look at Washington, DC’s public schools, both past and present.

\*\*\*

**Duke Ellington School of the Arts** is a DC public school that is nationally recognized as a leading arts high school, providing a rigorous dual curriculum in both academics and arts. Students concentrate in one of eight arts disciplines (Dance, Literary Media and Communications, Museum Studies, Instrumental or Vocal Music, Theater, Technical Design and Production, and Visual Arts) and over 95% of Ellington students are accepted to our nation's most competitive universities and conservatories each year, including Yale, NYU, Harvard, Juilliard, Smith, Parsons School of Design, Pratt Institute, and Howard University, among many other institutions. Ellington boasts a 99% on-time graduation rate with students receiving almost \$1 million in college scholarships each year. For more information, visit [www.ellingtonschool.org](http://www.ellingtonschool.org).

**The “Stories of Song” project:** The National Black Programming Consortium worked with Literary Media and Communications students to harness the spirit of these songs in a modern context, incorporating a medium that has now become ubiquitous and connects more directly with the youth of today – short-form digital video. *Stories of Song* is a digital literacy video training experience; after a 3-hour immersive video training session using the Flip video camera, involving instruction on both storytelling and the ethics of information sharing in a digital age, students were tasked with creating a one-take video inspired by a civil rights song and/or using a civil rights song in the public domain. Their video must address an issue they see as a relevant civil rights issue today and will be featured on the [WhiteHouse.gov](http://WhiteHouse.gov) and [BlackPublicMedia.org](http://BlackPublicMedia.org) websites.