

NEW YORK, NY, September 27, 2013 /**24-7PressRelease**/ -- Eighty-eight. In China the number conveys good fortune. For ham radio operators "88" is shorthand for hugs and kisses. There are 88 constellations in the sky. But for

[George Wein](#)

, it hits closer to home. On October 3, the world-renowned jazz and music impresario will celebrate his 88th birthday.

Perhaps it's no coincidence that when, in 1950, Wein opened a jazz club in Boston, he called it Storyville - because from almost that minute on, his life became storied. But, it was in 1954 when the story made a turn toward the legendary. On a July weekend in Rhode Island, Wein took an idea and made it into a reality when he produced the inaugural [Newport Jazz Festival](#). That first festival kicked off with Stan Kenton and the balance of the schedule featured performances from the likes of Dizzy Gillespie, Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday.

From that weekend forward, Wein forever changed how we experience jazz. He showcased legends. He gave voice to up-and-comers. He organized the stages into a setting that took the event beyond being a concert and instead into a shared experience. Later, Wein went on to produce myriad festivals, including the [Newport Folk Festival](#), JVC Jazz Festival, New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and Grand Parade du Jazz. However, Wein's first love has always remained in Newport and his intent and vision are more alive than ever. Next August, the idea that was first realized on a chilly Newport night in 1954 will celebrate its 60th anniversary.

In those early days at Storyville, Wein was an accomplished pianist. More than six decades later, he still packs the clubs. This October 3 and 4, 7:00 pm, **George Wein: The Life of a Legend** takes place at [Jazz at Lincoln Center's The Allen Room](#)

with Wein leading his beloved

Newport All Stars: Lew Tabackin, Randy Brecker, Anat Cohen, Howard Alden, Peter Washington

and

Lewis Nash

Eighty-eight means many things, but for George Wein it's a number with one more significant tie. "Eighty-eight keys on the piano," he explains. "From those 88 keys come an infinite amount of musical possibilities. So, man, that's a number worth celebrating!"