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PHOTOS INCLUDED

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PUNK ROCK ICON CHALLENGES UTAHNS TO PROMOTE PEACE THROUGH MUSIC

Henry Rollins joins with local arts and music leaders to discuss the critical importance of music diplomacy.

Salt Lake City, UT – Music plays a profound role in fostering international understanding, cultural preservation, and peacebuilding. In a first-of-its-kind event for Utah, Utah Global Diplomacy’s Music Diplomacy Symposium convened over 100 musicians, scholars, policymakers, and cultural leaders to explore how music transcends boundaries to connect people, amplify voices, and address global challenges.

The symposium’s keynote address was delivered by Henry Rollins, former frontman of the Rollins Band and Black Flag. Titled *Music as a Tool for Social Justice*, Rollins’ remarks drew on his extensive career as a musician, author, spoken-word performer, actor, voice-over artist, TV host, and DJ. He spoke to the evolving social and political climate in the U.S. and around the world, underscoring music’s potential to serve as a common language and a powerful force for cross-cultural understanding.

“We were absolutely thrilled to welcome Rollins to Utah to lead this critical conversation,” said Felecia Maxfield-Barrett, President and CEO of Utah Global Diplomacy. “Utah’s deep love for the arts—especially music—is woven tightly into the fabric of our culture and society. Music diplomacy is one way to foster global connections and meaningful dialogue.”

The event also featured distinguished local speakers, including singer-songwriter Nikki Jean of Rhymesayers Entertainment, who emphasized the role of music in civic engagement, and Joshua Perkins of 1520 Arts, who highlighted hip hop's power in amplifying underrepresented voices and preserving cultural heritage.

A standout moment of the symposium was the live performance session, *The Power of Song to Face Challenging Times Around the World*, hosted by KRCL’s Lara Jones. The session featured powerful, original music by artists Sammy Brue, Talia Keys, and Marv Hamilton, offering an inspiring testament to music's unifying force across communities and generations.

“The power of live music is undeniable in bringing people together,” said Lara Jones, host of KRCL’s *RadioACTive*. “Music allows us to express and interpret experiences, emotions, and dreams in ways the written word often cannot. It connects shared experiences and fosters understanding that transcends barriers of language and culture.”

The Music Diplomacy Symposium is part of the Ambassador John Price & Marcia Price World Affairs Symposium Series and builds on the legacy of cultural diplomacy advanced through Utah Global Diplomacy's annual *Vivaldi by Candlelight* concert. This initiative reflects the broader impact of "music diplomacy" as recognized by the U.S. Department of State in promoting peace, mutual respect, and democratic values worldwide.

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ABOUT UTAH GLOBAL DIPLOMACY: Utah Global Diplomacy is dedicated to fostering respect and understanding between Utah residents and individuals from around the world. This mission is carried out through citizen diplomacy—the belief that every individual has the right and responsibility to shape U.S. foreign relations through personal connections. Utah Global Diplomacy advances these efforts through International Exchange Programs (in partnership with the U.S. State Department), World Affairs Lectures, Dialogues & Conversations, and the Young Diplomats of Utah program. To join the Utah Global Diplomacy community, visit www.utahglobaldiplomacy.org or email info@utahglobaldiplomacy.org.





