

The Life and Music of Johnny Mercer at USCB Center for the Arts



It's a safe bet that everyone in the country has heard a Johnny Mercer song, even if they don't know anything about the man and his music. A legend among American composers, he won four Academy Awards for "Best Song" and was nominated 19 times, more than any other composer.

A favorite son of Savannah and the Lowcountry, Mercer wrote lyrics for over 1,500 songs from the 1930's through the 1960's, including such hits as "That Old Black Magic," "Moon River," "Satin Doll," "Come Rain or Come Shine" and "Autumn Leaves," to name just a few. His classic "Skylark," with music by Hoagy Carmichael, became the theme song for the Savannah-based hit movie, "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil."

The Savannah Jazz Orchestra will perform a variety of original scores and jazz interpretations of Mercer's work on Friday, March 1, at USCB Center for the Arts. In existence over 20 years, the orchestra features the most talented swing and jazz musicians in the Lowcountry, including members of the Savannah Jazz All Stars Hall of Fame.

Three outstanding jazz and blues singers will provide a night full of musical variety in their Johnny Mercer tribute; Terry Herron, a resident of Hilton Head; Priscilla Albergottie-Williams, a native of Beaufort, and Huxsie Scott of Savannah. Terry is a featured vocalist and MC for the orchestra and also has his own Jazz Quintet. Priscilla is a music educator, Gullah music expert and professional singer and pianist. Huxsie is Savannah's premier jazz, gospel and swing singer. Together they will definitely bring the house down!

In addition to some extraordinary live performances, the show will also feature film of Johnny performing his songs with entertainment giants Nat King Cole, Steve Allen, Mike Douglas, Milton Berle and Mel Torme.

"My fellow artists and I absolutely love to give new life and new interpretations to Johnny Mercer's music," said Terry. "Mercer was a master with lyrics and his poetic, rhythmic, story-telling words cover an amazing span of emotions that are as relevant today as when he wrote them. To top it off, he could write an award-winning song on a napkin in 10 to 15 minutes ... between courses ... at a fast-food restaurant! "

So if you are a Johnny Mercer fan, or a jazz or movie music fan, then you cannot miss this outstanding interpretation of some of the finest contemporary music ever composed. It promises to be a toe-tapping, hand-clapping, totally swinging night of pure music enjoyment!

The Savannah Jazz Orchestra will perform Johnny Mercer on Friday, March 1, at USCB Center for the Arts. Reserve seats \$20; General Admission \$15; Students \$10. Box Office: Monday – Friday, 10am – 3pm, 843-521-4145. USCB Center for the Arts, 801 Carteret Street, Beaufort, SC 29902

www.uscbcenterforthearts.com

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