

A Very Jerry Christmas with Jerry Donato and Nicole Pesce

Two Valley jazz legends, saxophonist Jerry Donato and pianist Nicole Pesce, collaborate to headline this holiday concert exclusively for Lakeshore Music's 10th season at Tempe Center for the Arts. The celebration includes vocalist Vicki McDermitt and guitarist Mike Eldred, along with Bob Lashier on bass and John Lewis on drums.

Anyone who appreciates saxophone knows that the sought-after Donato, who moved to Phoenix in 1983 from Baltimore, has been in the pit for three decades with virtually every touring show and orchestra that has come through the Valley. Donato is a familiar figure playing alongside pianists Pesce and Armand Boatman, bassist Lashier and legendary vocalists McDermitt and Margo Reed.

His extensive career includes everything from television to Broadway shows. He has performed on "The Arsenio Hall Show," on soundtracks for CBS TV's "Evening Shade" and several TNT movies.

"I once told Jerry, sincerely, that any time I might need to assemble a band, he would be the first player I'd call," said arranger-composer Bob Freedman. "He has been able to read down any part I have ever written for him, not only accurately but with a true understanding and feeling for whatever style the music was in. On more than one occasion, such as when I was composing a piece for Ron Carter's big-band album, I have asked him to try some tricky passages I intended to give one of the reed players to let me know if they were manageable. He's never failed to 'manage' any of them."

Donato played on Boatman's self-titled CD "Bebop Revolution." He co-produced and played on the 2006 CD "Keith Greko and Friends." Donato's latest CD, "It's a Cool Heat," features the last recording of West Coast legend pianist Pete Jolly, who lived and performed in Phoenix in the 1950s and '60s.

"Jerry's an incredible sax player who can add dimension and validity to any musical genre," said musician-composer Bob McCarrol. "And sure, Jerry will always give you 110 percent of his heart and soul. But I think one of the greatest things about the man is his willingness to share his incredible knowledge and talents. And, trust me, they're worth having."

Pesce has been recognized among the "Top Ten Musicians to Hear in Phoenix" by the *Arizona Republic*, and named among the Valley's top performers by *Arizona Foothills Magazine*. With a remarkable gift for memorizing music, she has been dubbed "The Human iPod." She has performed for Shaquille O'Neal, Jimmy Carter and The Gypsy Kings.

Pesce began playing at age 7 with her father as her teacher and mentor, motivated by the records of the jazz and classical great pianists he constantly had playing in the house. By age 10, she had memorized 500 songs. Also at 10, her career launched when she won the Discovery Television National Talent Competition in New Orleans.

This concert is family-friendly and school-age children are admitted at half-price.

For more information, please go to:

<http://www.jerrydonato.com/>

<http://www.nicolepesce.com/>

<https://www.vickimcdermitt.com/>

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