THE ASU CONCERT JAZZ BAND WITH VOCALIST MARK MURPHY

MICHAEL KOCOUR, DIRECTOR
DON OWENS, GUEST DIRECTOR

GUEST ARTIST CONCERT SERIES
EVELYN SMITH MUSIC THEATRE
MARCH 26-27 • 7:30 PM

MUSIC

Herberger College of the Arts
ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

Program

To be announced.

Alto Saxophone
Keith Kelly
Javier Ocampo

Tenor Saxophone
Jeff Gutierrez
Woody Chenoweth

Baritone Saxophone
Jeremy Lappitt

Trumpet
Steve Limpert
Kyle Anderson
Jonathan Rodriquez
Joe Kim
Ken Johnston

Trombone
Mike Wilkinson
Seth Gory
Jeff Hattasch
Pat Lawrence
Gabriel Sears

Tuba
Gabriel Sears

Rhythm Section
Todd Martino–piano
Jacob Lauxman–guitar
John Sims–bass
Matt Harris–drums
Matt Coleman-drums

Jazz Combo
Jeremy Lappitt-alto saxophone
Ken Johnston-trumpet
Chris Peña-piano
John Sims-bass
Shaun Lowecki-drums

Mark Murphy has enjoyed a prolific 40-year recording career, with over 40 releases to date. His original lyrics to "Stolen Moments," "Red Clay" and more are known the world over. His innovative projects range from the work of Nat "King" Cole to Jack Kerouac to Ivan Lins to Eddie Jefferson. "For decades the question 'What exactly is a jazz singer?' has had two easy answers, Betty Carter. And Mark Murphy." writes the New York Post. "He is arguably the best male jazz singer in the business," declares Rex Reed.

Murphy is "a hipster's hipster," writes the New York Post. Jazziz magazine concurs, "he is one of the true remaining jazz hipsters of our time." "Mark has devoted a long career to singing the hippest music with the best musicians," states Leonard Feather. "Consider the company he has kept on records. In the '60s, Clark Terry, Dick Hyman, Roger Kellaway. In the '70s, David Sanborn and the Brecker Brothers. In the '80s, Frank Morgan, Richie Cole and the Azymuth Trio. Consider the jazzmen to whose instrumental works he has composed and sung lyrics: Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins, Pat Metheny, Charlie Parker, McCoy Tyner, Charles Mingus, Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter."

It was Sammy Davis, Jr. who first discovered the young Mark Murphy in 1953 at a jam session in Murphy's hometown of Syracuse, New York. Impressed with Murphy's talent, Davis invited him to his show that night, where he asked Mark to join him on stage. Davis -- to whom Murphy devoted his Muse release, "What a Way to Go" -- was supportive of Mark throughout the years and was responsible for getting Murphy on the "Tonight Show" with Steve Allen. It was Allen's composition, "This Could Be the Start of Something Big," that Mark recorded a hit rendition of in 1959.

Murphy's recording career began at the age of 24 with his first release, Meet Mark Murphy, on the Decca label. Producer Orrin Keepnews recalls Murphy's early recordings as "timeless...it's remarkable how fully developed as an artist Mark was so early on. He was born with his incredible rhythmic sense. And he's matured throughout the years, his vocal powers remain undiminished." In 1958 Murphy moved to Los Angeles and recorded three albums for Capitol Records.

He returned to New York in the early '60s and did the now classic jazz recording Rah on the Riverside label, featuring legendary jazz players Bill Evans, Clark Terry, Urbie Green, Blue Mitchell and Wynton Kelly. This album has been recently reissued by Fantasy Records. Mark's favorite recording to date, That's How I Love the Blues, soon followed. In 1963 Murphy hit the charts across the country with his single of "Fly Me To the Moon" and was voted "New Star of the Year" in Downbeat Magazine's Reader's Poll.

With the advent of the Beatles in the early 1960s, work for jazz singers started to dry up in the U.S. Murphy moved to London, England in the late '60s where he worked primarily as an actor. Mark continued however, to cultivate his jazz audience in Europe and recorded three albums there, Mark Time! (Fontana, 1964), Who Can I Turn To? (Immediate, 1966) and Midnight Mood (MPS, 1967).

He returned to the States in 1972 and began recording an average of an album a year for over fourteen years on the Muse label. These projects -- including the highly acclaimed Nat King Cole Songbook Vol. I and II, Bop for Kerouac I and II, Living Room, Satisfaction Guaranteed, Beauty And the Beast and his classic, Stolen Moments - garnered widespread critical acclaim and numerous Grammy nominations. In 1987, Mark recorded Night Mood, an album of songs by Brazilian composer Ivan Lins, followed by the Grammy-nominated September Ballads on Milestone Records. Mark is appreciated by DJs like Gilles Peterson and Jazzanova, he has appeared on releases by the bands U.F.O. and 4Hero, collaborations that served notice to the acid-jazz and hip-hop fans too that Mark Murphy is the real thing.

Mark Murphy's coterie of fans also includes tap dancer Gregory Hines, who spontaneously jumped up on stage at Mark's Las Vegas engagement in 1995 to join him for an impromptu duet. Vocal greats Betty Carter, Peggy Lee, Cleo Laine and Shirley Horn all sing or sang Murphy's praises as one of the best in he business.

Mark Murphy continues to tour internationally year round, appearing at festivals, concerts, in the best jazz clubs and on television programs throughout the U.S., Europe, Australia and Japan. He is one of the most important, and yes, hippest, jazz vocalists of our time. His secret? "There's a party goin' on in Mark's head," declares fan Liza Minelli, "and I want to go to it!"

Don Owens, Coordinator Emeritus of the Jazz Studies and Pedagogy Program, Director Emeritus, Contemporary Music Ensemble, and the National High School Music Institute at Northwestern University, began his tenure at Northwestern University in 1979. Before coming to Northwestern, he taught for twelve years at Evanston (Illinois) Township High School where his duties included directing band, brass ensembles, and jazz band, as well as teaching classes in music theory, popular music, and composition. He created the Electronic Music Studio at ETHS in 1971. Many of his ETHS students went on to become music majors at many of the major Schools of Music in the United States and Canada.

Owens received the Bachelor of Music Education degree from North Texas State University, where he also studied Composition and Jazz. His Master of Musical Arts degree is from the University of Illinois, where he majored in Composition. He studied composition with Morgan Powell, Merrill Ellis, Samuel Adler, and Salvatore Martirano. He has won several grants and awards, and is regularly commissioned for new works.

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During the summers, Owens served as Director of the National High School Music Institute, from 1991 to 2004. Mr. Owens is an internationally recognized clinician/conductor. He has served as an adjudicator and has conducted Festival and All-State Concert and Jazz Bands in Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin, Canada, Greece, Germany, and Norway. As a conductor, he has shared in the art of music making with world famous figures from both the Jazz and Contemporary Classical idioms. His compositions have been performed across America, as well as in Canada, England, Greece, Germany, Japan, Norway, and South America.

Mr. Owens is the composer/arranger of over 100 works, including those for band, jazz band, orchestra, choir, and chamber music. His music is available from the composer via Phramus Music Publications. Owens is the author of several articles dealing with contemporary music. He is a member of M.E.N.C, Illinois Music Educators Association, International Association for Jazz Education (Past President for the Illinois State Unit), Pi Kappa Lambda (Past President of Alpha Chapter), and Phi Mu Alpha.

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