

SRO Artists, Inc.  
<http://www.sroartists.com> | [gigs@sroartists.com](mailto:gigs@sroartists.com)  
PHONE: (608) 664.8160  
FAX: (608) 664.8161

**PROGRAM: SMITHSONIAN JAZZ MASTERWORKS ORCHESTRA SEPTET "Tribute to Johnny Hodges"  
(rev. August-2009) p 1 of 3**

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**Concert Repertoire** (Music will be chosen from the following: )

"The Jeep is Jumpin'"  
"Squatty Roo"  
"Good Queen Bess"  
"Jeep's Blues"  
"Castle Rock"  
"Perdido"  
"Duke's Blues"  
"Azure"  
"Mood Indigo"  
"Just Squeeze Me"  
"Through For the Night"  
"Sultry Serenade"  
"I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart"  
"Don't Get Around Much"  
"Day Dream"  
"Lotus Eaters"  
"Take the "A" Train  
"In A Mellow Tone"  
"It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)"

**Program Notes (by Scott Silbert)**

*"Never the world's most highly animated showman or greatest stage personality,  
but a tone so beautiful it sometimes brought tears to the eyes-this was Johnny Hodges. This is Johnny Hodges.  
Because of this great loss, our band will never sound the same."Duke Ellington- May 1970*

Spoken by Duke Ellington at the funeral of Johnny Hodges, these words eloquently describe the personality and the impact that Johnny Hodges had on not just the Ellington orchestra, but in the world of music. Hodges' effortless ability to perform on the alto and soprano saxophone while maintaining his unique and lyrical musicianship, coupled with the inspiring compositions written for him by Ellington and Billy Strayhorn, helped to propel him to the top ranks of saxophonists. His legacy spanned forty-some years, from the late 1920s, when the Ellington band was in its infancy, until Hodges' death in 1970. Along with Benny Carter, Charlie Parker, and Cannonball Adderley, Hodges helped to refine and define the role of the alto saxophone in jazz and popular music. For most of his life, he was considered by his peers in the music industry to be the supreme alto saxophonist. Accolades from such musicians as John Coltrane, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Tony Bennett (who called Hodges the greatest singer ever) and Frank Sinatra attest to Hodges' mastery and taste. And after hearing Hodges perform "I Got It Bad (and That Ain't Good)," Bing Crosby said "Holy Toledo, that must be the greatest saxophone solo ever played!"

Hodges' tone, easily identifiable but difficult to forget, has been described as earthy, refined, sensuous, "wailing," sad, strong, confident, and tender. His playing, composing, and improvising were steeped in the blues' tradition. His technical mastery of the saxophone cannot be argued, yet he never used technique to make a statement in his improvisations. He was a guarded individual, confident of his place in jazz. He was often the highest paid sideman on the Ellington payroll. To friends, however, he maintained a dry sense of humor, and was very fond of children, often looking after the young Mercer Ellington.

Standing only five-and-one-half feet, Hodges would sit stone-faced in the front row of the Ellington saxophone section. Ellington's trumpeter Harold "Shorty" Baker said, "Nobody knows what Johnny feels inside when he walks out to the mike. He may look as though he is on his last walk to the gallows, but he appreciates the applause and he thanks the audience with a million dollars worth of melody." Hodges, conservative in speech and manner, said simply, "I play what I feel."

The music performed tonight is taken from a brief period when Hodges left the Ellington band to lead his own group in the early 1950s. With some urging from his wife, Cue, and with more than a gentle nudge from jazz impresario Norman Granz, Hodges left Ellington to run his own band. Relying heavily on the Ellington compositions that made him a star, Hodges supplemented his orchestra with his own compositions and also new material from various members of his new band. Even more momentous than Hodges leaving was the fact that two other senior members of the Ellington band left to join Hodges: trombonist Lawrence Brown and drummer Sonny Greer. The other members of the new Hodges group were: Al Sears on tenor sax, the underrated Emmett Berry on trumpet, Lloyd Trotman on bass, and Leroy Lovett on piano and arranging. Sonny Greer left shortly after the first jobs and was replaced by drummers Joe Marshall and J. C. Heard. Al Sears also acted as the band's manager; he had little trouble securing work for this new band, and the band was met with considerable success. Both Hodges and Brown had big followings from their years with Ellington, and Sears contributed one of the group's early hits, "Castle Rock," which received considerable radio airplay.

Various sidemen would come and go (a young John Coltrane played tenor saxophone during this period), but Hodges kept his group together for four years. He continued to record for Granz's label Norgran using established stars such as Ben Webster and Flip Phillips. But in the end, the cares and worries of being a leader were not to Hodges' liking. "Too many headaches" was his short answer; in 1955 he re-joined the Ellington band, on the same day that Ellington welcomed drummer Sam Woodyard. Ellington's fortunes began to improve, and his band went on to capture a new generation of listeners after their electrifying performance at the 1955 Newport Jazz Festival, capped off by tenor saxophonist Paul Gonsalves' solo on "Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue."

In 1970, Ellington was looking forward to having Hodges return to using his soprano sax for his new composition, The New Orleans Suite, featuring Hodges on the movement called "A Portrait of Sidney Bechet," when he received the call that Hodges had suffered a fatal heart attack at a New York City dentist's office.

In his eulogy, Ellington wrote "I am glad and thankful that I had the privilege of presenting Johnny Hodges for 40 years, night after night. I imagine I have been much envied, but thanks to God. May God bless this beautiful giant in his own identity. God bless Johnny Hodges."—Scott Silbert

## **Meet the Artists**

### **Band**

The Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra (SJMO) was founded in 1990 with an appropriation from the U.S. Congress in recognition of the importance of jazz in American cultural and its status as a national treasure. The orchestra, led by Artistic and Musical Director, David N. Baker, serves as the orchestra-in-residence at the National Museum of American History, Division of Cultural History. The orchestra re-creates big band jazz as its composers and arrangers intended it to be played, stripping away intervening changes and alterations. The SJMO has rediscovered old classics, premiered new discoveries, and more recently has begun premiering new works. Composed of 18 musicians drawn from across the United States, the orchestra plays authentic and compelling performances of the music of Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Benny Goodman, Dizzy Gillespie, and many other masters. The SJMO presents free weekend concerts to visitors and residents of the nation's capitol, educational workshops, tours nationally and internationally, and offers its own radio series, "Jazz Smithsonian," heard on more than 88 public radio stations across the United States and in six nations.

(Ensemble will include alto, tenor, trumpet, trombone, piano, bass and drums: Roster may be announced/changed by management without notice. Please verify musicians with management before publishing.)

### **Conductor**

**David Baker** is internationally famous as a composer, conductor, performer, author, and educator. He holds the position of Distinguished Professor of Music and Chairman of the Jazz Department at the Indiana University School of Music, a program he has headed since 1966. A veteran of the bands of George Russell, Quincy Jones, Stan Kenton, Maynard Ferguson, and Lionel Hampton, he has transcribed and conducted works from the historical repertory of jazz since 1975. He is the author of over seventy books on jazz, including the classic *Jazz Improvisation*; co-editor of *The Black Composer Speaks*; and editor of *New Perspectives on Jazz*. His most recent publication is Volume 76 in the Jamey Aebersold play-along Jazz Series *How To Learn Tunes - A Jazz Musician's Survival Guide*. His compositions, ranging from jazz and sonatas to film scores, have been commissioned by Janos Starker, Josef Gingold, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Beaux Arts Trio, the New York Philharmonic, the Smithsonian Institution and others.

Mr. Baker served on the National Council for the Arts; he was elected to the *Down Beat* Jazz Education Hall of Fame in 1994. In 2000, David Baker was awarded the American Jazz Masters Fellowship Award by the National Endowment for the Arts, joining the company of distinguished artists Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, Benny Carter, Sarah Vaughan, and Horace Silver. He has more than 65 recordings and 400 articles to his credit. In 2001, he received the Smithsonian's James Smithson Bicentennial Medal for his distinguished contribution to elevating the nation's appreciation for one of America's greatest national treasures - Jazz. He has received the Indiana Historical Society's Living Legacy Award, and was chosen as Chair of the Faculty for the Stean's Institute for Young Artists- Program for Jazz at the Ravinia Festival and past president of the *International Association for Jazz Education*.

### **Executive Producer**

**Kenneth R. Kimery** in 1980 began his music career as a drummer/percussionist after graduating from high school in Germany. He returned back to the U.S. in 1981 to further his studies at San Diego State University in music and continued to perform around San Diego in a variety of musical settings which included engagements with Charles McPherson, Peter Sprague, Bob Magnusson and Barney Kessel. In 1993, he relocated to Washington, D.C. and was invited to become part of the Smithsonian's jazz program; first in the capacity of Assistant Program Coordinator for the Jazz Oral History Program, then as Associate Producer for the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra, August 1999 Producer and presently Executive Producer of the orchestra. He has been involved in many jazz related programs as a performing musician, clinician, coordinator of Jazz Masterworks Editions publications program, and project director at the Smithsonian for Essential Jazz Editions, a partnership between the Smithsonian Institution, Jazz at Lincoln Center, and the Library of Congress.