



VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA
Tryon Festival Theatre
Saturday, October 10, 2009 | 7:30pm

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PROGRAM

Vanguard Jazz Orchestra
Established by Thad Jones and Mel Lewis

John Mosca, Director
Dick Oatts, Artistic Director
Douglas Purviance, Orchestra Manager
Jim McNeely, Composer in Residence
Thomas Bellino, Project Director
Jerry Van Campen, Production Manager

Billy Drewes, Alto and soprano saxophones, flute
Jaleel Shaw, Alto and soprano saxophones, flute
Rich Perry, Tenor saxophone, flute
Ralph LaLama, Tenor saxophone, clarinet
Gary Smulyan, Baritone saxophone
John Mosca, Trombone
Luis Bonilla, Trombone
Jason Jackson, Trombone
Douglas Purviance, Bass trombone
Frank David Greene, Trumpet, flugelhorn
Tanya Darby, Trumpet, flugelhorn
Joe Magnarelli, Trumpet, flugelhorn
Scott Wendholt, Trumpet, flugelhorn
Michael Weiss, Piano
David Wong, Bass
John Riley, Drums

Selections will be announced from the stage.

There will be a 20-minute intermission.

The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra appears by arrangement with:
William J. Capone
Arts Management Group Inc.
37 West 26th Street, Suite 403
New York, NY 10010
Phone: 212/337-0838
Fax: 212/924-0382
bill@artsmg.com
www.artsmg.com

HISTORY OF THE VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA

The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra is the current title for a band that began life as the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra in 1966 and has performed continuously ever since.

The story is familiar but bears repeating that in 1966 cornetist, composer, arranger Thad Jones and drummer Mel Lewis founded a band in New York. Having settled in New York after leaving their respective touring jobs with Basie and Kenton, Thad and Mel along with many of their colleagues needed an outlet for their creative energies and relief from the tedium of studio work. With a handful of arrangements they approached legendary club owner Max Gordon and were booked at the Village Vanguard for three Mondays in February. Critical acclaim, awards, and international success followed, but in 1979, tired of frequent traveling and the economic uncertainty that even great jazz musicians endure in America, Thad left the band to accept leadership of the Danish Radio Orchestra in Copenhagen.

Mel decided to continue the band now billed as Mel Lewis and the Jazz Orchestra and enlisted the talents of his old friend and former band member Bob Brookmeyer, who, miraculously, was just returning to active playing and composing in New York. The band not only survived but with Brookmeyer's writing continued the innovation and influence that Thad and Mel had begun. Bob moved on to other projects and ultimately also settled in Europe, and the new material was coming from within the band now. In 1990, the band would endure a terrible blow when Mel Lewis died after a five-year battle with cancer. For the members, all of whom had been there for five years and several of whom had been there for

more than 10, losing Mel was a deep family tragedy, for great bands invariably become families. They are also teams; and in this spirit the members decided to continue the band as a cooperative effort. (When asked who was "fronting" the band, one of the veterans was heard snapping, "the music.") So three weeks have become a permanent gig spanning over four decades and another name change to the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra. Several of the current key members played for Thad, so the original precepts of sound and swinging are proudly held and displayed while the other original precepts of creativity and experimentation are nurtured and encouraged.

The Village Vanguard is still a great place to be on a Monday night no matter which side of the bandstand you're on. The orchestra's recording entitled *The Way: Music of Slide Hampton* won a Grammy in 2004 for Best Arrangement for Jazz Orchestra. In 2006-07, the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra performed in the United States at the University of Arizona, Michigan State University, Kansas State University, Detroit's Symphony Hall, the Orange County Performing Arts Center, the University of Massachusetts, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. In the summer of 2007, the Vanguard returned to Europe, performing at the North Sea Jazz Festival in Holland, the Imatra Big Band Festival in Finland, and the Blue Note Records Festival in Belgium, and the group also gave performances in Italy and Germany. The orchestra began a yearly commitment to Jazz Assisi, a concert series in Assisi, Italy, that incorporates the orchestra's education program Precepts of Swing. Appearances in the 2008-09 season included those at the University of Colorado-Boulder, the University of California-Davis, Ithaca College, and the University

of North Carolina. The 2008 recording *Monday Night Live at the Village Vanguard* won the Grammy for Best Large Jazz Ensemble.

www.vanguardjazzorchestra.com

For over four decades, the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra has been committed to engaging audiences in jazz and related American music experiences. The orchestra serves as a creative outlet for some of the nation's foremost performers, composers, and arrangers. One of the driving forces behind the longevity and artistic excellence of this ensemble is a commitment to the original Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra precepts of sound and the nurturing and encouragement of creativity and experimentation in the creators, performers, and listeners of jazz.

Sixteen as One Music Inc., a not-for-profit 501(c)(3), was created by the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra to promote the development and growth of jazz music through education and community outreach programs. The goals of this endeavor are to provide worldwide performances, workshops, lectures, and symposia about jazz and related musical genres; to commission new arrangements and original compositions for jazz orchestra; to document historical and innovative projects through audio and video recordings; to initiate partnerships and collaborations with cultural, education, and corporate institutions; to help build and sustain an international jazz audience; and to foster and promote jazz education in schools and underserved communities.

The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra's latest Grammy-winning CD release, *Monday Night Live at the Village Vanguard* (Planet Arts Recordings), is available online at www.PlanetArts.org.