

# Pianist Alexander on jazz series

Mercury News Service

TOPEKA — The internationally acclaimed Monty Alexander Trio will appear in Topeka Sunday as the second offering in the Topeka Jazz Workshop, Inc.'s concert series for 2009-2010.

Pianist Alexander has built a reputation bridging the worlds of American jazz, popular song and the music of his native Jamaica.

The concert Sunday will be from 3 to 5 p.m. in the Ramada Hotel and Convention Center's Regency Ballroom. Admission is by season membership — no individual concert tickets will be sold. Season tickets will be available for purchase at the door Sunday for \$100 per adult or \$45 for students under 21. These tickets will provide admission to Sunday's concert and eight additional concerts in the series from October through May, and they each come with two guest coupons to use to bring two guests to one of the concerts or one guest to two concerts.

Alexander came to the United States in 1961 at age 17. Two years later he caught the eye of

New York club owner Jilly Rizzo and his friend Frank Sinatra and started playing in Rizzo's club accompanying Sinatra. Other illustrious names he has performed and recorded with are Tony Bennett, Dizzy Gillespie, Sonny Rollins, Clark Terry, Quincy Jones, Milt Jackson and Ray Brown.

He assisted Natalie Cole in her famous tribute album to dad Nat "King" Cole ("Unforgettable"), and he recorded the piano track for the film score of Clint Eastwood's "Bird." Alexander has recorded more than 60 albums.

The Monty Alexander Trio maintains an active touring schedule around the globe. The other two members are George Fludas on drums and Hassan Shakur (aka J.J. Wiggins) on bass, each of whom has noteworthy credentials of his own.

Marcene Grimes, executive director of TJW Inc., said the concert series would not have been able to afford the Monty Alexander Trio this season except for the generosity of an anonymous donor whose gift enabled TJW to hire Alexander

and also the Tierney Sutton Band next May. Still another anonymous donor is providing funding for the popular jazz trombonist Wycliffe Gordon in November.

Here are the dates of the remaining concerts in the TJW's 41st season:

October 25 — Ingrid Jensen (trumpet and flugel horn) and husband Jon Wikan, drums, with Kansas Citians Roger Wilder, piano, and Jeff Harshbarger, bass

November 22 — Wycliffe Gordon with K.C.'s Joe Cartwright Quartet

December 6 Kansas City's PBT Trio with Kathleen Holeman, vocals, and Bobby Watson, sax (P=Paul Smith, piano, B=Bob Bowman, bass, T=Tim Cambron, drums)

January 3 — Vocalist Ron Gutierrez and Friends (Ron is a native Topekan now living in K.C.)

February 14 — Scott Hamilton and Harry Allen, saxes, with K.C.'s Tommy Ruskin Trio

March 28 — The Mike Moreno Quartet, guitarist backed by Kansas Citians

April 11 — Banu Gibson and the Johnny Mercer Show (song stylist and her trio)

May 9 — Tierney Sutton, vocals, and her Band

For more information about the TJW Inc. series, contact Marcene Grimes at [mgrimes14@cox.net](mailto:mgrimes14@cox.net) or 785-379-5169.