

Monty Alexander brings classic trio lineup to Tempe



MONTY ALEXANDER

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It's the 40th anniversary of Monty Alexander's most beloved album, "Montreux Alexander," and he's bringing the trio featured on that album — Alexander on piano with bassist John Clayton and drummer Jeff Hamilton — to Tempe Center for the Arts for what he calls a real special coming together.

The three musicians play together "not nearly as often as one would think," the Jamaican-born bandleader says, "considering what this group really is. It happens maybe three, four times a year because both of those guys have their own wonderful ensembles. They're doing their thing. And I have a lot of my own invitations to take people up on."

There's a special chemistry, he says,

Monty Alexander Trio

When: 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 20.

Where: Tempe Center for the Arts, 700 W. Rio Salado Parkway.

Admission: \$25-\$40.

Details: 480-350-4311, lakeshoremusic.org.

that's been there since he first invited them to join his trio in the '70s.

"They just come out of Bloomington, Indiana University, and the timing was great," he says. "The stars were aligned. Whenever we got on the bandstand, it was some kind of unforgettable event for everyone, us players as well as the audience. And it's just been that way. You can't define those things. It's what it is."

The setlist can be pretty open-ended, Alexander says, but there's some "go to" stuff.

"The word we operate with is trust," Alexander says. "They trust me as the guy leading the troops and it's a very even sharing between those two guys and myself. So as far as material, a big part of it is what we played many years ago that never gets old. There are things that I just play two notes and they know where I'm going. We don't talk about it. The amazing thing about this is we've probably hardly said a word or hardly ever rehearsed."

It seems worth pressing Alexander on the no-communication comment.

"We don't say a darn thing," he says, with a laugh. "I mean, if somebody has an

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