Sax Master David Sanborn To Play at Cal Poly's Spanos Theatre June 24

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Launching the popular Cal Poly Arts celebrity Center Stage Summer series, smooth alto jazz saxophonist David Sanborn brings his five-member band to the Alex and Faye Spanos Theatre (formerly Cal Poly Theatre) on Thursday, June 24 at 8 p.m.

The Grammy nominated Sanborn is known for being a highly respected, versatile improviser who has credibility in the jazz world as well as the R&B/rock/pop world.

“I’m a product of my influences and my influences are jazz…as well as blues and R&B,” says the 57-year-old Sanborn, who now lives in New York.

Raised in St. Louis, Sanborn was exposed to a wide variety of music during his mid-western upbringing, including jazz, R&B, blues, and rock. Early on, Sanborn was attracted to soul-jazz saxophonists like Gene Ammons and Arnett Cobb, improvisers who brought some intellect to their work but were still quite accessible.

One of Sanborn’s strongest influences was alto saxophone great Hank Crawford. Like Crawford, Sanborn immersed himself in jazz but also embraced elements of popular culture.

That outlook ultimately resulted in a variety of engagements for Sanborn, who has backed a myriad of artists, from blues great Albert King to the "Godfather of Soul," James Brown.

In the 1970s, Sanborn earned a reputation for being both an improvising jazz instrumentalist and a busy R&B/pop/rock session player. Jazz heavyweights like Gil Evans, Jaco Pastorius, the Brecker Brothers, Joe Beck and Mark Murphy featured Sanborn on their albums in the 1970s. That decade also found him backing David Bowie, the Eagles, Donny Hathaway, Bruce Springsteen, Carly Simon and other major non-jazz stars.

Sanborn started recording as a leader in 1975 and made his debut album,

In early 2000, Sanborn signed with Verve and is now touring in support of his latest Verve CD, “timeagain,” released last month. Like many of Sanborn’s previous efforts, “timeagain” combines the freedom and spontaneity of jazz with the groove-oriented accessibility of soul and funk.

Sanborn’s album all-star cast includes bassist Christian McBride, drummer Steve Gadd, guitarist Russell Malone, vibist Mike Mainieri, trumpeter/flugelhornist Randy Brecker, percussionist Don Alias, and Gil Goldstein, who handles the horn and string arrangements.

He explains: “I came up with the title ‘timeagain’ because much of this album is re-examining things from my past. On ‘timeagain,’ I’m re-addressing songs that have meant a lot to me over the years.”

A master at bringing something fresh and personal to familiar melodies, Sanborn's interpretation of “Tequila” is moodier than the Champs’ original version and his version of “Isn’t She Lovely” is more relaxed and contemplative than Stevie Wonder’s original 1976 hit. Earl Hagen’s evocative “Harlem Nocturne” is taken at a livelier pace than usual and features Sanborn on the acoustic piano.

“timeagain” also includes three original Sanborn pieces and an interpretation of Joni Mitchell’s “Man from Mars.”

Seating will be general admission within Preferred and Premium sections of the theatre. Tickets for the Center Stage performance are $38 & $44 and may be purchased at the Performing Arts Ticket Office, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays. To order by phone, call 805/756-2787; to order by fax: 805/756-6088. Order on-line at www.pacslo.org.

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