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Jazz Masters Bill Charlap Trio Play at Cal Poly April 23

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIFORNIA – Personifying musical elegance in jazz, the romantic, swinging Bill Charlap Trio will perform some of America's favorite popular songs at the Spanos Theatre at 8 p.m. on Saturday, April 23, 2005.

"Charlap scores a direct hit to the heart" raves Entertainment Weekly.

A Bill Charlap Trio concert promises an evening of melodic renditions of the great compositions by American songbook legends such as Duke Ellington, George Gershwin, Hoagy Carmichael, and Leonard Bernstein.

"Jazz pianist Bill Charlap is breaking through as a nonpareil interpreter of American pop classics," declares Time magazine.

Critics have also variously described pianist Charlap's style as hard swinging, romantic or rigorous, but his musical roots can be found in a childhood home filled with songs and songwriters: his father, Moose Charlap, was a Broadway composer and his mother, Sandy Stewart, was a singer with Benny Goodman's band.

"A lot of great songwriters were friends of my parents," remembers Charlap. "My mother was doing demo records for composers like Jules Styne and Meredith Willson and Richard Rodgers. Composers and lyricists such as Charles Strouse, Yip Harburg, and Marilyn and Alan Bergman were part of my formative years."

Charlap claims to have been influenced by every musician he has ever worked with, including the members of his current trio, bassist Peter Washington and drummer Kenny Washington.

The list also includes such stellar jazz artists as Benny Carter, Clark Terry, Jim Hall, Frank Wess, Grady Tate, Phil Woods, as well as Tony Bennett, for whom Charlap was an accompanist.

But Charlap has also been influenced by his mother's singing, "Her phrasing influences the way I play melody. In many ways, I approach the song from a singer's perspective, music and lyrics are of equal importance.

"I try not to think about the piano per se," Charlap says. "I'm not interested in bravura displays. Melody is the most sublime of all the utterances. Harmony is an emotional response. Rhythm is physical. Melody is an intuitive response that carries both the emotional and the physical."

That power is conveyed with unmatched musical eloquence by the Bill Charlap Trio on their latest milestone recording, "Somewhere; The Songs of Leonard Bernstein."

From the opening "Cool" from "West Side Story," with its jaunty rhythms and bluesy turns, and the rich, haunting lyricism of "Lonely Town" from the show "On The Town," Charlap's expertise and admiration are clear.

Charlap approaches each Bernstein song with loving appreciation, throwing new light on "It's Love," "Some Other Time," "A Quiet Girl," "Big Stuff," "Ohio" and — in a solo performance of extraordinary sensitivity and harmonic

sophistication — the poignant "Somewhere."

The New Yorker sums it up: "(Charlap) always leaves something to remember him by."

Tickets for the performance are \$32 & \$38, with student discounts available, 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.pacsl.org.

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