

Melinda, John and Don Trio Featured at Jazz Vespers

Jazz Vespers at St. John's United Church will welcome the Melinda, John and Don Trio on **March 4 at 7:00 p.m.** The seasoned trio features Melinda Whitaker on vocals, John MacArthur on guitar and Don Cox on bass.

Melinda Whitaker's life in jazz began in Edmonton, singing original compositions, and on CBC Television with Tommy Banks. Returning home to Vancouver, she became a fixture on the city's vibrant jazz scene while making a second home in the equally active local studios singing on commercials for television, radio and film.



While singing nightly with Vancouver jazz stalwarts like Miles Black, Oliver Gannon, and Ross Taggart, Melinda performed for three years on The Rene Simard Show and television specials with Jose Feliciano, Kenny Loggins and Roger Whittaker. She sang with Martin Short on the first television show at Vancouver's CBC Studios in a career that also includes work with everyone from Alan Thicke, Brent Carver and Andre Gagnon, to rock royalty like Bryan Adams and Wolfman Jack. She has opened for jazz great Ray Brown at the Vancouver International Jazz Festival and was featured jazz vocalist with the Victoria Symphony's concert L'Amour! Melinda also appeared in concert at the Alix Goolden Hall performance with The Great Ladies of Jazz.

In the words of critic Joseph Blake: "Whitaker is a singular talent with an exquisite sense of time and tone and a deep knowledge of the jazz tradition. Her music swings transcendently, creating art from life's magnificent struggle. What a singer!"

Victoria's own John MacArthur is an accomplished guitarist with an extensive and eclectic background, who plays a variety of jazz classics, swing, Latin and Gypsy jazz. Despite being a member of Victoria's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, John is most often seen around town and the island either as a soloist or in a variety of combos with the city's top jazz musicians.

At 13 he joined The Esquires, one of Victoria's first rock and roll bands, winning the "Vancouver Island Battle of the Bands", a notable event in the sixties. By 16, he played in David Foster's first rock band, "The Teen Beats". Throughout that era he played in a succession of groups including Victoria R & R Hall of Famers The Motifs, Amor de Cosmos, and Velvet Brass. More recently, John has done an extensive cruise ship tour of the South Pacific Islands with Party of Four. He has played gypsy jazz with

Twango and Karmel Sutra and vintage rock with Hot Rod Lincoln, Davey's Gang and The Weeds.

Don Cox's resume is equally impressive, having spent a long and illustrious career with the Canadian Forces Military Bands, including positions as Musical Director of the Ottawa RCAF Stage Band and Assistant Conductor of the Naden Band. An active and versatile performer, Don played on countless concerts and recordings, and performed with jazz and pop personalities from across North America, including Herb Ellis, Barney Kessel, Eddy "Lockjaw" Davis and Lorne Lofski. Nationally well known as a bass and tuba clinician, Don also mentors young musicians in Victoria's Civic Orchestra.

The Jazz Vespers series continues on April 1 with Impromptu (with Amy Nold, Bill Kent, and Jayson deVries), and on May 6 with the Kelby MacNayr Trio.

All jazz vespers services begin at 7:00 p.m. St. John's United Church is located at 10990 West Saanich Rd., across from Deep Cove School. There is no admission charge, and an offering will be taken. For further information, please call Bernadette at 656-0875 or email her at bernadettegreene@shaw.ca to be included on an email list of upcoming concerts.