



Sunday, February 8, 2015, 7pm
Zellerbach Hall

The Gershwin Project



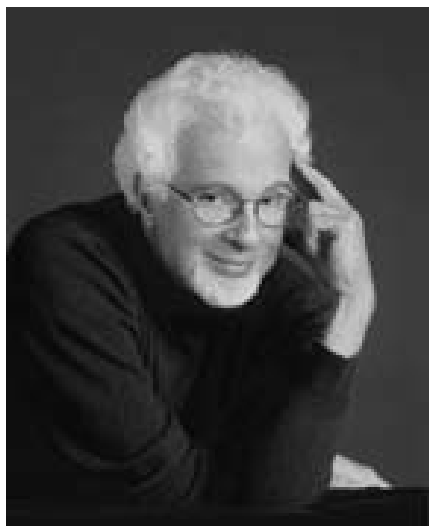
Peter Nero, *pianist*

featuring

Michael Barnett, *bassist*

*Mr. Nero will announce the selections for tonight's program from the stage.
There will be one intermission.*

*Jazz at Cal Performances is sponsored by Nadine Tang and Bruce Smith.
Hamburg Steinway piano provided by Steinway & Sons, San Francisco.
Cal Performances' 2014-2015 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.*



THIS YEAR marks the 55th anniversary of the birth of pianist and conductor Peter Nero's recording career, which eventually produced 70 recordings. In 1960, he was signed to a three-year contract with RCA Victor records, which was then renewed for another five years, producing more than 26 LPs, including Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and Piano Concerto in F with Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops. The following year, he was honored with his first Grammy Award, as "Best New Artist of the Year."

In January 2013, Mr. Nero was awarded a Certificate by the President of the Philadelphia City Council honoring his outstanding lifetime musical achievements and recognizing his innumerable contributions to arts and culture in Philadelphia, as an award-winning pianist and as the founder, and now Conductor Emeritus, of the world renowned Philly Pops orchestra.

In October 2009, Mr. Nero was also honored with lifetime achievement awards from the American Federation of Musicians (AFM) and the Philadelphia Musicians' Union Local 77, AFM. In November 2009, he received the Mario Lanza Award, in recognition of outstanding achievement in the field of music.

A two-time Grammy Award-winning pianist, Mr. Nero leads his unrivaled pops orchestra, blending classical, swing, Broadway, blues, and jazz—all performed with virtuosity, authenticity, and an inviting sense of humor.

On January 27, 2007, Mr. Nero joined Rod Stewart from the piano for a performance of "They Can't Take That Away from Me" at the Academy of Music's 150th Anniversary Concert. Mr. Nero's recent guest performances include engagements with the Indianapolis Symphony, the National Arts Centre Symphony in Ottawa, the Charlotte Symphony, the Detroit Symphony, and the Baltimore Symphony, among others. His complete concert schedule can be found at www.peternero.com.

As a Steinway artist for close to 50 years, Mr. Nero returned to New York's Carnegie Hall in 2003 to perform at a gala celebrating the 150th anniversary of Steinway with many noted pianists, including Dr. Billy Taylor, Herbie Hancock, and Michel Legrand.

Born in Brooklyn, Mr. Nero began his formal music training at the age of seven. By the time he was 14, he was accepted to New York City's prestigious High School of Music and Art and won a scholarship to the Juilliard School. Constance Keene, his teacher and mentor, once wrote in an issue of *Keyboard Classics* that, "Vladimir Horowitz was Peter's greatest fan!"

In addition to his two Grammy Awards, he has garnered ten additional nominations and released 70 albums. After his early association with RCA Records, he moved to Columbia Records, which resulted in a million-selling single and album—*The Summer of '42*—now available on CD.

His recordings over the last 14 years include two CDs with the Philly Pops, *Holiday Pops!* and *Broadway Showstoppers*, and three CDs with full symphony orchestra: *On My Own*, *Classic Connections*, and *My Way*. He also recorded *Peter Nero and Friends*, which contains collaborations with Mel Tormé, Maureen McGovern, and Doc Severinsen, among others.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

His latest CDs are romantic albums titled *Love Songs for a Rainy Day* and *More in Love*. By popular demand, four of his earlier vinyl recordings have been reissued on CD. Music lovers of all generations can now hear him on Rod Stewart's album *As Time Goes By...The Great American Songbook, Volume II*.

Mr. Nero's first major national TV success came at age 17, when he was chosen to perform *Rhapsody in Blue* on Paul Whiteman's TV special. He subsequently appeared on many top variety and talk shows, including eleven guest appearances on *The Ed Sullivan Show* and numerous appearances on *The Tonight Show* starring Johnny Carson.

Hailed as one of the premier interpreters of Gershwin, Mr. Nero starred in the Emmy Award-winning NBC Special *S'Wonderful, S'Marvelous, S'Gershwin*. Other TV credits include performances on PBS's *Piano Pizzazz* and with the National Symphony in Washington, D.C., on its July 4th special, *A Capitol Fourth*. He served as music director and pianist for the PBS special *The Songs of Johnny Mercer: Too Marvelous for Words* with costars Johnny Mathis, Melissa Manchester, and the Philly Pops.

Among Mr. Nero's long list of honors are six honorary doctorates (the most recent from Drexel University in 2004) and the prestigious International Society of Performing Arts Presenters Award for "Excellence in the Arts." He is also included on two historic walks of fame—one in Philadelphia, and one in Miami, Florida. In 1999, he received the Pennsylvania Distinguished Arts Award, presented by Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge. Previous honorees include Marian Anderson, James Michener, Andrew Wyeth, and Riccardo Muti. In February 2009, the Abraham Lincoln Foundation of the Union League of Philadelphia presented Mr. Nero with its prestigious Lincoln Award as part of its Lincoln Day 2009 celebration. The award is given to persons of distinction who, through their actions, have significantly contributed to the United States.

Mr. Nero is an active supporter of many important causes, including the funding of school music programs, fundraising for the building of new arts centers across the country, as well as research for cancer, dystonia, and autism.

When not touring the world, Mr. Nero makes his home in the Philadelphia area. He has two children—Beverly, a successful film producer residing with her husband in California, and Jedd, a commercial real estate entrepreneur residing with his wife near New York City. Both children have made him a grandfather.

Mr. Nero's recordings are available on the RCA, Sony/CBS, Arista, Concord, Bainbridge, Intersound/Compendia, and DRG labels, and from Amazon, iTunes, and eBay, and may be seen on YouTube. Mr. Nero plays the Steinway piano exclusively.



Bassist **Michael Barnett** has been playing professionally for almost 55 years, having played his first professional gig at age 15 at the Golden Gate nightclub near Joplin, Missouri. Since then, he has gone on to play in clubs and at jazz festivals throughout the United States and Canada. He has performed with most of the

great jazz singers, including Carmen McRae, Mel Torme, Joe Williams, David Allyn, Pearl Bailey, and Anita O'Day. The roster of major jazz instrumentalists with whom Mr. Barnett has worked ranges from swing artists to bop to free jazz and even rock 'n' roll. For the last 24 years, he has toured with pianist extraordinaire, conductor, and composer Peter Nero, playing trio and duo concerts as well as with

major symphony orchestras in the United States, Canada, Spain, and Italy.

Mr. Barnett attended Yale University and stunned many professors and students with his prodigious technique, sight-reading, and improvisational skills. He is rare among bassists in that he can play both the traditional standard symphonic repertoire as well as being able to jam with the best jazz musicians.