

For immediate release



An Ella Celebration! The Classic Songbook Recordings

National Arts Centre Fourth Stage – Wednesday November 29, 2017 at 8:30 PM

Ottawa vocalist Karen Oxorn celebrates her idol Ella Fitzgerald in a centennial tribute featuring songs by the composers of the Great American Songbook.

Ottawa, September 29, 2017 – *An Ella Celebration! The Classic Songbook Recordings* takes place on Wednesday November 29, 2017 at 8:30 pm at the beautifully renovated new Fourth Stage of the National Arts Centre in Ottawa.

Ella Fitzgerald was born on April 25, 1917. Often referred to as The First Lady of Jazz, this year marks the 100th anniversary of her birth and her immeasurable contribution to music with a concert that focuses on Ella's superb Songbook recordings of the 1950s and 60s. Originally produced by the legendary Norman Granz and recorded for the Verve label, the Songbooks celebrate the sheer beauty and purity of Ella's voice – with the occasional demonstration of her incomparable talent for improvisation – and feature albums of songs by Cole Porter (released in 1956), Rodgers & Hart (1956), Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn (1957), Irving Berlin (1958), George & Ira Gershwin (1959), Harold Arlen (1961), Jerome Kern (1963), Johnny Mercer (1964) and Antonio Carlos Jobim (1981).

Lyricist Ira Gershwin perhaps put it best when he said "I never knew how good our songs were until I heard Ella Fitzgerald sing them". The concert pays tribute to one of the best loved interpreters of vocal jazz of all time and an artist cited by many contemporary jazz vocalists as their first and most lasting inspiration. Conceived and produced by popular Ottawa vocalist Karen Oxorn, the show is a heartfelt thank you to the artist through whom she discovered the world of jazz in the early 1980s which eventually led to her own career as a jazz vocalist.

The Performers

Karen Oxorn's musical journey began later in life when she discovered that singing along to a recording by jazz icon Ella Fitzgerald helped her deal with the heartbreak of a failing love affair. After developing a serious interest in singing in 2002, Karen has performed regularly at local jazz festivals, concert halls and clubs, and has developed a large and dedicated following. Noted jazz historian Ron Sweetman describes Karen's singing as having "real feeling and a subtle swing in a deep, rich voice." The late Jacques Émond, founding Programming Manager for the TD Ottawa Jazz Festival, had the following comments: "Talented and versatile Karen Oxorn is a very interesting vocalist. She has a warm and swinging straightforward voice skilled with ballads as well as upbeat songs." Since 2010, she has become more involved in producing jazz concerts and working as a volunteer for music events in the Ottawa area including four years as the Artistic Director of Merrickville's Jazz Fest.

Thrilled to be returning for a fifth appearance at the Fourth Stage, Karen will be joined by guest vocalist **Michael Curtis Hanna**. Detroit-born son of pianist/composer Sir Roland Hanna and a recent arrival on the Ottawa music scene, Michael is equally at home singing jazz standards, blues and soul-stirring spirituals as well as performing vocalese in the style of the great Eddie Jefferson. He has released two CDs and currently performs regularly in Ottawa and Detroit. Michael is an exceptionally talented, inventive and exciting artist, and one not to be missed.

Joining Karen once again as Music Director, and playing piano and trombone is **Mark Ferguson**, an accomplished and much admired Ottawa musician, band leader, composer and arranger, who will lead The Ella Celebration Band. He has performed with many of the world's great artists including none other than Miss Ella Fitzgerald herself. His 2015 release, *The Next Chapter*, was recognized by the CBC as one of Canada's ten outstanding jazz albums of the year.

In addition to Mark, the band features several of Ottawa's finest and most in demand jazz musicians: Tim Bedner on guitar, Normand Glaude on double bass, Scott Latham on drums, Ed Lister on trumpet and Vince Rimbach on saxophone.

Tickets are \$30 and are available at the NAC Box Office (in person) and from Ticketmaster (with surcharges) at 613-755-1111 or through the [NAC website](#).

— 30 —

For additional information and interviews, please contact:

Karen Oxorn
613-241-1933
E-mail: karenoxorn@sympatico.ca
Website: www.karenoxorn.com
Concert website: <https://nac-cna.ca/en/event/16979>



KARENOXORN
jazz vocalist

Karen Oxorn Jazz Vocalist
Specializing in jazz standards for
Concerts, supper clubs, private events

An Ella Celebration! The Classic Songbook Recordings

Wednesday November 29, 2017 at 8:30 PM
National Arts Centre Fourth Stage
<https://nac-cna.ca/en/event/16979>