

Liz MAGNES: Israeli Jazz Pianist GIVES SOLO PERFORMANCE PLUS FREE CHILDREN'S CONCERT

Liz Magnes, one of the best known jazz pianists in Israel, will perform at 7:30 pm Sunday, Feb. 15, in the Soreng Theatre of the Hult Center.

Magnes creates unique interpretations of Israeli popular music and Oriental Jewish prayer music, which she will perform in a solo jazz concert. The program will include her arrangements for piano with synthesizer of 14th century Jewish prayer music from Yemen, Morocco and Turkey.

Magnes also will perform on acoustic piano her interpretations of songs by the most popular Israeli composers: Sacha Argov, Naomie Shemer, Yoni Rechter and Mati Casper.

The following weekend, on Sunday, Feb. 22, Magnes will give a free concert for children: "Play Me a Picture—Tones and Colors of Israel." This performance is at 11 am at Temple Beth Israel, 2550 Portland St., and is funded by a grant from the Herman Grossman Foundation. It will feature popular Israeli children's songs in Hebrew and in English, and the audience will have the opportunity to write a song with Magnes.

For many years, American born Magnes has captured audiences throughout the world with her rich, distinguished jazz piano. Her solo jazz piano album, *All There Is*, is featured on one of the in-flight entertainment channels on El-Al Jet. She has performed at the Israel and Tel Aviv Museums and has played her own compositions for innumerable silent films, including the Jerusalem Film Festival in honor of Lillian Gish.

Magnes lives in Jerusalem, where she shares a studio with her husband, Israeli born photographer Raffi Magnes. They have four children. In a telephone interview to Israel, Liz Magnes shared some of the

events that influenced her to move to Israel and change careers, from art therapist to jazz pianist.

Magnes moved to Israel from New York City 20 years ago, and married Raffi shortly after. She had met Raffi on her first visit to Israel when she was 11 years old. It was a later visit, in the 1960s, however, which helped her make the decision to leave the U.S.

"I think I was getting a little bit tired of New York," said Magnes. "I felt very comfortable in Israel. There was an extra air of relaxation here

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which is almost a paradox because this is one of the most intense places to live. People were very nice. They were low key. Everybody wasn't rushing, rushing, rushing. I arrived back in the States the day Robert Kennedy was killed. A friend of mine from work had been murdered. There was a scene of a lot of violence when I went back to New York and I thought, 'My God, I've just come from Israel where everybody is scared to death of going and I felt perfectly safe.'

Magnes started her music career at an early age. She and her schoolmate James Levine, currently Artistic Director for the Metropolitan Opera in New York, were considered the

child prodigies of Cincinnati, Ohio, where she grew up. Magnes made her solo piano debut performing Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* with the Westchester Symphony Orchestra in New York when she was 15 years old. After she attended Sarah Lawrence College, Magnes decided to focus on a career in art therapy in New York City. She studied jazz piano with Mal Waldron in the early 1960s.

When Magnes moved to Israel she continued to work as an art therapist. At the urging of friends, she began to play jazz at piano bars. She earned a degree in music from the Rubin Academy in Jerusalem and started teaching piano, in addition to working at a hospital as an art therapist and teaching at Haifa University. Then she was asked to work on a project at an Israeli settlement in the Sinai that was to be disbanded the following year. With other art therapists, psychiatrists and psychologists, Magnes participated in a study about the Israelis who had to leave the Sinai when Israel gave up that territory.

"The settlement was right on the beach and absolutely beautiful," Magnes remembers. "They had a village for tourists and there was a piano bar there. One of my friend said, 'You also work in a piano bar, so why don't you play us a little?' So I sat down and I played and one of the psychiatrists said to me, 'You know, I don't like to say this as a psychiatrist—as a fellow colleague and therapist—but you're crazy. You are a wonderful pianist. Why aren't you concentrating on it? You really should.' And I said, 'You know what—you're right.' I stopped teaching art therapy the next year. I stopped my private practice. I became more and more involved with music."

Magnes has been working on two new soon-to-be-released albums. One



Liz Magnes comes to Eugene from Jerusalem to present a concert of very special music.

features her solo jazz arrangements of Sacha Argov compositions, and the other her enchanting interpretations of Oriental Jewish prayer music. Magnes currently divides her time between performing, composing and teaching. She will be working on another musical when she tours the U.S. this winter.

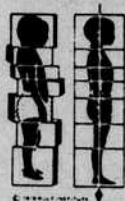
Magnes has performed for Israel's president, Chaim Herzog, and has entertained frequently at the U.S. Embassy residence. She has performed in solo concert on Israel National Radio, and has written scores for

films, plays and television in the U.S., Canada and Israel. She recently was named Musician of the Year by the Jerusalem weekly, *Kol Yerushaleim*.

Liz Magnes's family all lives in the United States. Her father, Dr. Milton Rosenbaum, is a professor of psychiatry at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque. Her sister, Mary Dwan, is a counselor in private practice in Eugene. Her brother Michael lives in New York.

For information about Magnes's Eugene concert, contact the Hult Center ticket office at 687-5000.

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