

# Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

## Les McCann To Be Featured Artist At Jazz Festival



Les McCann

Les McCann will be the featured jazz artist among others at the Cathedral Park Jazz Festival on July 18th at 6pm.

Les McCann was born in Lexington, Kentucky where he was raised on the rich sounds of the Baptist Church. Taking the advice of a teacher who told him "If you want to be somebody, you'll have to get out of Lexington," Les joined the Navy at age seventeen to try out for the Navy School of Music. "But I didn't know how to read music," he says, "I couldn't even fake it. I was marching in formation one day and as I passed the PX I heard this music. It was Erroll Garner playing 'Lullaby of Birdland,' and I got so excited-I'd never heard anything like it--I stepped out of formation, walked right into the place, and got into a whole lot of

trouble. But I knew what it was that I wanted to do. It was from that point on I started playing seriously." A lady officer then provided him with a place to practice his new love, piano, and eventually he entered the All Navy Talent Show. "It was the Navy and the Army, the whole military competing. We all got to go on the Ed Sullivan Show. And I won it!"

While attending Los Angeles City College Les helped to create the jazz coffeehouse circuit and before long his reputation attracted the likes of Miles Davis and Cannonball Adderly. This new piano player was beginning to revolutionize jazz. Les' music cannot be easily categorized into any single type since over the years he has 'fused' so many different forms of music into his own style. "Just when you think you've heard it all," he says, "I'm gonna surprise you again. There's always more Les." His recording of 'Compared to What' introduced many rock lovers to a form of music they had never heard as well as bringing 'jazz' followers into a new music they never thought they would like. For this reason, Les has been called the 'Father of Fusion.'

Les discovered Roberta Flack singing in a club in Washington, D.C. and recorded and produced her first album which included "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face." Determined to help new talent, Les also co-produced Lou Rawls' first album.

Les was the first musician ever to teach at Harvard in the learning From Performers program. He has had,

many acclaimed European tours. In 1970 he went to Africa with Ike & Tina Turner, Wilson Pickett, Santana, Roberta Flack, and others. Les narrated the film 'Soul to Soul' which was made as a result of that tour.

Les McCann is a man of many talents. He is an accomplished photographer whose photographs have appeared on several album covers as well as top rated TV shows such as "The Steve Allen Show," "The Mike Douglas Show" and "The Bill Cosby Special." His love of life and people has made him a popular guest on talk shows where his quick wit and earthy humor are as stimulating as his music. He is also an accomplished painter who has recently had several one man exhibitions.

The only constant in his music is Les' ever-changing controversial style, which is always new and full of surprises. Diverse examples are 'Compared to What' on the best selling 'Live at Montreux' album with Eddie Harris, 'Lovers' on his 'Invitation to Openness' album, a haunting free-form expression; 'Bat Yam' inspired by a recent tour in Israel and included in this album, 'Les McCann's Music Box.' Les' latest release, 'Butterfly,' is an album showing yet a different facet of the artist. "My music is inspired by my faith in people--people changing for the better."

Les will continue to change but his music will always be filled with the magic of his playing, with the warmth of his voice, and always the richness of his soul. His music grabs you, hugs you, and makes you feel good all over!

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### Concerts At The Zoo

Concerts at the Zoo are presented in cooperation with Oregon Public Broadcasting. The popular Your Zoo And All That Jazz series, continues Wednesday evenings through August 18.

The Rhythm and Zoo series, continues Thursday evenings through August 19.

Concerts begin at 7pm. Plan dinner at the zoo-pizza or barbecued chicken kabobos. Food proceeds go directly to the zoo. Alcohol consumption is restricted to that purchased on zoo grounds. A free shuttle runs between the zoo and the Sylvan Business District, where overflow parking is available.

## Fourth of July Concert in Laurelhurst Park

Pack a Picnic and Come Enjoy a Free Concert at Laurelhurst Park, SE 35th & Oak Sunday, July 4, 6:00pm

The Granite Youth Symphony Orchestra, a 90-member band from Salt Lake City public high schools, will follow the Cultural Recreation Band, Portland elementary school performers, under the baton of Greg McKelvey, Music Director at Wilson High School.

For more information on concerts in the parks call Portland Parks and Recreation, 823-2223 v/tt

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