



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **CURTIS STIGERS TO PERFORM BENEFIT CONCERT FOR VJF**

#### **An Evening of Blues & Jazz with the Platinum Selling Vocalist and Saxophonist with Curtis Stigers**

**JANUARY 9, 2003 – VAIL, CO** – The Vail Jazz Foundation (VJF) is pleased to announce that on Thursday, February 27, 2003, a benefit concert will be held at the Vilar Center for the Arts, Beaver Creek for the Vail Jazz Foundation in an effort to support the Foundation's ongoing educational programs. Curtis Stigers, platinum selling vocalist and saxophonist, will appear with sidemen: Matthew Fries (piano), Greg Ryan (bass), and Keith Hall (drums) for an evening of blues and jazz.

Raised in Boise, Idaho, Stigers played jazz, blues and rock & roll in the local clubs while attending high school and was a regular at jazz legend Gene Harris' Tuesday night jam sessions at the Idanha Hotel. "Gene was always supportive of the young players. He gave me encouragement that led me to pursue music as a career," is how he explains it. Like a lot of young musicians, Stigers was drawn to New York and where he began a regular gig at Wilson's on Manhattan's Upper West Side in 1987, ultimately landing a recording contract with Arista Records. His self-titled debut, released in 1991, sold nearly 2 million copies and spawned several hit singles, including a top 10 hit that he wrote "I Wonder Why".

Appearances on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno and Late Night with David Letterman were followed by world tours with artists such as Elton John, Eric Clapton, Bonnie Raitt, and Rod Stewart. In 1992 he recorded "(What's So Funny 'Bout) Peace, Love and Understanding", as part of the soundtrack to The Bodyguard, which was a worldwide hit - 30 million sales.

In the late 1990's, Stigers began to move away from the performance of pop music and to explore songwriting, collaborating with Carol King, Jules Shear and others. At about the same time, he started to reconnect with his jazz roots, appearing on several CDs with Gene Harris and performing alongside Toots Thielemans, Randy Brecker, Cleo Laine, Jimmy Scott, Chuck Mangione, Frank Wess, Brother Jack McDuff, Ernie Watts, and Red Holloway. In 1997, the New York City Cabaret Society voted Stigers the Best Jazz Singer. In 2001 he was signed by Concord Records and has released two CDs "Baby Plays Around" and most recently "Secret Heart" establishing himself as a jazz singer, songwriter and saxophone player. Stigers is currently working on a new CD, which will be released this summer.

By supporting this fundraiser, you are helping to ensure that the VJF is able to carry on its mission of perpetuating jazz through live performances and through jazz education with a focus on young musicians and young audiences. This fundraiser will help us continue to present the following programs:

\* The Vail Jazz Festival is an eleven-week series of jazz performances that attracts thousands of jazz enthusiasts to Vail, culminating with our critically acclaimed Labor Day Weekend Jazz Party featuring many of the world's top jazz artists.

\* Jazz Goes to School is a unique jazz education program that integrates the study of jazz with social studies subjects and is presented free of charge to over 1,000 fourth and fifth graders in the Eagle County public schools. Highly praised by students, parents and teachers, the program is having a far reaching impact on the students as noted by Michael Markley, former Eagle County Music Director, "The quality teachings of Tony Gulizia and friends, along with their enthusiasm for what they are doing is outstanding. Their advice to the kids is relevant, easy to understand and well prepared. My own program has been rewarded from their visits."

\* VJF Regional Big Band is composed of middle and high school musicians from throughout the region, the Big Band has expanded from a smaller ensemble originally formed by the VJF in response to the interest in playing jazz by students who had participated in the JGTS program.

\* The Vail Jazz Workshop is a 10-day residency program for talented and dedicated high school aged musicians from throughout the United States who are provided full scholarships by the Foundation to attend this professional musical training program. Many of our Workshop alumni have earned music scholarships to colleges and universities and have won prestigious young musicians awards and honors.

The show begins at 7:30 p.m. and tickets are \$40 for adults. To purchase tickets, call (970) 845-TIXS, or for additional information, please contact the Vail Jazz Foundation at (970) 479-6146. All proceeds from the performance will benefit the Vail Jazz Foundation.

The performance is sponsored in part by: the Vail Daily, the Antlers at Vail, KKCH Choice FM 92.3, Colorado Mountain Express, the Park Hyatt Beaver Creek, Vail Resorts Development Co., and the Vilar Center for the Arts, Beaver Creek, and presented by the Vail Jazz Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization (tax exempt under Sec. 501(c)(3) IRC) dedicated to the education and perpetuation of jazz.

**For more information, contact: Christine Richards-Carlson**

**The Vail Jazz Foundation**

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