FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 4, 2003

WHAT: The 14th annual Friends of the Fine Arts Center Gala and Auction “Winter in Paradise”

WHEN: Saturday, February 1, 2003 at 7PM

WHERE: Hotel Northampton, Northampton, MA

Call 1-800-999-UMAS or 545-2511 for tickets

(UMass Fine Arts Center to Host 14th Annual Gala at Hotel Northampton)

The Friends of the Fine Arts Center host the 14th Annual Gala – Winter in Paradise-- to benefit the center at 7pm on Saturday, February 1, 2003, at the Hotel Northampton, Northampton. Just as last year, the Fine Arts Center will take over the entire hotel for the evening where revelers will be able to move from room to room for feasting, dancing, auction bidding, and entertainment. Proceeds from the Gala will benefit two programs this time: the Billy Taylor Endowment for Jazz Residencies, providing support for residencies in which professional jazz artists can share their personal experiences in the field with students of jazz; and the Angel Ticket Program, providing tickets to Tri-County residents whose financial situation would otherwise prohibit them from experiencing live performances at the FAC.

The Gala will be packed with entertainment – for those who want to dance or just sit and enjoy. No one will be sitting for Major Motion in the Ballroom, however. This powerhouse group combines the soul of the Temptations and Marvin Gaye, the R&B of Earth, Wind and Fire and Stevie Wonder, and the funky dance sounds of the 70’s, 80’s and 90’s. They have performed at private functions for the Kennedy’s and Meryl Streep and have opened for the Temptations, Tower of Power, and Chaka Khan. With a voice that puts her in the category of “jazz diva,” Sue Wiggin and her quintet Wiggin’ Out will bring it altogether in Wiggins Tavern playing the best in jazz standards for dancing cheek-to-cheek or relaxing and listening. Musicians include Brian Leceese, guitar, Geoff Vidal, sax, Matt Giannaros, bass and Clark Seibold, percussion.

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From Bach to Ellington, from Mercer to film score masters Rota and Morricone, the Archguitar Duo is unsurpassed in musical ability on the archguitar. Guitarists Peter Blanchette and Jean Chaine have been heard on “Prairie Home Companion,” “All Things Considered,” and all over the NPR airwaves. This dynamic duo will perform in the intimate surroundings of the Coolidge Café.

Back again after receiving rave reviews from last year’s Gala, pianist Daniel Monte will play a variety of tunes from classical to Broadway as well as some of his own original compositions. In between band sets in the ballroom the comic duo called The Will & Casey Show, including Cassandra Smith and Amherst native Will Matthews, will offer their unique brand of humor.

In the Hampshire Room, the Gala auction will hold over 100 treasures of fine arts, original creations, getaways, catered parties, vacation homes, and more from local businesses. There will also be some great music by up and coming young artists including Charity Delsie on harp and 5-Alone, the award-winning a cappella jazz vocal group from the Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter School. Under the direction of Tony Lechner, 5-Alone consists of Arla Berman, Hannan Goodwin-Brown, Emily Kaufman, Ian Littell, O.J. Martori, Erin Richardson, and Rob Ventulett.

Ticket prices for the Gala are $65 per person, which includes all the entertainment listed above plus a royal feast beginning with hors d’oeuvres of sushi, baked Brie, crab cakes, vegetable spring rolls and more. For dinner there’s roast tenderloin of beef and smoked country baked ham carving stations, made-to-order seafood/pasta stations, Viennese desserts and much more.

Individual Sponsor tickets are available at $100 and include a ticket to the event, one drink ticket and program recognition. A corporate package is available for $250 and includes two tickets, two drink tickets and a program ad. For more information on the sponsor or corporate package, please call the Friends of the Fine Arts Center at 413.545.3671. For tickets to the event, call the box office at 413.545.2511 or 1-800-999-UMAS.


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