

Cabaret tribute to legendary Jelly Roll Morton to be presented April 13 in Mandeville Auditorium at UCSD

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CABARET TRIBUTE TO LEGENDARY JELLY ROLL MORTON TO BE PRESENTED APRIL 13 IN MANDEVILLE AUDITORIUM AT UCSD

Jelly Roll! The Music and the Man, a two-man cabaret tribute to the legendary Jelly Roll Morton, will be presented at 8 p.m. April 13 in Mandeville Auditorium at the University of California, San Diego.

Jelly Roll Morton was a flamboyant jazz pioneer who had no qualms about letting people know--loud and clear--how much he contributed to the birth of the Jazz Age. Morton (1890-1941), a.k.a. Ferdinand Joseph La Mothe, is quoted as saying that he "alone invented, or you might better say created, jazz as we know it today."

Jelly Roll! The Music and the Man is a musical and humorously scripted live portrait of the New Orleans jazz pianist, composer, arranger and bandleader -- and his mega-ego.

The April 13 performance at UCSD stars Kirk Taylor and Paul Asaro.

Taylor tells Morton's story in a string of anecdotes and sings and dances some of the songs Morton wrote or made popular. Asaro plays Morton's compositions on the piano.

Based in New York, Taylor has performed throughout the U.S. and Europe. He was last seen on stage in the Broadway tour of Five Guys Named Mo, and was featured in Take Me Along and The War Party. He has appeared in movies such as School Daze and The Last Dragon, on television in shows including Law and Order, and in a number of New York-based soap operas.

Asaro specializes in ragtime and early jazz piano styles. Based in Chicago, he has performed in numerous ragtime/jazz festivals including those in New York, Montreal, Milwaukee, and Branson, Mo. He has played the piano role in Jelly Roll! productions in New York, Milwaukee and Philadelphia, and most recently, he has been performing ragtime piano on the Delta Queen Riverboat out of New Orleans.

Jelly Roll! was created by Vernel Bagneris, who starred in the original New York revue. Most of the spoken words are taken from Morton interviews recorded in 1938 with folklorist Alan Lomax for the Library of Congress. The oral history reveals Morton as an easy raconteur and a shrewd musical analyst with a rise-and-fall life of euphoric ups and dismal downs.

"Jelly Roll! doesn't attempt to create a full-blooded portrait or outline a complete biography," writes the New York Times' Stephen Holden. "It is an entertaining series of sketches deftly stitched together with wonderful music."

The New York Times' Vincent Canby called the original cabaret act of Jelly Roll! starring Bagneris, "one of the most revivifying entertainments to be found on Broadway or off. Jelly Roll! free-floats and takes the audience along. It also jams and rocks and in its own way, rolls. It's not easy to keep the feet still even when sitting down."

Tickets for Jelly Roll! The Music and the Man's April 13 performance at UCSD are \$18 general admission; \$16 for UCSD faculty, staff and senior citizens, and \$14 for students. Tickets are available at the UCSD Box Office, 534-6467, and at Ticketmaster outlets. For further information, call the UCSD University Events Office at 534-4090.

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