

Coral Gables Congregational Church
United Church of Christ



Community Arts Program

2010 Summer Concert Series

25th Anniversary Season!

RAMSEY LEWIS

Thursday, August 12, 2010, at 8:00 p.m.

Coral Gables Congregational Church



RAMSEY LEWIS

“There's no denying the lyrical urgency, harmonic beauty and pianistic luster . . . “ *Chicago Tribune*

RAMSEY LEWIS, pianist and composer, has been referred to as "The Great Performer," a title reflecting his performance style and musical selections that display his early gospel roots and classical training. They are coupled with his love of jazz and other musical forms. A native Chicagoan, Mr. Lewis began taking piano lessons at the age of four, studying the basics. He is quoted as saying, "It wasn't until I started studying with the late Dorothy Mendelson that I responded to some of the startling things she was teaching me, such as 'Listen with your inner ear,' and 'Make the piano sing.' These concepts were revelations!" Except for records his father played around the house – Duke Ellington, Art Tatum, Mead Lux Lewis and others – young Ramsey had no experience playing jazz. He was 15 years old when a fellow church musician, Wallace Burton, asked him to join his jazz band and took the time to coach and help the young musician learn the language of jazz.

Ramsey Lewis captivated fans with his first album *Ramsey Lewis and the Gentlemen of Swing* by the Ramsey Lewis Trio in 1956. By 1965, he was one of the nation's most successful jazz pianists, topping the charts with *The In Crowd*, *Hang On Sloopy*, and *Wade In the Water*. He has three Grammy Awards and seven gold records to his credit and has been honored with three honorary doctorate degrees.

Mr. Lewis hosts the syndicated *Legends of Jazz with Ramsey Lewis*, a two-hour radio program that airs in over 75 cities throughout the U.S and also airs in London. In 2003, Mr. Lewis along with Larry Rosen (founder and former president of GRP Records) and Lee Rosenberg formed LRSmedia, the company that produced for the first time in forty years a series of thirteen one-half hour television programs. This acclaimed series *Legends of Jazz with Ramsey Lewis* has aired on PBS featuring emerging and established jazz musicians.

Active in community affairs, especially on behalf of youth, he helped organize the Ravinia Festival's *Jazz Mentor Program*. Serving not only as the Artistic Director for that festival's jazz series, he was also elected Trustee in 2002. Mr. Lewis serves on the Board of Trustees of the Merit School of Music in Chicago as well. Early 2005 saw the formation of the Ramsey Lewis Foundation that will help provide youth with the opportunity to play musical instruments and develop those and other skills to enhance self-confidence and a sense of personal accomplishment.

Mr. Lewis tours nationally and internationally with over 25 symphony orchestras in the U.S. and Canada. He has performed in concert and at festivals throughout Europe, Japan, Mexico and the Caribbean and primarily performs with his trio composed of Larry Gray on bass and Leon Joyce on drums. The 25th Anniversary 2010 Summer Concert Series closes with the living legend, Ramsey Lewis, in a rare solo performance.

Press Only - Contact Person, Phone, & Email:

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