



STG Presents Improvisational Saxophone Legend Sonny Rollins At The Paramount Theatre May 10

*"Rollins has gotten so good at probing the workings of a line that he literally drills himself through to a transcendent other side."
-- Paul De Barros, "The Seattle Times" (1996)*

SEATTLE, Tuesday, March 9, 2010 - Seattle Theatre Group (STG) presents improvisational saxophone legend Sonny Rollins at The Paramount Theatre. A rare treat, this engagement will be Rollins' first tour to Seattle in almost 15 years and his first performance at The Paramount Theatre. Always a restless creative spirit, a constantly self-renewing citizen of the jazz world and one of the music's leading lights, Rollins is jazz's most exacting, exhilarating and inspiring practitioners.

"Sonny Rollins sold out The Moore Theatre back in 1996 and we are delighted to have him back after all this time," said Josh LaBelle, STG's Executive Director. "The Paramount stage has been host to its share of legends, such as Dave Brubeck, Ramsey Lewis and Wynton Marsalis - we are honored and grateful to add the extraordinary Sonny Rollins to that list."

Tickets: Sonny Rollins tickets are \$37.00 - \$65.00 and are on sale Friday, March 12th at 10:00am. Purchase tickets online at www.stgpresents.org, by phone at (877)784-4849, in person at The Paramount Theatre box office, Monday through Friday 10:00am-6:00pm and The Paramount and Moore Theatre venue kiosks, 24-hours a day, 7-days a week, powered by Tickets.com. Groups of 10 or more receive a 10% discount, call (866)798-7469 for more information. The Paramount Theatre is located at 911

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Pine Street in downtown Seattle.

Sonny Rollins Biography:

Theodore Walter Rollins was born on September 7, 1930 in New York City. He grew up in Harlem not far from the Savoy Ballroom, the Apollo Theatre, and the doorstep of his idol, Coleman Hawkins. After early discovery of Fats Waller and Louis Armstrong, he started out on alto saxophone, inspired by Louis Jordan. At the age of sixteen, he switched to tenor, trying to emulate Hawkins. He also fell under the spell of the musical revolution that surrounded him, Bebop.

He began to follow Charlie Parker, and soon came under the wing of Thelonious Monk, who became his musical mentor and guru. Living in Sugar Hill, his neighborhood musical peers included Jackie McLean, Kenny Drew and Art Taylor, but it was young Sonny who was first out of the pack, working and recording with Babs Gonzales, J.J. Johnson, Bud Powell and Miles Davis before he turned twenty.

"Of course, these people are there to be called on because I think I represent them in a way," Rollins said recently of his peers and mentors. "They're not here now so I feel like I'm sort of representing all of them, all of the guys. Remember, I'm one of the last guys left, as I'm constantly being told, so I feel a holy obligation sometimes to evoke these people."

In the early fifties, he established a reputation first among musicians, then the public, as the most brash and creative young tenor on the scene, through his work with Miles, Monk, and the MJQ.

Miles Davis was an early Sonny Rollins fan and in his autobiography wrote that he "began to hang out with Sonny Rollins and his Sugar Hill Harlem crowd...anyway, Sonny had a big reputation among a lot of the younger musicians in Harlem. People loved Sonny Rollins up in Harlem and everywhere else. He was a legend, almost a god to a lot of the younger musicians. Some thought he was playing the saxophone on the level of Bird. I know one thing--he was close. He was an aggressive, innovative

player who always had fresh musical ideas. I loved him back then as a player and he could also write his ass off..."

Sonny moved to Chicago for a few years to remove himself from the surrounding elements of negativity around the Jazz scene. He reemerged at the end of 1955 as a member of the Clifford Brown-Max Roach Quintet, with an even more authoritative presence. His trademarks became a caustic, often humorous style of melodic invention, a command of everything from the most arcane ballads to calypsos, and an overriding logic in his playing that found him hailed for models of thematic improvisation.

It was during this time that Sonny acquired a nickname, "Newk." As Miles Davis explains in his autobiography: "Sonny had just got back from playing a gig out in Chicago. He knew Bird, and Bird really liked Sonny, or "Newk" as we called him, because he looked like the Brooklyn Dodgers' pitcher Don Newcombe. One day, me and Sonny were in a cab...when the white cabdriver turned around and looked at Sonny and said, `Damn, you're Don Newcombe!" Man, the guy was totally excited. I was amazed, because I hadn't thought about it before. We just put that cabdriver on something terrible. Sonny started talking about what kind of pitches he was going to throw Stan Musial, the great hitter for the St. Louis Cardinals, that evening..."

About STG: STG is the 501 (c)(3) non-profit arts organization that operates the historic Paramount and Moore Theatres in Seattle, Washington. Our mission is to make diverse performing arts and education an integral part of our region's cultural identity while keeping these two landmark venues alive and vibrant. STG presents a range of performances from Broadway, off-Broadway, dance and jazz to comedy, concerts of all genres, speakers and family shows - at both historic theatres in Seattle and venues throughout the Puget Sound and Portland, Oregon.

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