ARTISTS
Lavay Smith and Her Red Hot Skillet Lickers
Lavay Smith, vocals
Ron Belcher, bass
Howard Wiley, drums
Danny Armstrong, trombone and vocals
Jules Broussard, alto sax
Rob Barics, tenor sax
Mike Olmos, trumpet
Chris Siebert, piano

PROGRAM
This evening begins with a free swing dance lesson at 7:00 pm led by Paul Csonka and Audrey Ho of Wednesday Night Hop.

PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE. Please be considerate of others and avoid any flash photography. Thank you.
LAVAY SMITH AND HER RED HOT SKILLET LICKERS

Sultry chanteuse Lavay Ms. Smith evokes a sensuous era of glamorous jazz divas and sexy pinups but adds a modern, feminist twist. Whether singing her own compositions or drawing on a large repertoire of classics, Ms. Smith and her all-star seven-piece band bake up an instant recipe for good times.

Vocalist and bandleader of the Red Hot Skillet Lickers, Ms. Smith grew up in Southern California and the Philippines. She has become known as a modern-day jazz and blues song stylist in the tradition of Billie Holiday, Dinah Washington, Bessie Smith, and Little Esther Phillips. Her enticing stage style is a cross between Marilyn Monroe and Bettie Page.

Ms. Smith approaches her material from the standpoint of an independent woman, combining world-class singing and musicianship with contemporary and provocative lyrics. Her musical stance is echoed in her real-life role as owner of her own record label, Fat Note Records. Her debut CD, One Hour Mama, received widespread critical acclaim and has sold more than 40,000 copies in the United States. Her alluring stage presence and high musical standards ensure that this diva will continue to be a best-selling independent phenomenon.

Ms. Smith’s band—consisting of four horns, piano, bass, and drums—features the finest musicians anywhere. This is truly an all-star ensemble; Ms. Smith’s musicians have performed and recorded with Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Nat King Cole, Frank Sinatra, Tito Puente, Lionel Hampton, Jay McShann, Johnny Otis, Wynton Marsalis, Big Joe Turner, Ray Charles, Big Mama Thornton, Taj Mahal, and Little Esther Phillips, to name a few.

The band first performed in 1989 and immediately began attracting crowds thanks to Ms. Smith’s big, bluesy voice; exciting stage personality; and glamorous approach. According to Fox TV, the band has become “a San Francisco institution.” In 1998, the readers of San Francisco’s two major newspapers, the Chronicle and the Examiner, voted Lavay Ms. Smith and Her Red Hot Skillet Lickers the Best Band in the annual readers’ poll.

Important publications, including Jazz Times, Blues Revue, Jazziz, New York Press, Living Blues, and Alternative Press, have sung the praises of Ms. Smith and her band. The group has made television and radio appearances on shows such as The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer, Fox TV’s Fox Files, and National Public Radio’s To the Best of Our Knowledge. World-famous celebrities have jumped on the Lavay Ms. Smith bandwagon as well. Johnny Otis says, “Lavay is wonderful! She and her band are a breath of fresh air.” Dan Aykroyd says of Ms. Smith’s debut album, “This CD is guaranteed to make you feel better.” Even President Bill Clinton has seen the light, proclaiming, “I love this band—they’re great!”

Performances

Lavay Ms. Smith and Her Red Hot Skillet Lickers maintain a busy schedule of more than 250 performances per year, including extensive touring throughout the United States and Canada. They have performed at many prestigious venues, including Lincoln Center, the Festival International de Jazz de Montréal, the Chicago Jazz Festival, the Ottawa Jazz Festival, the Monterey Jazz Festival, Kansas City’s 18th and Vine Jazz and Blues Festival, the San Francisco Blues Festival, the Toronto Jazz Festival, and the Playboy Jazz Festival.

Ms. Smith has performed in 40 states, Canada, Mexico, and Japan. When not on the road, Ms. Smith and her band are showcased at some of San Francisco’s hippest nightclubs, where they have been selling out shows for years.

Recordings

Ms. Smith produces her CDs with musical director Chris Siebert for her record label, Fat Note Records. Her debut CD, One Hour Mama, was an independent smash hit, outselling most major-label jazz and blues releases, a true testament to her musical and business savvy. Her second CD, Everybody’s Talkin’ Bout Miss Thing, repeated this success, staying on the Billboard jazz charts for 20 consecutive weeks and rising to number 10. The album received widespread critical acclaim, including a prestigious four-and-a-half-star review in DownBeat magazine.

Ms. Smith’s CD Everybody’s Talkin’ Bout Miss Thing incorporates a variety of classic American musical styles, including swing, bebop, salsa, jump blues, and New Orleans R & B. Enlisting the arranging talents of David Berger, arranger for Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, the album includes six outstanding original tunes, many classics, and several obscure gems.