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### **A CELEBRATION OF ELLA FITZGERALD AND GUITARIST JOE PASS**

(Mahwah) – Jazz at the Berrie Center presents a celebration of Ella Fitzgerald and Joe Pass on Friday, October 21 at 8 p.m. in the Sharp Theater on the campus of Ramapo College of New Jersey. Marlene VerPlanck and Bucky Pizzarelli, two of New Jersey’s own, come together for a celebration of the collaboration between Fitzgerald and her guitarist, Joe Pass.

Ella and Joe recorded together for many years, including such standards as “You Go To My Head,” “Speak Low” and “These Foolish Things.” VerPlanck and Pizzarelli bring their own style and beauty to the songs in this tribute.

Marlene VerPlanck got her start in the big-band business, as a young vocalist with Charlie Spivak and Tex Beneke. During a brief stint with the last Dorsey Brothers Orchestra, she met her husband, musician-arranger Billy VerPlanck. She became a studio singer, backing up vocalists ranging from Frank Sinatra and Mel Torme to Kiss. Following appearances on Alec Wilder’s 1970s National Public Radio series, “American Popular Songs,” VerPlanck emerged as a leading solo performer. Appearances at Carnegie Hall, Michael’s Pub and the Rainbow Room brought rave notices. *In a Digital Mood*, featuring VerPlanck, Mel Torme and Julius LaRosa with the Glenn Miller Orchestra, was the first big-band CD to go gold. At the request of Richard Adler, the renowned composer of *Damn Yankees* and *The Pajama Game*, she recorded some of Adler’s most memorable music, contained on a CD titled *You Gotta Have Heart: The Songs of Richard Adler*. VerPlanck performs across North America and much of Western Europe, while a growing roster of

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solo CDs continues to win critical acclaim. Her albums feature arrangements scored by her husband, with accompaniment by many of America's finest musicians.

For more than half a century, John "Bucky" Pizzarelli has helped keep mainstream and traditional jazz alive. The list of big bands and vocalists with whom he has performed and recorded reads like a Who's Who of Jazz. Pizzarelli has been a fixture in jazz and the studios since the early 1950s. At the age of 17 he toured with Vaughan Monroe's dance band, which he re-joined (after military service) in 1946. In 1952 he joined the staff of NBC and played in the Doc Severinson Band on the *Tonight Show*. After touring for two years with the Three Suns trio, he returned to New York to work in recording studios and as a freelance musician. He played and toured with Benny Goodman, forming a close association with him that lasted until Goodman's death. He also led his own trio and recorded duos with Zoot Sims (1976), Bud Freeman (1975), Stephane Grappelli (1979) and his son John (1981). Along with being a dedicated conservator of the old guitar music and the early styles of playing, Pizzarelli also has developed a very personal style that sets him apart. Recordings like *Love Songs* and *New York Swing* present a picture of the complete jazz musician and guitarist who moves effortlessly from soloist to playing solid, swinging rhythm and single string solos in an ensemble setting.

A post-performance dessert and wine reception with the artists will be held in the Berrie Center. A combination performance and reception ticket entitles patrons to priority seating at the concert, reserved parking and a dessert buffet.

Combination gala/concert tickets are \$50 per person. General tickets for the performance only are \$24 for adults, \$21 for senior citizens and \$12 for youth. The Sharp Theater is located at the Angelica and Russ Berrie Center for Performing and Visual Arts on the Ramapo College campus. For more information call 201.684.7844.

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