

The veteran and the novice teaming up for jazz Sunday

Pianist Vezza, singer McCarthy to perform at Madison venue

MADISON - Anyone who knows Jerry Vezza, Madison jazz pianist, realizes that he's passionate about life, his family and his profession.

Vezza is "old-school," and committed to "passing it on."

"The idea of mentoring a young artist is something I feel committed to," said Vezza of Wisteria Court, a Madison resident since 1991 and a proponent of arts education in Madison.

What he'd like young artists to learn, Vezza added, is that the public enjoys, expects, and deserves a "seamless" performance, and that a "seamless" performance requires a huge amount of training, commitment and discipline.

"It looks easy", said Vezza of the ideal performance style, "but it is based on hours of work."

In Vezza's case, his work as a jazz musician is what he loves, with an interest in jazz that dates back to his childhood. He started playing piano at age 7 and was inspired by his father's extensive collection of jazz records.

Over the past few weeks, Vezza has been sharing his skills and wisdom while rehearsing with Kira McCarthy, formerly of Madison, for a show at 6 p.m. this Sunday, Jan. 18, at Shanghai Jazz, Madison's renowned jazz



KIRA MCCARTHY

venue at 24 Main St., named one of the "Top 100 Jazz Clubs in the World" by Downbeat magazine.

McCarthy will be performing jazz favorites selected and arranged by Vezza, including material from Billie Holiday through Dionne Warwick.

An actor and vocalist, Mc-

Carthy recently graduated from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, majoring in theater and English, and has been offered a contract by the Henderson Hogan Agency with offices in New York and Los Angeles.

While at Tisch, McCarthy performed in several productions and was featured in an independent film, "The Parade," produced by Italian filmmaker Giorgia Farina.

Found Her Passion

She began her vocal and theatrical training nearly 12 years ago, at the age of 10.

At first, her performing arts training offered a welcome respite from demanding academics. By the age of 12, however, after attending Stage Door Manor, a decades-old professional theater camp in the Catskills, she was certain that she wanted to pursue a career in the performing arts; a career course from which she has never wavered.

Throughout her training, McCarthy learned to dovetail academics with arts: in preparation for any performance, she studies the historical context and the author's viewpoint; if she's going to perform in Chekhov's "Three Sisters," first she reads his autobiographical letters.

McCarthy, a 2005 Kent Place School, Summit, graduate, has continued her training in voice, dance and acting by studying and performing at such selective programs as the Williamstown Theatre Festival, one of America's preeminent regional summer stock theatres, in Massachusetts; the Marin Shakespeare Festival in California; New York's Circle in the Square, and CAP21 in New York. McCarthy noted the opportunity to work with a professional like Vezza, however, has been one of her most satisfying arts experiences.

For reservations to hear what the veteran and the novice have come up with, call Shanghai Jazz at (973) 822-2899.