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DULUTH -- The exciting, versatile Don Shirley Trio -- making its third Twin Ports appearance in as many years -- returns to the UMD campus for an 8 p.m. concert Friday (February 26) in Kirby Student Center ballroom.

A pianist of singular musical creativity, Shirley takes his own arrangements and with cello and bass accompaniment presents fresh, imaginative excursions into classical, popular, folk, jazz and modern works.

The trio played at UMD in 1962-63 during their first tour under Columbia Artists management. Last March they presented a concert in Superior (Wis.) as part of that community's annual artist series.

The UMD performance is open to the public. There is no admission but tickets must be picked up at Kirby Student Center Information Desk. No reservations will be accepted by phone.

The Shirley sound can be heard on several Cadence records. Recent recordings include "Drown In My Own Tears," "The Don Shirley Trio Presenting Martha Flowers" and "Don Shirley, Pianist Extraordinary."

Shirley's special talents and those of Peter Stolarchyk, Richard Armin and James Candido cannot readily be classified. The makeup of the concert ensemble is a matter of Shirley's personal enthusiasm. After auditions, he decided Stolarchyk and Armin were so talented they both merited joining the current tour.

Letters, wires and press reviews have provided proof of the Trio's impact on the concert-going public. In Hanover, Indiana "the Don Shirley Trio was called back for five encores and even then left the audience clamoring for more . . ."

(more)

Shirley is a free artist and does not consider himself an interpreter of any specific style or idiom. His admirers range from classicist Igor Stravinsky to Duke Ellington.

A child prodigy, Shirley was invited to study theory with Mittolovski at the Leningrad Conservatory of Music at the age of nine. He made his American debut with the Boston Pops Orchestra in 1945.

Later he deserted his musical career to study psychology. After earning his Ph.D. with Phi Beta Kappa honors, he set out to teach and lecture in colleges and universities throughout the U.S. and the Caribbean.

While Shirley was teaching at the University of Chicago a number of "thrill killings" took place in New York's Central Park. Because of an attempt to link the killings with the stimulus of certain types of music, he was awarded a grant to study this relationship.

He devised a number of musical arrangements of varying dynamics and began performing them in a small Chicago club. The public, unaware it was the subject of an experiment, flocked to hear Shirley's sounds. One writer called them "mellow dynamite."

A college friend persuaded Shirley to try the same numbers at the friend's New York club. Shirley soon found himself playing opposite Duke Ellington at Basin Street and his musical career was relaunched.