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10th Annual Lafayette Jazz Festival

By Angela LaScala-Gruenewald



Taylor Reynolds Photo Doug Kohen

describes how he learned to play a variety of instruments. It began with piano lessons in elementary school. Soon he picked up the trumpet and eventually, in the Stanley Middle School Jazz Band, he discovered the vibraphone. "It just kind of snowballed and I kept picking up more and more instruments," says Zucker. "Vibes in particular just stuck with me. They're versatile; you can play chords and melodies easily." Both artists will perform in the March 7th "Honor that Jazz" program at the Veterans Memorial Building.

The enthusiasm Michels and Zucker exude is due largely to Lafayette's rich, musical community which has expanded over the past decade through the efforts of public school programs and organizations like the Generations in Jazz Foundation. A founding member of the foundation, and Music Director at Stanley Middle School, Bob Athayde has played a major role in the creation of these opportunities. Athayde recalls growing up in East Oakland where his public school teachers had an enormous effect on his own musical development. His teachers were "life changing" and at this point he says he is just "trying to keep up with them." His advice is simple, "Music is supposed to make your heart happy; so keep playing music and you'll have a happy heart."

Director of the Big Band of Rossmoor, Mo Levich, developed his passion for music growing up in Idaho, home of the enormously popular musical, the Music Man. He credits summer concerts and band shows for inspiring his love of music. The Big Band will be playing in the "Jazz for All Ages" program on Thursday, March 4th. As senior musicians in the community, the Big Band members work to "promote music and music education between the generations," says Levich. He is particularly excited about the upcoming Lafayette Jazz Festival. "Jazz is an original American art form where a live conversation takes place between the musicians," he explains.

This year those conversations should be interesting and diverse. Athayde is particularly looking forward to guest artist, Ellen Rowe, a member of the University of Michigan faculty. An avid advocate of jazz education, Rowe will be performing on Friday, March 5th. "She is an ideal mentor for all of us. Her talent blows me away," declares Athayde.

Jazz Festival Event Schedule

March 4th "Jazz for All Ages": private party for Rossmoor residents and their guests will feature The Big Band Of Rossmoor and student run Joe Barton Quintet.

March 5th "Future Jazz Greats": Ellen Rowe and Friends will be featured along with the Stanley Jazz Orchestra led by Bob Athayde.

March 6th "A Tribute to Frank Martin": The great pianist/arranger/producer, Frank Martin, will be joined by saxophonist Marc Russo along with Troy Lampkins on bass and Paul Van Wageningen on drums. Opening the evening will be the UC Jazz Combo directed by Ted Moore.

March 7th "Honor That Jazz": the seventh annual Contra Costa County Middle School Honor Jazz Band with Guest Director Michael Galisatus, followed by the eighth annual

Contra Costa County High School Honor Jazz Band with Guest Director John Maltester will perform at the Veterans Memorial Building. Tickets for the Tenth Annual Lafayette Jazz Festival are on sale now. Shows are \$5 for Thursday and Sunday and \$15 for Friday and Saturday night. To purchase tickets, contact the Lafayette Chamber at (925) 284-7404 or visit their web site at www.lafayettechamber.org.



Mo Levich and The Big Band of Rossmoor at the Big Band Dance on February 19th Photo Andy Scheck



Marc Russo Photo provided by Tom Carter

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