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Jazz for Joplin World-class lineup for Moraga Jazz Festival

By *Sophie Braccini*

The first annual Moraga Jazz Festival will resound within the walls of The New Rheem Theatre next month, featuring some 18 Grammy-nominated jazz professionals performing in support of tornado victims in Joplin, Missouri. The festival was conceived by local flutist Carol Alban, who brought it to fruition with support from the California Independent Film Festival Association (CAIFFA), which manages the New Rheem and Orinda theaters.

"We have a very famous guitarist, Alex De Grassi, who is considered by many to be among the most virtuosic living guitarists; jazz legend Roger Glenn who played with Dizzy Gillespie; Mark Levine on bass; keyboardist Victoria Theodore who tours the planet with Stevie Wonder; Frank Martin who performed with artists as different as Al Jarreau and Andrea Bocelli, and many other wonderful musicians," says Alban, "I'm so happy they all agreed to come to Moraga."

The idea formed as Alban, a Moraga resident, was at the New Rheem Theatre watching a movie and noticed what a nice stage the big theater has. "I've done a lot of concerts in support of disaster victims," says Alban, "I ran the idea by the mayor and she said 'let's find Beau (Behan) and ask him.'" Behan, the manager of the New Rheem Theatre, was game and Alban started working on her lineup. "I think that this Festival will foster a lot of interest in the local performing art community and among Lamorinda youth who are interested in music," says Behan, "some of the musicians are internationally acclaimed; it's great mix. We're impressed with what Carol (Alban) has done and we're happy to be contributing to it."

"My life would be very different without music," says Moraga mayor Karen Mendonca, who added that the presence of entertainment and cultural events in Lamorinda is something she wholeheartedly supports. "There is something fun about the idea of a Jazz Festival," says Alban, "we will add dancers, wine and food at the end, and a discussion with the musicians. People will have a wonderful time, for a great cause, and we've kept it affordable." The majority of the proceeds will go to support tornado victims in Joplin; small portions will be directed toward renovation of the theater's sound system and local emergency preparedness.

Moraga Jazz Festival

Sunday, August 7, 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Tickets are \$20 general and \$15 for students

Box office: (925) 388-0751

Scheduled to perform:

Bammy winner Barbara Higbie

Sax: Roger Glenn, George Brooks

Vocals: Mary Jenson, Alvenson Moore

Keyboard: Victoria Theodore, Frank Martin

Bass: Kai Eckhardt (elec.), Marc Levine (upr.)

Flute (and vocals): Carol Alban, Viviana Guzman

Guitar: Alex Degrassi, Rafael Manriquez, Steve Sage

Drum/Tabla: Napoleon Revels-Bey, Aushim Chaudhuri

Piano: David Thomas Roberts

Drummer: Bob Scott, who is originally from Joplin, Missouri

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