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Mo Levich Wins Prestigious 'Jefferson Award'

By Cathy Tyson



Mo Levich at last year's Concert at the Res Photo
Eric Dausman

Because that's what Mo is: he's Lafayette's Music Man."

When asked how he got involved in music education, Levich replied, "It started about fifteen years ago with friend Bob Athayde. I was invited to attend his 7 a.m. Jazz class, (at Stanley) and saw his valuable instruction in music and in life firsthand." Together they found a way to start the Lafayette Summer Music Program that continues musical inspiration and education during the summer. The Generations in Jazz Foundation was started shortly after that; the organization helps fund scholarships for the music camp. Levich also proudly directs an orchestra of seniors, The Big Band of Rossmoor. As some of the elderly senior musicians passed on, it occurred to Levich to encourage younger musicians from Acalanes and Stanley Middle school to join. "There are no barriers in music," he said, referring to the mutually beneficial relationship with the younger and older musicians.

"Mo is Lafayette's 'game changer'," said friend and fan Jay Lifson, executive director of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce. "Add Mo to the recipe, and it always tastes better. His vision and creativity lead to exceeding our very highest expectations."

Levich will be shown receiving his award during the 6 p.m. Channel 5, CBS newscast on March 28, and again on March 29 during the noon news program.

Businessman by day and musical force of nature by night, Maurice "Mo" Levich recently won the Jefferson Award for Public Service for his years of dedicated volunteer work.

Since 1998, Levich, who has a full-time job as CEO of Employerware in Lafayette, has directed the 31 members of The Big Band of Rossmoor and is a founding member of the Generations in Jazz Foundation that promotes music education in schools. He's been an integral part of the Lafayette Summer Music Workshop since its inception over a dozen years ago. The accomplished trumpet player is also a long-time member of Lafayette Rotary and in 2007 was named "Business Person of the Year."

The Jefferson Award recognizes unsung local and national volunteers for their contributions to the community - it's the Nobel Prize for public service. -The Awards are meant to inspire volunteerism throughout the country.

"From the beginning, the awards have been based on the simple idea that one person can make a difference and, well, has Mo ever done that," said City Manager Steve Falk in his Weekly Summary. "I'm left wondering if it's just coincidental that Mo hails from Iowa - the same state [as] Meredith Wilson, the fellow who wrote the Music Man.

Reach the reporter at: cathy@lamorindaweekly.com

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