



# FREE Concert at the Reservoir



## SATURDAY, MAY 14, 11AM – 3PM

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### Lafayette's Music Man Takes on New Gig

... continued from page A1

As a freshman at California State University, Hayward, he joined the jazz band, first as a trumpet player and then playing the piano, mainly because "they had a bunch of trumpet players and were short on pianists." He began playing professionally, providing music at weddings, parties, funerals. "If they needed a piano player, I was there," he says.

With his bachelor's degree in music and a teaching credential in hand, Athayde moved forward with his true passion – teaching music to young people. Positions in San Lorenzo and Pinole preceded his coming to Stanley Middle School in 1986.

The much-awarded and much-loved Athayde brings energy and creativity to his students, now numbering more than 300 in Stanley's five concert bands, two jazz bands and one chorus. And in his classes, everyone plays. "My philosophy is that everyone is invited and everyone gets to play," he explained.

Summers for Athayde are not for lounging around. For the last 15 years, the Orinda resident has spent a week in Sitka, Alaska, teaching and mentoring students at the Sitka

Fine Arts Camp. And then there's the Lafayette Summer Music Jazz Workshop, a week-long program that Athayde founded and has directed for 18 years, attracting people of all ages interested in learning and playing jazz.

If that's not enough to keep him busy, Athayde also teaches a jazz improv class at Saint Mary's College, teaches master classes and interviews artists at the annual Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival in Idaho, and jams with friends frequently.

And then there's his latest gig – solo pianist on weekend nights at La Finestra. "This job is the greatest," he states. "I play classic songs, the kind most people recognize." Calling himself a commercial musician rather than a jazz musician, Athayde has a repertoire of approximately 1,000 songs. "And I just keep trying to learn more." He plays both pop and jazz at La Finestra and even, occasionally, sings. "I'm there to provide background music," he explains. "A waiter serves the food, I serve the music. I'm there to enhance the dining experience."

On a recent Saturday night, La Finestra was bustling and Athayde, looking dapper in his dark suit and

tie, was sitting at the piano, softly playing tunes that would be familiar to most diners. Suddenly, at a nearby table, one of the five Saint Mary's College Christian Brothers who were enjoying a night out started singing along as Athayde played "If Ever I Should Leave You." Soon his tablemates joined in and it wasn't long before other diners added their voices. Athayde kept on playing. Patrons suggested songs and Athayde played them. Minutes later, a customer sat down at the chair next to Athayde and sang; once she returned to her table, a gentleman, waiting for his table to be ready, took her place to sing along.

Athayde admits there are some Fridays when, leaving school and feeling exhausted, he's wondering how he's going to get through the evening. "And then I start playing and the music absolutely rejuvenates me," he says. He's also energized seeing former students and parents walk through the restaurant's doors.

Many years ago, when Athayde was pursuing an advanced degree, one of his instructors suggested that he "become the village music teacher of Lafayette." It looks like that's exactly what he did...and so much more.

### Local Schools Perform at Concert at the Res



The 22nd annual Concert at the Res will be held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, May 14.

Since 1996, The Lafayette Rotary has hosted an afternoon of live music at the Lafayette Reservoir featuring local school bands from Acalanes High School, Stanley Middle School, Bentley School and Westlake Middle School. In the last few years the program has expanded to include young dancers and singers from the Town Hall Troupe and the Lamorinda Theatre Academy.

This annual concert raises money to support the local school music programs as well as other Rotary-sponsored programs such as Meals on Wheels, Trust in Education and Rotary scholarships. The concerts are presented on the outdoor stage in the Lafayette Reservoir that was entirely built and funded by the Lafayette Rotary Club and individual community donors, and has recently been deeded to EBMUD to be operated by them for use and enjoyment by the public.

The event was conceived by Lafayette Rotarian Dick Holt over 20 years ago to provide a venue to showcase and help fund local school music programs through donations, corporate sponsorships, and the proceeds from a day-of-the-event raffle.

Along with the live entertainment, there will be food and drinks for purchase. It is also the perfect spot for a picnic on the lawn, and chairs and shade tents will be provided for those attending the concert. Though the stage is a short walk from the parking area, the Rotary Club will be providing golf cart transportation to and from the stage for those who may desire it.

Public restrooms and a children's play area are nearby, and parking is available for \$7 all day or at metered parking.



Photo provided

Stanley Middle School musicians were thrilled with the news that the Lafayette City Council last week proclaimed April 27 as Stanley Middle School Jazz Messengers' Day in Lafayette. This honors the many achievements the middle school jazz band has made this year, including participating in the "Next Generations in Jazz Festival" in Monterey and receiving a shared first place award from Downbeat Magazine as a top Middle School Large Jazz Ensemble in the nation. This will be published in the June edition of Downbeat Magazine.

Although Stanley Music Director Bob Athayde knew about the award for the past two months, he had to keep it secret from his students until the proclamation at the April 25 meeting. "It was hard," he says, "but it was worth the wait."

### Moraga Faire Celebrates 10 Years of Family Fun

... continued from page A5

The anniversary will also showcase those businesses that have been there since the first year: Rheem Valley Pet Shoppe, Mechanics Bank, 5A-Rent-A-Space, Montessori School, Loard's Ice Cream, the Lamorinda Wine Growers Association and the Lamorinda Weekly.

Beans also wants to acknowledge the many volunteers who have given their time and energy this past decade, from Boy Scout Troop 246 to Saint Mary's College students, as well as many residents. She adds that the sponsors, all local businesses, donated money for the climbing wall and the bounce

houses, and make it possible for the Faire to be a free family event.

The most recent poll shows that 85 percent of the visitors are Moraga residents, and to Beans that means that the Faire has succeeded in becoming the community-building event she dreamed of.

The only element Beans does not control is the weather. She's seen it all, from the days of scorching heat, to a very wet and cold Faire, to that day in May when the wind was so strong that the tents started flying away.

"You just can't predict it," she says with a smile.

### Hacienda de las Flores Turns 100

... continued from page A1

The Rheems originally bought the property from two friends, Alberta Higgins and Gertrude Mallette, who built the first building on the property in the Spanish style in 1917. The first floor of the Hacienda is still testimony of what was conceived to be a boys' orphanage. The orphanage did not last and was closed down when authorities discovered that only female nurses were working on the premises.

That land had been a part of the Rancho Laguna de los Palos Colorados, the 13,316-acre Mexican land grant given in 1841 to Joaquin Moraga and his cousin, Juan Bernal. When the wheels of fortune turned and Moraga lost the rancho, a quarter section was bought by Jesse Williams in 1857, who had been a squatter on that land. In 1906, 160 acres of the land was purchased by Manuel Lucas, who in turn sold 20 acres to Albert Higgins. His daughter Alberta inherited the property.

When Donald Rheem's wife died, he decided to sell the property he had developed for her. Over the years the property had been considerably remodeled, with the addition of a second floor and 18 rooms. In 1938 the pool and cabana were added (now the Pavilion). The estate included quarters for the chauffeur, the maid and butler, a theater and a dark room. In 1961 the Christian Brothers of Saint Mary's College purchased the present building surrounded by 10 acres for their residential and administrative use.

In 1973, Moraga was not yet a town, but it had a Park and Recreation Authority independent from the county that had its own taxation

rights. The Authority included William Penn Mott, who had been director of the California Department of Parks and Recreation under Gov. Ronald Reagan. Claire Roth, who served on the Authority board, remembers how Mott's imagination was unbounded. The work of the Authority led to the purchase of the Hacienda. It was transferred to the town after the incorporation in 1977. In 1986 the town paid off the \$130,000 mortgage that had been taken to purchase the building.

The 1970s and 80s were the height of the Hacienda as a recreation center. Roth remembers dinners, meetings, gatherings and classes for all ages on every level of the building. She even remembers the photo lab installed on the second floor for photography instruction. In the winter of 1975,

over 1,000 people signed up for 86 classes. It included DVC classes, a Youth Summer Theater, the Moraga Music Makers and holiday workshops.

Current Parks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram adds that at the time Moraga was the only Lamorinda city with a recreation center. He says that in the nine years he has been in charge not much has changed, and the facility is not competitive with what Lafayette and Orinda have developed for community centers. He is very hopeful, though, that the new plan the town is working on will result in improved community facilities, as well as all around attraction for residents.

The next step in the life of the unique facility will begin with its second century.

### The Centennial Celebration

It was the Parks and Recreation Department idea to have a Centennial Celebration for the Hacienda. The Hacienda Foundation was the perfect partner to organize the May 15 event.

"This is a free event," says foundation member Claire Roth. "It is not a fundraiser, it is a way to invite the community to come and enjoy their park."

The event is a Cinco de Mayo celebration, but with a lot of additions and surprises. Residents will enjoy traditional Mexican food, drinks, music and games, such as piñata contests, tortilla making, Mexican tile painting, cupcake walks and loteria on the beautiful grounds. The friends of the Moraga Adobe will bring a unique game, Capture the Donkey with a Lasso.

But since it is also a historical celebration, the mosaic room in the Hacienda will be transformed in a small museum with on one side the history of the Hacienda and on the other the conceptual ideas presented by Gould Evans for the future of the building.

The celebration runs from noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday, May 15, and is for all ages. There will be parking at Rheem Elementary School, 90 Laird Dr., and free shuttle to the Hacienda.