

# The Phantom of Orinda

By Derek Zemrak

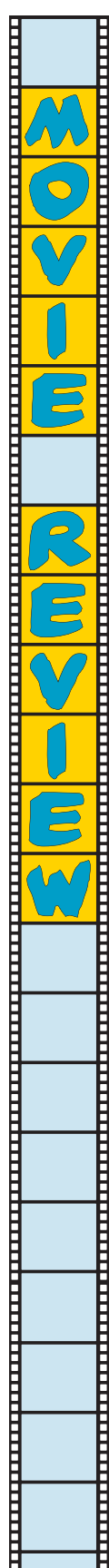


Photo provided

Calling all “The Phantom of The Opera” fans. Franc D’Ambrosio will be performing at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 20 at the Orinda Theatre. This unique cabaret series started in Orinda this past February and the shows have quickly become the East Bay events to attend. Where else in the Bay Area can you see Tony, Grammy and Emmy Award-winning performers in such a close-up, personal and stunning venue?

Nowhere. “Every seat in the 190-seat auditorium makes you feel like you are having a private concert. Even the back seats are only 14 rows from the stage,” states Michael Williams, producer of Live at the Orinda.

D’Ambrosio is best known as the Phantom in Andrew Lloyd Webber’s Tony Award-winning musical, “The Phantom of The Opera.” Affectionately known as “The Iron Man of the Mask,” D’Ambrosio was awarded the distinction as the “World’s Longest Running Phantom,” with over 2,300 performances of the Phantom, a title he held for a decade.

D’Ambrosio is a welcome and frequent guest artist with many major symphonies in America and Europe (Pop Series). With the success of D’Ambrosio’s national and international tours, he has joined the ranks of Michael Crawford and Sarah Brightman as only a hand-

ful of Phantom alumni to successfully cross-over to solo careers. He celebrates 11 years of continuous touring.

D’Ambrosio’s resume also includes an Academy Award-nominated film, an Emmy Award-nominated television show, four-time Tony nominated Broadway show, two Grammy considerations, and a National Theatre Award nomination.

Early in D’Ambrosio’s career, Paramount Pictures talent scouts discovered him in the chorus of his first Broadway show. This ended an exhaustive two-year international search and D’Ambrosio was awarded the role as the opera-singing son of Al Pacino in Coppola’s seven-time Academy Award nominated film “Godfather III.” D’Ambrosio had the honor of singing the Academy Award-winning theme song, “Speak Softly Love” (Brucia la Terra), both in the film and on the Original Motion Picture Soundtrack. D’Ambrosio’s performances of the theme song have garnered over one million hits on YouTube.

D’Ambrosio’s performance so impressed the late Luciano Pavarotti that it led to an invitation for the summer to study with the legendary tenor at his home in Italy. So began his varied and amazing career.

After his impressive run as The Phantom of The Opera, D’Ambrosio caught the eye of Barry Manilow, who personally selected him to create and star as Tony in the pre-Broadway tour of “Copacabana.” The show enjoyed a successful yearlong tour. This performance earned D’Ambrosio his National Theatre Award nomination for Best Male Performer in a Musical.

D’Ambrosio tours extensively throughout the United States, Europe and South America with his critically acclaimed one-man show. “He looks and acts like Marlon Brando and sings like Mario Lanza,” said Hal Prince, Tony Award-winning director of “The Phantom of the Opera.”

Now is your chance to hear D’Ambrosio’s amazing voice at the Orinda Theatre. It will be an event that you might never have experienced before. Tickets for the show can be purchased online at [www.lamorindatheatres.com](http://www.lamorindatheatres.com) or at the Orinda Theatre box office. Seating is reserved and will be sold out soon, so get your tickets for this very unique performance as soon as possible.

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## Service Clubs Announcements




**Breakfast, Friday 7:00 a.m.**  
 The Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa,  
 Mt. Diablo Blvd.  
[www.lamorindasunrise.com](http://www.lamorindasunrise.com)  
 or email [lamorindasunrise@gmail.com](mailto:lamorindasunrise@gmail.com)


September 7	September 14
<p><b>Common Hope, Executive Director, Shari Blindt.</b> Fighting poverty with diplomas in Guatemala.</p>	<p>Annett Balter of <b>COVIA</b> - helping people thrive.</p>

Join us to learn how you can help.

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## Lafayette Rotary Club



**Step in on a Thursday and join us for our lunch meeting.**  
 Thursday at noon Oakwood Athletic Club, 4000 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette.

<p><b>September 6:</b>  <b>Sara Zeff Gerber PhD.</b>                      Fifty Plus, Minus Kids,                      The Unique Changes of                      “Solo Agers”</p>	<p><b>September 13:</b>  <b>Susan Orassman and Michael Barrington:</b>                      Water Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools.</p>
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[www.rotarylafayette.org](http://www.rotarylafayette.org)  
[www.facebook.com/Rotary-Club-of-Lafayette-Ca-197392963631366](https://www.facebook.com/Rotary-Club-of-Lafayette-Ca-197392963631366)

## ◆ Not to be missed

### OTHER ... continued

**Lafayette Methodist Church Stained Glass Window Tour** at 2 p.m. on Sept. 15 and 16 at 955 Moraga Road, Lafayette.

**Come celebrate our diversity and promote** our unity at Soul Food Lamorinda from 2 to 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 15 at the Intercultural Center at Saint Mary’s College. Soul Food Lamorinda is a free Baha’i-inspired program which combines live music and an audio-visual presentation with readings from various faiths, philosophers and leaders, reminding us of the oneness of humanity. This month’s program, “Sacred Balance,” will explore humanity’s physical and spiritual relationship with the environment and how these two elements can work hand in hand to address the environmental challenges of today and tomorrow. Free and open to everyone. For more info: [www.meetup.com/Soul-Food-Lamorinda/](http://www.meetup.com/Soul-Food-Lamorinda/)

**Members of the Lamorinda community** are invited to attend a special presentation from 10 to 11 a.m. on Sunday, Sept. 16 at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church in the Oak Room. The LOPC Senior Ministry team is sponsoring a unique opportunity for persons of all ages to learn about Well Connected (formerly Senior Center Without Walls) a nation-wide, award winning Community Service of Covia (formerly Episcopal Senior Communities). It is a FREE phone and on-line based program offering activities, education, friendly conversation, and an assortment of classes and support groups accessible to older adults right from the comfort of home. For more information, call LOPC at (925) 283-8722.

**The Many Faces of Prostate Cancer** from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Sept. 27 in the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Community Room. Come and experience an event focusing on the unique issues of prostate cancer patients. Join an engag-

## ◆ Not to be missed

ing panel of medical experts who will discuss the latest information regarding ongoing screening, risk factors, and advances in treatment. Q & A session to follow presentation. Space is limited, advanced registration is required. RSVP to Shayna at 925.677.5041 x272 or [sjung@dvoimg.com](mailto:sjung@dvoimg.com).

### POLITICAL GATHERINGS

**Catharine Baker the 16th Assembly District Representative**, is the LRWF Monthly Speaker at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, Sept. 20 at the Orinda Country Club. She is a Republican Assembly person serving since 2014 for the Lamorinda and Tri-Valley areas. This talk will be highly informative and offers a chance to hear about the changing dynamics of the Golden State’s politics firsthand. Luncheon and program: \$31 For more information regarding this event [www.lamorindarepublicanwomen.org/](http://www.lamorindarepublicanwomen.org/) or <https://www.facebook.com/Lamorinda-Republican-Women-Federated-136134033113066/>

**The Lafayette Homeowners Council (LHC)** is sponsoring its yearly Candidates Night at 7 p.m. on Sept. 20 at the Lafayette Veterans Memorial Hall at 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd. All residents are welcome! This year five candidates will be on the November ballot for just two City Council positions. Each candidate will have five minutes to introduce themselves and speak regarding their individual positions on various issues regarding our City. After each of the candidates have spoken, members of the audience will be able to ask questions of any candidate. The meeting will also include a brief “Annual Meeting” agenda by the LHC and we also hope to hear from our Mayor! [www.LafayetteHomeownersCouncil.org](http://www.LafayetteHomeownersCouncil.org)

### SENIORS

**Xenophon Therapeutic Riding Center** in collaboration with Connected Horse is offering Equine Assisted Workshops for people with

early stage dementia and their care partners. No prior horse experience needed to participate. Participants will be engaging with horses from the ground, no riding. Session 4 - 9:30 a.m. to noon on Aug. 29, Sept. 5, 12, 19, 26. If interested in participating, please contact (925) 377.0871; [info@xenophontrc.org](mailto:info@xenophontrc.org). Free.

**A Matter of Balance, presented by Lamorinda Village and Meals on Wheels** Diablo Region, is an 8-week program for those who are experiencing concerns about falling. Held at LOPC, 49 Knox Dr, Lafayette, the program begins at 10:30 a.m. on Friday, Sept. 14. Registration is required. Fee is \$25 and includes materials and refreshments. Call (925) 283-3500 to register or go online: <https://lamorinda.helpfulvillage.com/events>

**BE! Brain Enrichment is an interactive** educational experience for adults with normal age-related memory changes. Presented by Lamorinda Village and Eldercare Services, the program begins at 10 a.m. on Monday, Sept. 17 for eight weeks. Held at Eldercare Services, 1808 Tice Valley Blvd, Walnut Creek. Registration is required. Fee is \$40 for Village members, \$60 for nonmembers. Includes materials and refreshments. Call (925) 283-3500 to register or go online: <https://lamorinda.helpfulvillage.com/events>

### GARDEN

**Healthy Meals/Healthy City on a Budget:** The September program of the Walnut Creek Garden Club features Cindy Gershen, chef, teacher, and founder of Sunrise Bistro who created a remarkable, sustainable Hospitality Program at Mt. Diablo High School. Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Road, Walnut Creek. 9:45 a.m. - Business Meeting; 10:30 - Social; 11 Program on Sept. 10. We invite you to attend a meeting. Questions: [mittle44@gmail.com](mailto:mittle44@gmail.com)

**The Lafayette Garden Club meets the second** Thursday of each month

## ◆ Not to be missed

at the Lafayette Veteran’s Building at 10 a.m. and will have its first meeting Sept. 13 featuring Executive Director Linus Eukel, who will speak about the John Muir Land Trust and its mission to conserve our open spaces. His presentation will include photos, maps and video. There is no admission charge and light refreshments will be served.

**The Moraga Garden Club will hold their next meeting** at 9:30 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 20 at the Holy Trinity Church, 1700 School Street, Moraga. The guest speaker will be Steve Lambert of Garden Lights Landscape. Interested parties are welcome to attend the 9:30 a.m. social hour, the 10 a.m. meeting and the presentation by Steve Lambert, immediately following the meeting.

**The Montelindo Garden club’s September meeting** will be at 9 a.m. on Sept. 21 at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Community Hall. Presentation: Designing with Palms, speaker Jason Dawees. Jason is the author of the book Designing with Palms, released in 2018. He is the horticulturalist and palm expert at Flora Grubb Gardens in San Francisco. His book will be available for purchase. [www.montelindogarden.com](http://www.montelindogarden.com)

**Lafayette Community Garden and Outdoor Learning Center** 7th Annual Harvest Fest from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sept. 23 at the Lafayette Community Garden. There will be garden tours, talks, music, scarecrow building, art card decoration, food and drink and other activities to welcome the fall season. Free.

## Lamorinda Weekly

is an independent publication, produced by and for the residents of Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda, CA  
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