Front Porch Music Festival at **Town Hall Theatre**

By Lou Fancher

Town Hall Theatre Com-pany's ongoing collabo-ration with the Front Porch Music Festival prings an exciting roster of local acoustic musicians to the historic downtown venue on Aug. 2. Appearing in the third performance of the Lafayette-based Front third performance of the Lafayette-based Front Porch Music second sea-son, the one-night-only show opens with singer/songwriter Joe Pe-ters warming up the crowd in the lobby bar at lobby into the warm, in-timate theater space, the full production begins at

7 p.m.
First to take the stage and welcome audiences eager to enjoy close proximity to the artists, are five local musicians who craft a unique program offering folk, Americana, bluegrass, blues, country, jazz, and traditional acoustic music. The range is noteworthy, and a feature Front Porch cofounders Austin and Andrée Hurst established early on, when the casual jam sessions began—on their Lafayette home's their Lafayette home's front porch, appropri-ately. Now a non-profit organization, Front Porch offers educational workshops and monthly Open Mic night's in addi-tion to concerts. On Aug. 2, the show begins with accordionist

begins with accordionist Sarah Gronquist joined by guitarist Mark Gill. The duo will set a lively tone with gypsy jazz and swing, after which gui-tarist and singer/song-writer Eric Smith will launch juto country and launch into country and bluegrass covers and original tunes with bassist Kerry Hays and percussionist and vocal-

ist Laura Dorman. Lafayette-based Mike Danese, who dove into his long-time love for nis iong-time love for guitar upon retirement, contributes a story-teller's approach, with songs based in humanity and connective themes that render feelings of harmonic unity harmonic unity.

harmonic unity.
The special guest
artists for the evening
are five members of the
Berkeley-based band,
Charlie Torch. Each a
master bluegrass artist
in his or her own right,
the band's multigenerational old-time style fidthe band's multigenera-tional old-time style fid-dlers include Chad Man-ning, Jasper Manning, Jayna Manning, Tyler Stegall, and Paul Knight. Chad Manning and his wife, Catherine Man-ning, faunded and par-

nis wife, Catherine Man-ning, founded and oper-ate the Manning Music school that has several hundred students. Chad Manning began playing fiddle at age eight, and has performed with artists such as David Grisman and Laurie Lewis. During his teens, Manning's musical inter-est infected his par-ents—his father began paying bass, while his mother, picked up the pi-ano. Shortly thereafter, his siblings joined in and the family band toured to local fairs and other events. He also started teaching and found speteaching and found spe-

teaching and round spe-cial thrill in passing along the fiddling legacy to people of all ages. Catherine Manning was a classical musician who performed as a vio-linist with orchestras and ameared primarily. and appeared primarily in concert halls, She took up fiddling as a student of Manning, her soon-to-be-spouse. Intrigued with learning music by



ear, instead of reading notes on sheet music, she became a proficient artist and instructor in the fiddling genre.

The couple's original jam sessions with friends and students they taught out of their El Cerrito home laid the groundwork for the reaching studio they groundwork for the teaching studio they eventually opened in Berkeley. The school's curriculum has expanded beyond fiddling with the addition of guitar, banjo, mandolin, ukulele, Dobro, music theory and voice teachtheory, and voice teachtheory, and voice teach-ers. During COVID, when the school was closed, scheduled performances were canceled, and classes held only on Zoom, they countered the isolation with outthe isolation with outdoor, backyard get-

door, backyard get-togethers and live-streamed the shows. That kind of en-ergy—local, intimate, up-beat, and community enbeat, and community en-riching—is exactly what the Front Porch show-case aims to affirm and amplify at Town Hall. With local established and emerging musicians sharing their art through performance and min-gling with audience performance and mingling with audience members before and after the show, the opportunity strengthens bonds and creates new friendships. Who knows what might happen? If the stars align, the festive evening might even result in a person, young or old, pursuing a long-buried or just-discovered musical passion.

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Yoga studio Yoga Village



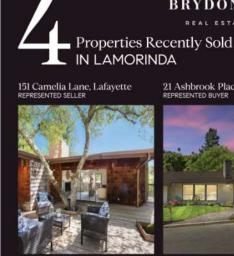
Valorie Moore holds her new sign in her Lafayette yoga studio Yoga

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Moore teaches several different levels of Vinyasa yoga, a popular vari-ety that emphasizes flow, and the

more uncommon Buti yoga, which blends yoga, high intensity interval training, plyometrics, cardio, and tribal dance. "It's really fun," said Moore, before demonstrating several athletic, rhythmic moves to help reduce tension and release energy, before standing up beaming. "When we blast the music, it is not a relaxing class at all."

Moore has been enjoying these first couple of months getting to know her new regulars and first members, but she isn't done yet. She is already looking to the future to evolve Yoga Village even further. In the short term, there is going to be a Saturday morning all ages class for families. In the long term, she wants to create a community for mindful families where both parents and kids can learn. "For a long time I've thought, "Wouldn't it both parents and kids can learn. "For both parents and kids can learn. For a long time I've thought, 'Wouldn't it be magical if I could go and take a class from a really good teacher and at the same time my kids nearby were also doing yoga or something mindful?" After saying this, she looked around the studio with hope and determination before turning back termination before turning back "That's what we're striving toward. And we're starting here." Yoga Studio is located at 3416 Mount Diablo Blvd Suite B and classes can be found at https://yogavillagecafe.com.



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