

theLYRIC

Winter - Spring 2022





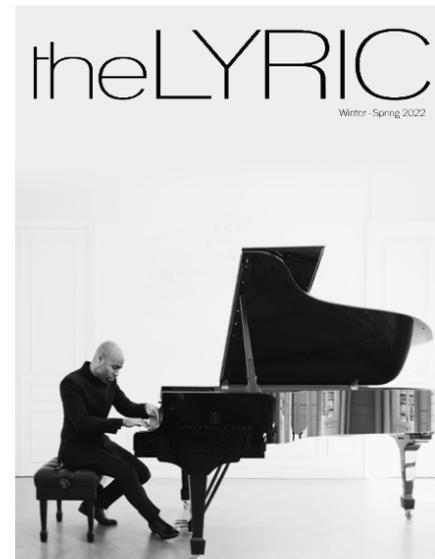
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On the Cover
The Lyric stage welcomes back
American jazz pianist **Aaron Diehl**.
Come see the jazz virtuoso and composer
on **April 20, 2022** at 7:00pm.

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We are Back!

We would not have been able to make it through the last two years without your acts of kindness. Because of your tremendous support, we are back to providing a variety of quality programming and strengthening our commitment to empower, educate and inspire our leaders of tomorrow through our Arts & Education Programs!

On behalf of The Lyric League, I am excited to announce the 5th annual Youth Arts Celebration on Sunday, April 10th. Prepare to be amazed by Treasure Coast student performers as they take the stage in this dynamic talent showcase benefiting The Lyric Theatre's Arts & Education Programs. The Youth Arts Celebration is not a contest, but rather an opportunity to recognize these students for their commitment to their craft, the courage to express themselves and their love of the arts. We hope you will join us for an unforgettable evening of emerging young talent and making a difference in young lives by supporting the 2022 Youth Arts Celebration.



Drumroll...Our AWESOME! Summer Camp is preparing for its 10th year! Themes for this summer's sessions are *We could be Heroes* transforming campers into everyday heroes through kind actions and deeds and *Calling all the Monsters* where campers will explore and accept each other's differences and make new friends. Our AWESOME! Summer Camp utilizes performing arts to teach practical life skills and character-building techniques that translate into everyday life.

We are humbled to be a part of such a caring and supportive community. A community who has joined together time and time again to support and save our historic landmark. Heartfelt words of gratitude will never be enough to THANK YOU for your love, thoughtfulness, generosity and positive vibes.



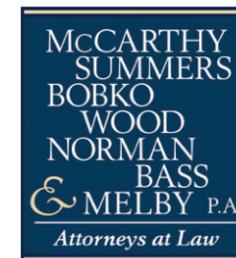
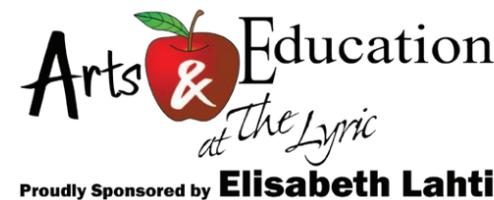
Humbly,

Kia Fontaine
President / CEO

The Lyric Theatre's Mission "To provide the community with a home for the performing arts that entertains, educates, and stimulates the growth of artistic integrity and experience for everyone."

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Ana Great Season Rocks On!

Heading into 2022, The Lyric has a full calendar of world-class artists, musicians, comedians and more. From Grammy-winning vocals to deep ocean adventure, there is something for everyone!

Ana Popovic
MAR 6, 2022 | 7pm



Al Di Meola (January 5, 2022 7:00pm) Al Di Meola is a guitarist's guitarist, but those who listen to his music, in concert or on recordings, are the fortunate recipients of the genius his peers have long recognized. He is considered a pioneer of the blending of world music and jazz, and his career has spanned four decades. He has earned three gold albums and countless awards, including induction into Guitar Player's Gallery of Greats and the prestigious Montreal Jazz Festival's Miles Davis Award, which celebrates an artist's body of work and influence in giving new life to the jazz idiom. That 2015 award would have been the capstone for many careers, but in 2017, Di Meola released *OPUS*, an album that again refocused his art. Now he has released *Across the Universe*, a nod to the Beatles in his own eclectic style.

Di Meola grew up in New Jersey and played the guitar as a kid. When he discovered the music of Larry Coryell, whom Di Meola calls "The Godfather of Fusion," he fell in love with jazz, blues and rock blended together. He enrolled in the Berklee College of Music and when a gig of a band tape was passed along to Chick Corea, the 19-year old was asked to join his supergroup, Return to Forever. The young man was on his way. "I was very impressed with someone merging all the idioms," he said. "I was growing up with rock and pop, absorbing jazz and had a slight country phase. Larry seemed to embody all of these elements."

Di Meola has a reputation for rehearsing for hours on end, a regimen he began early-on. I mentioned that old Isaac Stern joke that the way to get to Carnegie Hall was practice, practice, practice. He laughed. "When I went to Berklee, I wanted to make it," he said. "I thought I should practice as much as possible. Now I find it meditative and relaxing. My first professional gig with Chick Corea was at Carnegie Hall. I got a call and I was in shock. It was a dream come true. I told my parents I was playing Carnegie Hall and my father thought I was joking. I was nervous beyond belief and it was the opportunity of a lifetime. The musicians were already legends, even then, and Return to Forever was my favorite band. They had a strong belief in me, but I didn't have it yet. I did have the ability to read long charts and had good formal training."

Di Meola has had success with both the acoustic and electric guitar and he loves them both. For the past 20 years, he has played more acoustic guitar, a legacy of the type of ear damage many musicians have. The strong acoustic following he had from his early years cushioned the transition back to acoustic. "Playing acoustic separates the men

from the boys," he said. "You can't get away with a lot. With electric, there's the volume and you can get away with being sloppy."

Di Meola is a fan of the music of all genres and two of his favorite artists or groups are the tango composer and musician Astor Piazzolla and the Beatles. That seemed an eclectic set of favorites "Piazzolla was the father of modern tango and I've done a lot of his work," Di Meola said. "We had become good friends and his influence was extreme." In fact, Piazzolla and Di Meola were going to embark on a project together just before the former's death in 1992. Di Meola has recorded an album of Piazzolla's work.

In 2017, Di Meola released *OPUS*, the first of six signed projects with a German record label. For this album, Di Meola wanted to return to composition. "When I started, I was a guitar player trying to be a composer," he said. "Now I am a composer...guitar player. I have 300 very involved compositions that say I am a composer. I am very proud."

At this season of his life, Di Meola finds himself in a good, if unexpected place. He has a happy marriage and a young child. "It's a new relationship," he said. "It's the best I've ever had, the most complete, with no baggage. It makes being a dad fulfilling, easy and a lot of fun. It's the least painful I've ever been. I wasn't sure I was going to be able to do it. I'm used to being miserable." The last, of course, was said tongue-in-cheek, but you could hear the truth there, as well. This is a man who has fulfilled that goal he set for himself so many years ago. He has made it, both professionally and personally, and that makes him a happy (mostly) man.

That the latest album celebrates the Beatles is no surprise. Di Meola admires their often-under-rated musicianship. "Not a day goes by that I'm not involved in

Al Di Meola
JAN 5, 2022 | 7pm



thinking about Piazzolla or the Beatles," he said. "When we first heard the Beatles music, there had been nothing like it. They had an amazing evolution in the 1960s and just got better and better. When they disbanded, I lost interest in their solo careers, but I rediscovered them. I realized their music was incredible and way ahead of its time, with an aesthetic beauty that is overshadowed as they're just thought of as a pop band. They had a lot of depth."

Di Meola has paid homage to their influence with his 2013 release, *All Your Life*, in which he interprets Beatles tunes with his acoustic guitar. Now he has *Across the Universe*. In a review of the new album in *All that Jazz*, Doug Collette noted that while the homage to the Beatles is clear, it is true Di Meola. "On songs such as 'Hey Jude,' Al Di Meola maintains a supremely artful balance between that which is familiar and his novel expansions on that groundwork, the end result of which should be equally moving to listeners who know this music by heart as well as those music lovers for whom the record will constitute a different kind of epiphany altogether."

For Al Di Meola, this is the best of times. He'll follow the sun and see where it takes him.

Elements: A Tribute to Earth, Wind & Fire

(January 7, 2022 7:00pm) It's not easy covering a legendary band like Earth, Wind & Fire. The ground breaking group which was founded in Chicago in 1970 by Maurice White has been credited by *Rolling Stone* magazine with changing the sound of black popular music. With genres from R & B, soul, funk, jazz, disco, rock, Latin and African, Earth, Wind & Fire is impossible to categorize. Over its long and successful career, the group received 20 Grammy nominations and 12 American Music Awards nods and has been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the Vocal Group Hall of Fame. With more than 100 million albums sold worldwide, Earth, Wind & Fire is one of the best-selling musical groups ever.

Elements, an Earth, Wind and Fire tribute band, brings to life all the group's greatest hits, spanning decades, with a full band of brass, percussion and talented vocalists. Elements performs a thrilling

continued on page 12



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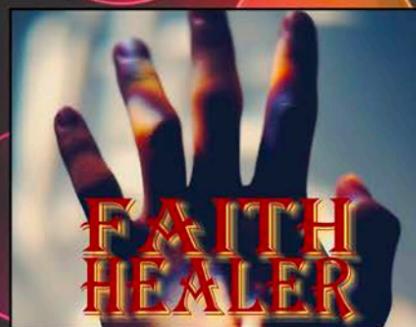
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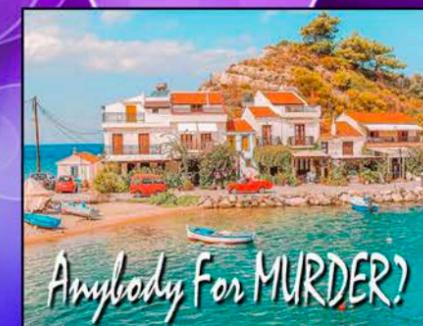
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show featuring all of the classic tunes, including “Shining Star,” “September,” “Can’t Hide Love,” “Boogie Wonderland,” and “Fantasy.” The stage production has a multi-media program that is a show unto itself.

Elements is based in the Northeast and its musicians have more than 50 years of combined recording, performing and touring experience. They combine tight horn arrangements, soaring falsettos and a pulsating groove as they bring to life a night of unforgettable hits. Their professionalism has earned them a solid reputation and a collection of devoted fans as they tour the country from California to Florida and worldwide.

You’ll be in your element(s) as you move and groove to the sounds of the songs that defined a generation.

Live in Central Park {Revisited}: Simon & Garfunkel

(January 8, 2022 7:00pm) On Sept. 19, 1981, more than 500,000 fans gathered in New York’s Central Park for a reunion of two legends: Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel. After 10 years apart, the two came together to raise money for the park’s restoration. Decades later, Lee Lessack and Johnny Rodgers, both performing artists in their own right, decided to pay tribute to Simon and Garfunkel, but they wanted something more than a tribute show. Lessack felt he needed a hook, something more specific than a general tribute. “I said, ‘What if we recreate the identical set list they played at Central Park, recreate that moment in time?’” he asked.

The result is *Live in Central Park (Revisited): Simon & Garfunkel*. Lessack has stressed that he and Rodgers are not assuming the persons of Simon and Garfunkel and there will be no Gar-funky hair. “We’re using an identical song list, song for song,” Lessack said. “I’m very excited that there was a lot of interest. Most of what I do is The Great American



Frank Marino's
DIVAS: Absolutely HER-Larious
JAN 13, 2022 | 7pm

Songbook. I was thrilled to get the interest I did (for this). Personally, I think these songs are standards.”

The play list includes everything from “Mrs. Robinson” to “Scarborough Fair,” “The sound of Silence,” “The 59th St. Bridge Song (Feelin’ Groovy),” “Homeward Bound,” “Bridge over Troubled Waters” and “Kodachrome.” The show features more than 20 songs and there is not a bad one in the bunch.

Lessack, a Philadelphia native, attended the American Academy of Dramatic Arts. He fell in love

with the theater when he saw *Pippin* as a gift for his Bar Mitzvah. The show was written by Stephen Schwartz, who also wrote *Wicked* and *Godspell*. He became a Lessack fan and Schwartz specifically asked for Lessack to work on the soundtrack recording of his *Gepetto* a Disney television movie. He tours extensively and has released five albums.

Johnny Rodgers was described by Stephen Holden of the *New York Times* as an “entertainer who has show business in his bones,” with “fused elements of Billy Joel, Peter Allen and Johnny Mercer.” A singer/

songwriter, pianist and recording artist, Rodgers has toured the world with his band as music ambassadors for the State Department.

Lessack said that they don’t give a lot of context to the songs because there are just so many of them and it’s about the music. “We talk about what was going on in the country in 1981. The first IBM personal computer came out, Reagan was shot and Beyoncé was born. Then we talk about them as songwriters and there’s some fun stuff and a little trivia. I grew up listening to the album and thought it would be piece of cake. I didn’t know the proper lyrics.” He knows them now.

Frank Marino’s DIVAS: Absolutely HER-Larious

(January 13, 2022 7:00pm) Don’t hate Frank Marino because he looks better in a gown than you do. Don’t hate him because his hair and makeup are always perfect and he walks on Manolo Blahnik stilettos. His show, DIVAS, features an all-star cast of superstar female impersonators, and on any given night, you are likely to meet Britney, Cher, Diana Ross, Beyonce, and more. Even Madonna and Dolly may stop by. Marino, the show’s emcee and star, Joan Rivers, changes between every act and struts on stage in designer gowns, strapped into his stilettos. His campy voice, smooth performance style and comic delivery are part of the reason for his success, but the main reason is his incredible energy. As his promo material says, “Niagara Falls could take lessons.” Be-dah-da-dum.

Marino grew up in New York and was going to be a doctor. In college, he worked in the pharmacy and spent too much time at the makeup counter. “For Halloween, I dressed up as Diana Ross,” he said.

Later on, he began impersonating Joan Rivers because of her glamor. “That was my big break,” he said. “I was impersonating Joan and went to see her in Atlantic City. I sent flowers and knocked on her door. She introduced

me to producers who were looking for a ‘Joan’ in Florida. I played the Sunrise Musical Theatre, which had 5,000 seats. Pia Zadora and her husband saw the show. They owned the Riviera in Las Vegas and they booked me for three months. I lasted 25 years. When it ended, I started my own show, ‘Frank Marino’s Divas Las Vegas’ at Caesar’s Entertainment for 10 years. I’m now in the Legends in Concert at the Tropicana and I’m still playing Joan.” Rivers was very supportive of Marino and he appeared on Rivers’ show, *Fashion Police*, spoofing what she would wear to Jennifer Aniston’s wedding. He wore a gown, of course.

In 2005, then Las Vegas Mayor Oscar Goodman proclaimed Feb. 1 to be “Frank Marino Day.” He has a street, Frank Marino Drive, named after him and a star on the Las Vegas Walk of Fame. In 2009, he was named Las Vegas’ “Entertainer of the Century,” and has performed more than 25,000 shows to more than 10 million people.

Marino is an author, newscaster, columnist and actor. His first book, *His Majesty, the Queen*, was a best-seller and he appeared in *Miss Congeniality 2* with Sandra Bullock and in the off-Broadway hit, *Tony ‘n Tina’s Wedding*.

He said that the show is about more than impersonating stars. “It’s the soundtrack of their lives,” he said. “With Aretha Franklin, we have everything from when she was young to before she passed away. We bring back memories to life. My core audience is Mr. and Mrs. America. The couple sees the show in Vegas and the next time they’re in town, it’s the first show they run to with friends. It’s usually the husbands who bring the others. Women run the households and they bring (the husbands) and he ends up liking our show better than the sexy show she promised for the next night. It becomes one big party, a very light, fun show.

While Marino always knew he’d be a star, he didn’t know the path would be covered with designer clothes and wig changes. “The ladder of success was even harder to climb wearing high heels,” he said. Come meet the Divas. It won’t be a drag.

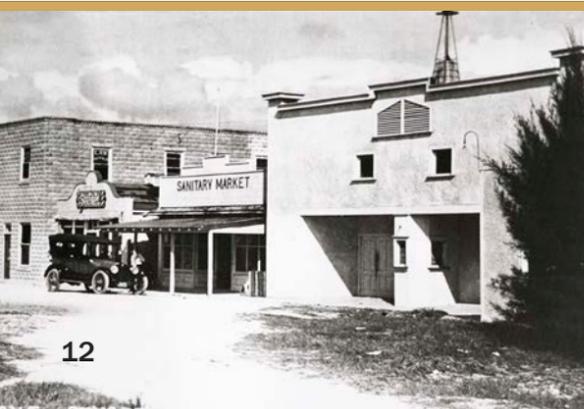
Matt Schofield (January 14, 2022 7:00pm) Britain has produced great guitarists: think Eric Clapton and Peter Green. Now there’s another, in a new generation named Matt Schofield. *Guitar and Bass Magazine* rates him in the Top 10 of British blues guitarists of all time and the *Los Angeles Daily News* calls him “the best blues guitarist from any country in decades.”

That’s heady stuff for the 43-year-old who grew up in the English countryside watching a B.B. King video his father gave him. Later videos introduced him to Albert Collins and Stevie Ray Vaughan. “It was like, ‘I’ve got to do this,’” Schofield said. “There’s something about the way the three of them were jamming. B.B. really was majestic. As an 11-or-12-year-old watching him, I was mesmerized but didn’t think there was any way I could ever do that. It was too special. When I saw Stevie Ray Vaughan playing with him, I thought maybe I could. Stevie made it seem accessible to people. I taught myself, working through my dad’s great blues record collection. I did my first gig at 13, and I’ve been doing it ever since.”

At 18, Schofield moved to London and worked as a sideman, honing his skills playing for artists of the British blues scene and touring American performers. “This enabled me to stay close to my roots while learning my trade and exploring a variety of musical frontiers,” he said. “By age 25, I was starting to explore my own band projects. Although my formative guitar influences are largely the old school blues players, I never wanted my own music to be constrained by a rigid formula or even genre. I just wanted to play ‘Matt Schofield music.’ Classic jazz, funk, soul, rock and all the music I love have all found their way into it. The process of writing and singing has become increasingly important to me, and I feel it’s those other aspects of creativity that helped define my own voice on the guitar.”

After five studio albums and some 10 years touring with his own band, Schofield has more that he wants to explore. “Remaining open to where the

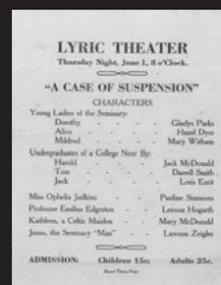
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Weaving together the history of The Lyric Theatre over the past 96 years is a story of community, commitment and connection. A community who joined together to support and save this historic treasure is our story. The thriving Lyric Theatre we now know is a testament to you, our Community.

HISTORICAL LYRIC

A Brief History



Spring of 1913
Construction for The “first” Lyric began on Osceola Avenue near Belle Flora and opened for its first performance a year later.

1917
The “first” Lyric was abandoned and moved to a little wooden structure on Osceola Avenue.

June 1925
Judge JC Hancock began construction of the new Lyric Theatre.





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music might take me while maintaining the excitement that improvising and collaborating with talented musicians is key to me," he said. "My inspiration and goals come from many places, my influences, old and new, include musicians I have wanted to collaborate with for years. There are things I still feel I hadn't realized on previous albums and I have a need to keep pushing myself. It all meets at the place where I'm heading now. I'm always aiming to go as far as possible to capturing the same connection with the listener that I aim to make at a live show or record. That's the goal: capturing that special moment."

Schofield has achieved success he never imagined, but he remains in awe of those who showed him the way. "I remain a music lover, first and foremost," he said. "The recognition I've received from both fans and peers is humbling and inspiring and those 'pinch me' moments where I found myself trading licks with heroes like Robben Ford and Buddy Guy are still the greatest thrill."

If you haven't heard Matt Schofield, your thrill is still to come.

Smokey & Me: A Celebration of Smokey Robinson

(January 19, 2022 7:00pm) The story goes that the legendary singer/songwriter Smokey Robinson, a founder of Motown and one of the producers of *Motown: The Musical*, went backstage on opening night to look for Charl Brown, the handsome young actor who portrayed him in the show. When he found him, Robinson simply smiled and said, "Hello, Me!"

Brown, who won a Tony nomination for Best Featured Actor in a Musical for his portrayal of Robinson, was inspired by the story to put together a show celebrating the life, music and career of the acclaimed singer/songwriter whom Bob Dylan

once described as "America's greatest living poet." Robinson's career spans more than four decades and includes songs like "Shop Around," "You've Really Got a Hold on Me," "My Girl," "I Second that Emotion" and "Tracks of My Tears." Robinson has received numerous awards, including Grammy's Living Legend, an Honorary Doctorate from Howard University, Kennedy Center Honors, the National Medal of Arts Award from the president of the United States and the Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for his lifetime contributions to popular music. He is a member of the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame and the Songwriters' Hall of Fame.

Charl Brown, a graduate of the University of Southern California School of Dramatic Arts, appeared on Broadway in *Jersey Boys* and in the original cast of *Sister Act* before he was tapped to play Robinson in *Motown: The Musical*. He reprised the role on London's West End and also appeared off-Broadway in *Walmartopia*. Brown perfectly captures the essence of the singer as he celebrates Robinson's life



Tito Puente, Jr.
JAN 21, 2022 | 7pm

from his beginnings in Detroit to the singer and songwriter who wrote some of popular music's most enduring hits. Brown sings them all, both the ones Robinson wrote and the ones he sang.

It's a wonderful opportunity to celebrate a legendary star and hear a rising one. "Ooh, Baby," ...it's going to be a night to remember. Don't miss a minute.

Tito Puente Jr. (January 21, 2022 7:00pm) As he turns 50, Tito Puente Jr. is as comfortable with the legacy of his father as he is with his own sound and style. While some sons of famous fathers run away from their father's fame and legacy, others try to emulate it.

Some, like Tito Puente Jr., son of the performer known throughout the world as the King of Latin music, embrace the legacy and work to keep it alive while making their own kind of music and their own mark.

In an interview, Tito Puente Jr., who was raised in New York and now lives in Miami, spoke about the different influences on his father and himself. "I was born in the suburbs of Rockland County,"

he said. "I was suburbanized. New York is a totally different feeling. It's more urban jazz. South Florida is more mambo, more Caribbean islands, more Afro-Cuban salsa. It's part of the aura of South Beach. New York is more jazz and Big Band."

Puente noted that his father, who was born and raised in Harlem, was exposed to jazz, blues and the Apollo sound. "My father created a sound and a vision," Puente said. He added mambo to swing. "It was very danceable and was very structured in its way. It had the rhythm. Gloria Estefan was right about that."

Puente admired his father, who taught him valuable lessons. "He was an incredible man," Puente said. "He said the main thing was to hone your craft and surround yourself with creative people and you will be creative, too. He was always around musicians. He was a cool cat and spent a lot of time with jazz, Latin and percussion players. I learned that from him and it's taken me far into a career having that instilled at an early age."

One thing his father did not teach him was the drums. The younger Puente began his career in the school marching band and he took drum lessons with someone else. "He didn't have the patience to teach," Puente said. "He sent me to drum classes and in college, jazz appreciation pushed me to learn more about music. I would come on the road with him from my late teens to early adult, watching and listening. It was the greatest way to learn about Latin jazz music, seeing that mentorship. It got into my heart. He didn't push me; I gravitated to it."

Puente has created his own style and it has taken him a long way. He brings a taste of contemporary jazz to the traditional mambo style and performs more than 300 shows a year across the country, from jazz festivals to grand symphony halls. In 2004, he released the celebrated album, *In My Father's Shoes*, which inspired a BET Jazz television special. He also appeared on the NPR tribute, *The Apollo at 70: A Hot Night in Harlem*. His 2010 album, *Got Mambo*, featured salsa legends Hansel and

Raul and Bobby Cruz and tropical music star Kevin Ceballos as it combined traditional mambo with new and innovative salsa compositions.

Puente is excited about a new project in the works with actor and director Edward James Olmos. Olmos is planning a documentary and film and Puente will serve as a consultant on the project. He is thrilled to introduce a new generation of audiences and young musicians to the ground-breaking music his father made.

"I'm getting to the point where I feel I've embraced his spirit," he said. "He left a catalogue of more than 186 records. I've embraced the 'nepotism.' I do feel that I honor his name. He shined a light on Latin music as an ambassador and I'm proud to hold that crown highly. What makes my concerts unique is that I have a quirkiness between songs and tell how it was written. I also engage the audience and talk about the great nightclubs and places like Kutcher's in the Catskills. It's really nostalgic and your feet will be hurting you."

The Lyric's Family Fun Series presents Mutts Gone Nuts

(January 22, 2022 2:00pm & 5:00pm) If you go onstage with kids or animals, you may well find yourself overlooked. If the animals are the cutest rescue dogs on the planet, it's a given, but that doesn't bother Scott and Jane Houghton of Mutts Gone Nuts. They are happy to share the stage with their adorable friends for a high-energy, high-wire show that is perfect for the entire family. Kids, parents and grandparents will love the pooches and the adults they let share the stage.

The show is billed a *Canine Cabaret* and that should tell you that you're going to get a little of



Mutts Gone Nuts
JAN 22, 2022
2pm & 5pm

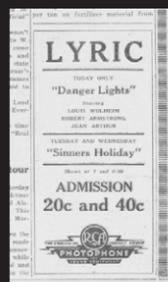
everything. The Houghtons, who are known as the "disorderly duo," have been performing together as a comedy team since 1984 and are known for blending physical comedy and circus artistry. They travelled the world and spent several years at Lee Greenwood's theater in Tennessee and as the featured act for Greenwood in Las Vegas and Tennessee. The duo also spent seven years with Dolly Parton's production, *Dixie Stampedo*. In 1996, they adopted their first rescue pooch and began fostering dogs in the off-season for a local rescue group. They brought Chico into their act in 2005 and by 2007, they'd reinvented themselves as Mutts Gone Nuts. They've added dogs since then and have brought a two-legged creature on board. Samantha Valle is one of the world's top trainers and a spokesperson for animal rescue. She and Geronimo hold the Guinness World's Record for a dog jumping rope Double Dutch. They have appeared with David Letterman and Steve Harvey.

"We have world record holders and they're fantastic," Scott Houghton said. "There are some Frisbee dogs and Sam has a couple of canine freestyle routines where she dances with her dogs to choreography. We have five dogs on pedestals who

continued on page 20



1930
Newly equipped with a RCA Photophone, *Danger Lights* was screened as the first "talkie."



1936
The Hancocks fell on hard times during the Great Depression and sold The Lyric to the bank.

1936-1978
The Lyric was rented out to community groups and was used to present traveling vaudeville shows, news weeklies, movies and eventually, a Performing Arts Auditorium.



1978
The Lyric was purchased by the New Life in Christ Church and used for weekly worship services.



1988
Friends of the Lyric purchased the historic theatre.

1989
Friends of the Lyric became a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

1987
The Lyric was put up for sale. Seen as an anchor and much needed entertainment center, Roy Laycock entered into a contract to purchase the building. Believing the community should own The Lyric, Roy gathered a group of people with fundraising and operational backgrounds to ignite and support his vision.

1993
The Lyric Theatre was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

1996
New Orchestra seating was installed and administrative offices constructed.

1991-1995
With grant funding from the State of Florida, National Endowment for the Arts and local community funding and support, The Lyric underwent needed stabilization and repair: new roof and air-conditioning systems, ADA Compliance alterations, Box Office construction, marquee improvements and remodeling of the lobby, restrooms and dressing room.





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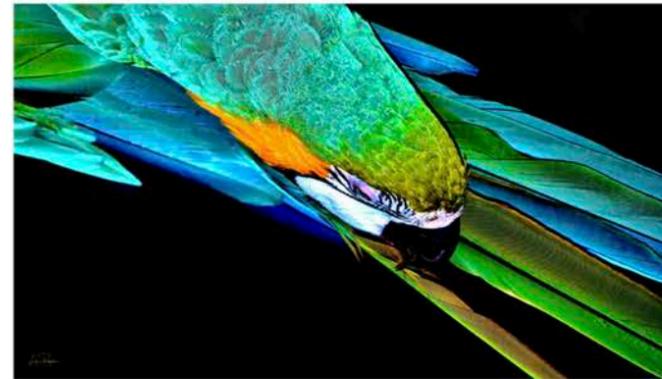
Stop in for a visit or take the day to explore the latest traveling exhibits on display at the Elliott Museum. Permanent exhibitions include an amazing collection of antique cars, a breadth of inspired art, the legends of baseball, and so much more! Enjoy lunch or dinner at the café.

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do fun tricks. The underlying story is that they don't behave well for me but behave well for Joan. I'm the 'bad trainer.' I get no respect and I'm the Rodney Dangerfield of trainers. Kids love watching a dog outsmart an adult."

The Houghtons are very serious about keeping their shows funny, and they're also serious about the welfare of the dogs in their care. Their rescue dogs are trained using positive, reward-based methods like toys and praise. They look for what each dog likes to do and they cultivate that talent. The dogs live indoors, have two acres of fenced area to run when they are at home and travel in large, padded, climate-controlled kennels for safety when on tour.

Chico, who is (probably) a Chihuahua and Pomeranian mix, is only 15 lbs., but he's the top dog. Feather, the group's first Greyhound, is a rescue dog who was saved after she couldn't run fast enough. She may not be a racer, but she has jaw-dropping jumping skills and has the unofficial world record for the highest jump by a dog. Pixel, also known as Wheels, is a border collie mix. She can run and out-manuever much bigger dogs and is Chico's understudy.

Charlie is a Jack Russell terrier who was rescued on his last day. He's agile and loves to climb, which makes him the perfect high-wire walking dog. Chuck Taylor is a Frisbee-playing border collie who was given up because he preferred to herd sticks instead of cows. Geronimo is a cattle dog mix who is the only dog in the world to jump into two spinning ropes at the same time. Rox Steady is a Heinz mix who looks just like Geronimo. Her specialties are agility and tricks. Paco, who was picked up as a stray in Wyoming, does everything from high jump to barrel. McNerdy's favorite toy is the Frisbee and he could play all day, dazzling the crowd with his athletic ability. New this year is Mr. Finnie, also known as Finn. The border collie was given up because the breed needs to be busy and active and Mutts Gone Nuts gives him the scope he needs.

If you are lucky enough to have a kid in your life, or are a kid at heart, it will be an awful lot of fun, and

you'll laugh yourself silly, even at Scott's corny jokes. Try your doggone best to get down to The Lyric. You'll be glad you did.

Jay & the Americans

(January 25, 2022 4:00pm & 7:00pm) They were almost called Binky Jones & the Americans. When four kids from Brooklyn, Sandy Deanne, Jay Traynor, Howie Kane and Kenny Vance went to meet legendary songwriters Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, that's the name the writers proposed. Leiber and Stoller had good records all over the walls and had written for Elvis, the Drifters and The Coasters. They were hit makers.



Jay & the Americans
JAN 25, 2022 | 4pm & 7pm

"We dreamed we could be with them," Deanne said. "We lucked out and they liked us. We were the first white group they signed themselves, as Col. Parker brought Elvis to them. They liked our harmonies and Jay's vibrato and said we were clean cut and a little bit soul."

The only problem was that name. The guys did not want to be Binky Jones, but they were too intimidated to say anything. Leiber and Stoller wanted "the Americans" in the title and an all-American name in front. They came up with Jay, and Jay & the Americans was born.

The group went on to have 12 Top 10 records, including "This Magic Moment," "Only in America," "She Cried," "Come a Little Bit Closer," and "Cara Mia."

"I remember sitting in the cafeteria at Hofstra College and hearing our first big hit, 'She Cried,' being announced as Number 3 on the Top 10 charts," Deanne said. "I promptly got up from the table and dumped my textbooks into the trash and broke my parents' hearts. They had hopes of my becoming a doctor. Later on, with the success of the band, they were proud of us. I was proud of us too. Over the years, the name Jay & the Americans has not always been considered hip, but I kind of think it's not so corny to be patriotic."

The group was inducted into Vocal Group Hall of Fame in 2002 and played Madison Square Garden 18 times, a highlight of their career.

"Selling out Madison Square Garden, you never forget," Deanne said. "There were kids screaming our names. It was mind-boggling and we never dreamed it would happen. It was a wonderful thing. We came off the stage bewildered because the audience was standing and screaming."

Today, the band consists of Deanne, Howie Kane, Marty Sanders and Jay Reinecke, the third "Jay" in the band's history. They never thought, as 18-year-olds, that more than 50 years later, they would still be performing for screaming crowds. They love touring and going to smaller towns they never played the first time around and they put on a heck of a show.

"They call it 'oldies,'" Deanne said. "To me it's mental memorabilia and it's valuable. We're building new memories, which is nice."

Leo Kottke

(January 29, 2022 7:00pm) Guitarist and composer Leo Kottke is one of the foremost finger-style guitar players in the world and he has the degree to prove it. In 2008, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Peck School of the Arts awarded Kottke a doctorate in performance music for redefining the potential of the guitar. "Kottke is an American musical icon who

has extended the tradition established by musical greats such as Chet Atkins and Merle Travis and John Fahey," said Scott Emmons, dean of the school. "Over the past 35 years, no single guitarist has influenced an emerging performance style to the extent that Kottke has influenced finger-style guitar."

Leo Kottke was born in Georgia, but his family moved around and he was influenced by folk and delta blues music, especially the work of Mississippi John Hurt. As a boy, he played the violin and trombone, but abandoned both to the guitar by the age of 11. In the 1960s, after a stint in the military, Kottke settled in the Twin Cities area and began playing at Minneapolis' Scholar Coffeehouse, which had been home to Bob Dylan and John Koerner. His debut album, *12 String Blues*, was recorded on a Viking quarter-inch tape recorder.

After sending tapes to John Fahey, Kottke was signed to Fahey's Tacoma label and released *6-and-12-String Blues*, known as the "Armadillo album." Fahey's agent signed Kottke to a contract at Capitol Records, and his first major label record, *Mudlark* was released in 1971.

Kottke wanted to remain an instrumentalist, but *Mudlark* and albums like *The Greenhouse*, *My Feet are Smiling* and *Ice Water* positioned him as a singer/songwriter in the golden era of the singer/songwriter. His last album for Capitol, *Chewing Pine*, put him in the Top 30; his touring had brought him fans throughout the United States and the world. In 2002, Kottke collaborated with Phish bassist Mike Gordon, recording *Clone* and *Sixty-Six Steps*. He has toured with flamenco and jazz guitar virtuosos Paco de Lucia and Al Di Meola, and his composition, "Ice Fields," a suite for amplified steel-string guitar and chamber orchestra, is considered a milestone for guitar concerto.

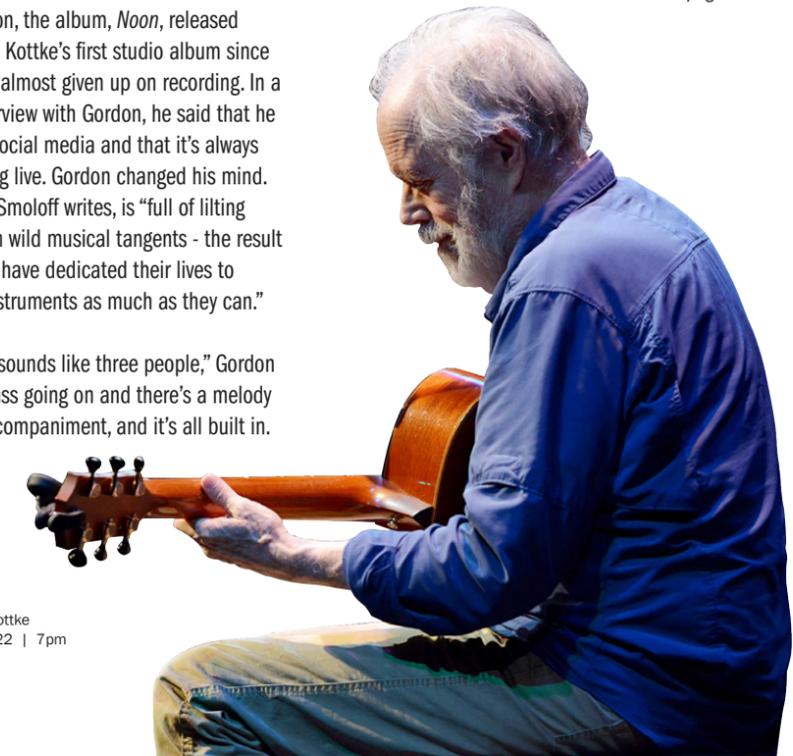
Throughout his career, Kottke has had to deal with partial hearing loss from an accident and severe tendinitis in his right hand, which almost ended his career. He maintained a relationship with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and its unique

guitar program, the only one in the world at which a student may choose to specialize in finger-style, jazz, classical or flamenco guitar. In 1985, he performed at the first American Finger-Style Festival, held on campus. He has been an advisor and visitor and has spoken to students about "The Realities of a Life Devoted to Music." "Kottke is a fabulous role model," says Dean Emmons, "His personal integrity, humor, self-effacing style and uncommon musical talent combine to provide many lessons for our aspiring music students."

Leo Kottke's peers have honored him, as well. He has two Grammy nominations, *Performance Magazine's* "Best Instrumentalist" award and induction into the Guitar Player Hall of Fame. Perhaps in tribute to his not playing the trombone as an adult, and with tongue in cheek, he was awarded a Certificate of Significant Achievement in Not Playing the Trombone from the University of Texas at Brownsville with Texas Southmost College.

In August 2020, Kottke and Mike Gordon announced a new collaboration, the album, *Noon*, released that month. It was Kottke's first studio album since 2005. Kottke had almost given up on recording. In a *Rolling Stone* interview with Gordon, he said that he had no heart for social media and that it's always been about playing live. Gordon changed his mind. The album, Jared Smoloff writes, is "full of lilting grooves that go on wild musical tangents - the result of two artists who have dedicated their lives to mastering their instruments as much as they can."

"When we play, it sounds like three people," Gordon said. "There's a bass going on and there's a melody and there's an accompaniment, and it's all built in."



Leo Kottke
JAN 29, 2022 | 7pm

As soon as your brain can see the pattern, he buries it. He's like this iconic American treasure living in his own bubble. He'll travel the country listening to 'The Lone Ranger' series from the 1950s in its entirety."

Kottke himself has likened his singing voice to "geese farts in a muggy day." It's a great thing for all of us that the music is the key and he is the master.

Live from Nashville: Country Legends

(January 30, 2022 7:00pm) You'll have a boot-scooting good time as *Live from Nashville: Country Legends*, takes you on a 75-year tour of the best of country music, from its beginnings to its future legends. Direct from Music City, singers and dancers will entertain with fast-fingered fiddling, fancy footwork and fine vocals that bring to life the music of everyone from Patsy Cline and Hank Williams to

continued on page 24

1999
Vacant lot to the north of The Lyric was purchased for a future expansion.

2001
The balcony of the theater was remodeled for the installation of new balcony seating, an elevator was installed and refurbishment of the lobby and restrooms.

2005
The Lyric expansion was completed, enlarging the stage 14 feet and adding a backstage equipped with a restroom and office/storage areas.



2014
A Capital Campaign resulted in substantial renovations to the lobby and box office, new exterior and interior entrances, new orchestra seating, new sound system and architectural elements added to the walls and columns.

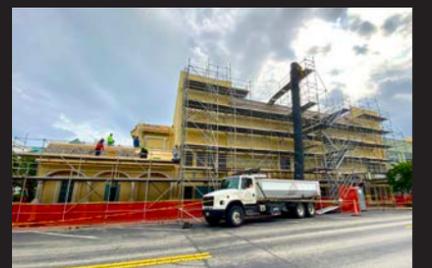
2015-16
The Lyric's proscenium was ornamented in an Art Nouveau style. The elegant design, artistry and craftsmanship of the trompe l'oeil art technique were added throughout The Lyric including the balcony parapet, doorway transoms and interior theatre walls.



2021
With amazing community support for the Next Act Capital Campaign, The Lyric underwent critical structural and building renovations. Substantial structural column and beam replacement/repairs, new roof, new air conditioning units with state-of-the-art air purification systems, new signage to replicate the historic "blade" sign of The Lyric's past and restoration of the marquees.

2020
The Lyric was shuttered by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

October 1, 2021
The Lyric reopened.



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George Jones, Conway Twitty and Loretta Lynn, to Garth, Reba and Shania and the “youngsters”: Luke, Carrie and Blake.

Live from Nashville: Country Legends takes you on a chronological journey of the best of Nashville, with a fully-costumed and choreographed production that will keep your toes tapping, your adrenaline pumping and your memories coming fast and furiously. The show starts with a Welcome to Nashville, “Tennessee Saturday Night.” It moves through the Roots of Country, with songs like “Night Train to Memphis,” “Salty Dog,” and “Foggy Mountain Breakdown” and then comes to the Golden Age, with classics like “Your Cheatin’ Heart,” “Sweet Dreams,” and “Ring of Fire.”

Country Music Greats features songs you love, like “Hello Dartin,” “Stand by Your Man,” and “Make the World Go Away,” and Country Goes National brings the songs the whole country listened to: “9 to 5,” “Rhinstone Cowboy” and “The Gambler.” Country Music is King features “Boot Scoot Boogie,” “Friends in Low Places,” “The Dance / I Hope You Dance” and “Meet in the Middle.” Cowboys Gonna Be Cowboys features “Who’s Your Daddy?” and “She Thinks My Tractor’s Sexy,” and Future Legends spotlights “Before he Cheats” and “The House That Built Me.” The show ends with a tribute to God and Country, “God Bless America” and “America, The Beautiful.”

The cast includes Candice Lively, originally from Tennessee. She spent many years in Pigeon Forge, TN, singing and dancing in theaters that included Dolly Parton’s Dollywood theme park, the Black Bear Jamboree and The Smoky Mountain Opry. She has appeared with Norwegian Cruise Lines and has toured the United States twice on national tours of *Miracle on 34th Street* and *Ring of Fire*.

Lisa Saint attended East Carolina University, where she received a BFA on musical theater performance. She spent eight months at the Black Bear Jamboree, worked for Carnival Cruise Lines and toured the globe performing.

Anthony Manning is also a native Tennessean who now lives in Nashville. He spent more than 15 years performing at theme parks and on cruise ships and most recently played Harold Arlen in the tour of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. He has been a background singer for artists such as Dolly Parton and Jimmy Fortune.

Chet Wollan spent years at Dollywood and most recently traveled the country in the national tours of *Miracle on 34th Street* and *Ring of Fire*. He will be sharing the stage with his wife, Candice Lively.

The performers and band have played to sold out audiences around the country. At the Westchester Broadway Theatre, audiences said that “The singers were so gifted, talented, personable and energetic, it was one of the best shows we’ve ever seen and we were sorry to see the show end!”

Two step over to The Lyric. You’ll have a country good time.

Under the Streetlamp (February 2, 2022 7:00 pm) When their successful run in the Chicago company of *Jersey Boys* ended, performers in the Tony-winning musical were all ready for their next gig. They’d formed a group, Under the Streetlamp, and their mission was to stand on the shoulders of the artists that created the classic hits from the ‘50s, ‘60s and ‘70s that they loved. With a unique blend

of harmonies and slick dance moves, Under the Streetlamp played to sold-out audiences around Chicagoland.

The talented musicians caught the eye of a local producer, who thought that their “nostalgic rebirth of retro rock ‘n roll” could have a home on PBS, where their sound would reach millions across the country. They filmed a short promo and presented it to WTTW, the PBS station in Chicago. The response? “You film a concert; we will be the presenting station.” Their first show, *Under the Streetlamp Live*, aired on PBS and led to tours around the country. They even opened for the Temptations. A second special was also a PBS hit and the guys began touring in Europe and Mexico. They released a holiday album, *Every Day’s a Holiday*, that premiered on Sirius XM radio, and a third PBS concert, *Under the Streetlamp: Rockin’ Round the Clock*, hit the air in 2016.

Since then, the talented four, made up of Shonn Wiley, David Larsen, Brandon Wardell and Eric Gutman, have performed with orchestras that include the Utah, Phoenix, Milwaukee and Detroit Symphonies and the Cleveland Pops. In 2019, they made their New York debut at the Sony Music Hall.

In a 2019 review of their performance with the Nashville Symphony, Jeffrey Ellis called them “Handsome, charming, engaging and amazingly talented. No matter how many times you’ve seen them, (whether it’s your first or twenty-first concert,) there’s one thing you cannot help but think about Under the Streetlamp: these four guys really know how to put on a show. In Nashville, where we know a thing or two about superstar performers, consummate professionals and dazzling musicians, anyone who can bring their audience to its feet in a genuine, heartfelt standing ovation...deserves their moment in the spotlight.”

For Shonn Wiley, the shows are about the music and the audiences. “My favorite Streetlamp moment is meeting our fans at the end of each show. Music is inside all of us. That’s why our hearts have beats. Over the years, this defines so many important moments. I like hearing about the memories of our fans. We are definitely in the business of nostalgia and our audiences never shy away from telling us how much fun they’ve had.”

Over the past 10 years, no matter how the personnel have changed, the goal of Under the Streetlamp has remained clear: to breathe new life into timeless songs so that audiences leave with a smile.

Come see this modern-day Rat Pack. You’ll see why retro never sounded so now and leave with a smile.

Abbacadabra: The Ultimate ABBA Tribute

(February 3, 2022 6:00pm & 8:30pm) Jack Greenberg signed the up-and-coming Swedish pop group ABBA to its first U.S. recording contract in 1974. It was hard to envision then what was to become a global phenomenon, spawning a Broadway show and several hit movies. When Greenberg first saw Abbacadabra, an ABBA tribute band, he said it was a revelation. “I know ABBA inside and out and when I first saw Abbacadabra perform, I couldn’t believe it. It was like watching the real deal.”

Greenberg put his money where his mouth is and now manages the tribute band, which came to life in 2004. Gary Raffanelli, a musician, entrepreneur, Benny Andersson look-alike and ABBA fan, saw the group in 1979 and decided to put together a tribute band. He called on his friend Sandy Selby, who has a four-octave range, to help dissect the vocal parts. Every musical note would have to be transcribed and replayed into the computer. All of the parts were assembled and compared to the original ABBA tracks for accuracy.

Raffanelli brought together a team of highly trained vocalists and internationally-known keyboardists, percussionists and bassists to recreate the sounds and sights of an ABBA show. The group’s first show was at the El Dorado Resort and Casino in Reno, but they were soon playing to sold out crowds around the country and on cruise lines such as Princess and Royal Caribbean. Fittingly, in 2007, they began performing in Europe, where ABBA first came to fame.

In addition to Raffanelli, the performers included Susan Campbell as Agnetha, Lesley Green as Frida and Rich Hamelin as Bjorn. Campbell, a Canadian, studied music at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. She started her singing career with the band Cool Change, led by Canadian Music Rock & Roll Hall of Famer Tommy Horrocks for seven years. As Agnetha, she has performed around the world and Gary Puckett of the Union Gap said that she had “one of the best voices in the business.”

Lesley Green has been performing since she was a child. The singer, songwriter, actor and dancer calls music her first love, and with more than a three-octave range, she has performed in musical theater with credits including *Phantom of the Opera*, *West Side Story*, *Guys and Dolls*, and *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*.

Rich Hamelin is a singer/songwriter and multi-instrumentalist, specializing in vocals, guitar, keys and bass. Also a Canadian, he studied string bass and composition at Canada’s prestigious Humber College. He specialized as Bjorn in ABBA tribute groups before joining Abbacadabra.

The group covers 20 of ABBA’s mega-hits, including “Mamma Mia,” “Dancing Queen,” “The Winner Takes It All,” and “Take a Chance on Me.” They are known for their attention to detail, from the sound to the clothing. Listening to them is like taking a step back in time, when everyone was dancing.

Tony Orlando once told Gary Raffanelli that “When you’re dreaming about your life and future, shoot for the moon, because even if you miss, you’ll still be up there among the stars.” Raffanelli took a chance and it has paid off big time, for his band, and most especially, for his audiences. You can take a chance on them, too.

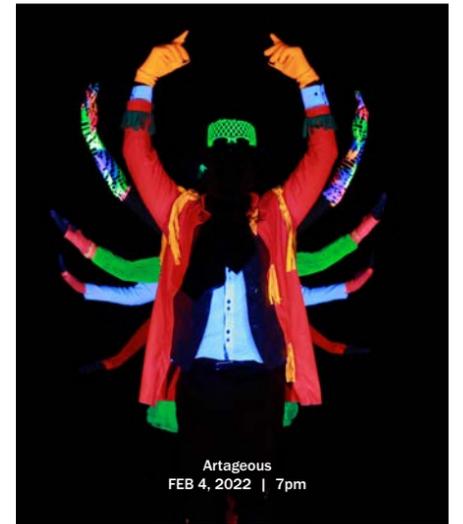
The Lyric’s Family Fun Series presents

Artrageous (February 4, 2022 7:00pm) Outrageous Fusion. Outrageous Inclusion. Outrageous Revolution.

That’s Artrageous, the troupe of multi-talented live performance artists, world-class singers and recording artists, highly-trained dancers, audience motivators and veteran musicians from the high desert of New Mexico. Their high energy performance is a combination of all the arts on one stage, combined with humor and interaction in a frenzy of movement and color.

Artrageous has a passion for art and community and the performers bring the message of the arts as an integral and valuable part of human existence to the stage, leaving their audiences of all ages singing, dancing and clapping along.

When they enter the World of Artrageous, theatergoers are greeted by troupe members and encouraged to choose a souvenir finger light ring and participate in activities where they can win prizes and create their own original art works on a



Artrageous
FEB 4, 2022 | 7pm

troupe member. Artrageous actors teach audience members dance moves they will use later and pick brave volunteers to join the troupe on stage for a special number. Their custom soundtrack plays while creative art quotes and Artrageous facts (they have played 49 states - hello, Delaware) are displayed on the video screen, leaving the audience wondering what will happen next. Every scene or musical number includes some audience participation. Have no fear, audience members who are more reserved can express themselves by singing along and using their finger lights to create a light show. There is something for everyone, whether you are a performer at heart or just want to be thoroughly entertained.

What will you see at an Artrageous show?

Artists, using hands, brushes and other objects create art on giant canvases while the audience tries to guess what each will be. Lines and strokes become portraits of icons in a matter of moments. All the while, live musicians perform everything from pop to country to Artrageous’ original music. Artrageous dancers incorporate the dance moves the audience learned before the show and the audience can’t help but dance in the aisles and their seats. The troupe brings their puppet, Howard, out and he takes the audience on an imaginative dream through a world of blacklight where masterpieces are created by a team of artists as the paintings seem to appear out of thin air. People and paintings seem to float in Howard’s blacklight world.

At the end of the performance, the entire audience is invited on stage to interact with the art creations made just for them. The audience can view the art created during the presentation and meet the troupe and take photos. A signature of Artrageous is Splatter! After the show, audience members are



Under the Streetlamp
FEB 2, 2022 | 7pm



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invited to bring up a favorite t-shirt, hat or pair of shoes and get creative as they step into the Splatter Station and have one of the artists turn the gear into a custom art piece.

This is a show that stretches the boundaries of art and of the imagination. It expands the palette and goes beyond the canvas.

Billy Prine and the Prine Time Band Present: The Songs of John Prine

(February 5, 2022 7:00pm) Billy Prine was seven years younger than his brother, legendary singer/songwriter John Prine. Billy, though, grew to be two feet taller. "He had a big heart, a real big heart," Billy Prine said about his brother, who died of COVID-19 in 2020. "I know I got way taller than him. But his heart, I think, was bigger."

The two Prines, the younger of the four Prine brothers, were close their entire lives. When they lost their father when Billy was 17, John took on some of that role. After John's death, Billy put together a show, "The Songs of John Prine," to celebrate the music of a man widely regarded as one of the most influential songwriters of his generation. He also released an Extended Play album, *A Place I Used to Know*, featuring covers of John's work including "Paradise" and "If You Don't Want My Love," a song John wrote with Phil Spector, and Billy Prine's own work.

The Prines grew up in the Chicago suburbs. Their father was a tool and die maker and often listened to country music when he came home from work. Two of the boys, John and Dave, were musicians and introduced their younger brother to the works of Hank Williams, Bob Dylan and the New Lost City Ramblers. Their parents took the boys to live performances and Billy saw Johnny Cash at 4 and Ernest Tubbs at 8. Billy began performing in a garage band at 12 and was with bands in Chicago and California for many years before moving to Nashville, where he worked for John's record label.

For Billy Prine, John was the best of big brothers and always a brother first. Billy

Prine told an interviewer that he didn't realize what a large body of work John had accumulated at an early age until he saw John perform live at The Fifth Peg in Chicago at the beginning of his career. "I said, 'Wow,' I wasn't aware he had all this material and it was great material. It was kind of surprising, but it happened so fast. It wasn't like he was doing this for four or five years before he got discovered, but when I thought about it, I said, 'Well that's John,' because he used to like to write stories and he was good at creative writing in high school. It was like a natural progression and his songs were definitely something I've never heard anyone write about. Some of the songs and some of the subjects were really unique."

John Prine went on to win four Grammy Awards as well as a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award. Billy Prine attended his brother's induction into the National Songwriters Hall of Fame, where Kris Kristofferson, no mean songwriter himself, said that "If God has a favorite songwriter, it's got to be John Prine."



My Son the Waiter: A Jewish Tragedy
FEB 10, 2022 | 7pm

To Billy Prine, who knows the impact his brother's music had on the world, he's still, first and foremost, Billy's beloved brother. "He was a great guy, a great brother," Prine said. "He was a pleasure to be around. He was funny and someone I could always go to if I needed some advice."

Now it's Billy's time to honor the big brother with the big heart. Keeping the music alive is his way to do it. Come hear John Prine's music, sung by the man who knew him and loved him best.

My Son the Waiter: A Jewish Tragedy

(February 10, 2022 7:00pm) No Jewish woman in the throes of labor ever screamed, "He's going to be a waiter!" That truism is the premise for Brad Zimmerman's one-man show in which he uses humor and pathos in equal measure to detail his 29 years of "temporarily" waiting on tables in New York City while he waited to make it big as a comedic actor.

If you ate in New York City, Zimmerman may have waited on you. For him, success was not a new house or expensive car. His mother got to tell her friends that he was able to buy a mattress or some other non-luxury item. As with so many hopefuls, he took years of acting lessons and never gave up on his dream. In 2005, he began working on his show, which is part stand-up and part theater. He sends up his childhood, his family, his misbegotten love life and his career, which actually took a wonderful turn in 2006, when he opened for George Carlin. They became friends until Carlin's death in 2008 and the first time Zimmerman opened for Carlin at the Paramount Theatre outside of Chicago, Carlin came up to him and said it was "really great." Okay. Carlin used a different word than "really," but he did say "great."

Zimmerman went on to work with entertainers like Brad Garrett, Susie Essman, Julio Iglesias and Dennis Miller and was Joan Rivers' opening act of choice for more than seven years. She has said that she had three great opening acts her lifetime: Billy Crystal, Gary Shandling and Brad Zimmerman.

As a reviewer in *Broadway World* wrote, "Brad Zimmerman is a people person. He knows how we tick and how we operate. He knows just what to serve to get the laughs and the smiles and the tears. All those years of waiting tables has shaped him into a connoisseur of satire. He has that enchanting ability to deliver a punchline with one look, giving the audience a double laugh when he actually tells us the end of the joke."

Those who have seen Brad Zimmerman have a message for his mother. He may not be a doctor, but he has kept us in stitches. Ba-da.

An Evening with Matt Nokoa

(February 11, 2022 7:00pm) He's been described as "Jerry Lee Lewis meets Beethoven." He's been called "a hot-handed phenom who can go from Chopin to beer-drenched honky-tonk in one set." Born on a small goat farm in upstate New York, he trained as a concert pianist before accepting a scholarship to the Berklee College of Music as a vocalist. He's a multi-instrumental composer with powerhouse vocals. He's Matt Nokoa and he's a young man with a brilliant future.

Nokoa didn't start playing the piano until he was a teen and he toured the Adirondacks and Catskills with his music. Then he set his sights on the Berklee College of Music in Boston, where he started an art rock band, The Fens. His piano skills and incredible vocals led to performances with Grammy-winning singer Kathy Mattea and Grammy winning jazz composer and Rolling Stones tour saxophone player Tim Ries.

After college, Nokoa moved to New York City, playing the all-night piano bars. In 2012 and 2014, he released solo albums, garnering multiple songwriting awards including a win at the Kerrville Folk Festival's new folk competition. His newest album, *Casting Shadows*, is a mesmerizing blend of pop, soul and classical influences that tells a story of a young man whose childhood dreams and adult reality sometimes crash into each other. A modern troubadour, Nokoa tells stories in song with a musicianship that belies how young he is.



An Evening with Matt Nokoa
FEB 11, 2022 | 7pm

Recently, Nokoa has been touring with singer/songwriter Tom Rush, who sees great things for the young artist. "He's my accompanist, but he's so much more than that," Rush said. "He's a monster talent. He steals the show and I don't know why I let him do it. It's fun for the audience. He's definitely on his way up. I'm hoping he'll let me open for him when he's doing stadiums."

Joanne Shaw Taylor

(February 12, 2022 7:00pm) Don't ask British blues guitarist Joanne Shaw Taylor what it's like to be a female guitarist. She does not believe that it requires special equipment. "My ovaries don't affect my guitar playing," she said.

Indeed, not. The 33-year old has been called the "new face of the blues;" the woman with the big

voice from the Black Country of England, has been rocking since she was a teen. Her debut album, *White Sugar*, released in 2009, and her sophomore album, *Diamonds in the Dirt*, from 2010, each went to No. 8 on the *Billboard* Top Blues Album charts. She has twice been named Best Female Vocalist at the British Blues Awards and was also named Songwriter of the Year there.

Taylor's father was a guitar player who loved country-style blues. Her older brother was into rock and metal. Taylor played acoustic guitar and was trained in the classical style, performing with the Birmingham Youth Ensemble. That changed when she was 12 or 13. "The electric guitar seems far sexier than the classical world," she said.

Taylor also discovered the music of Stevie Ray Vaughan. "I come from the disciplined classical

continued on page 32

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Joanne Shaw Taylor
FEB 12, 2022 | 7pm

world,” she said “Stevie Ray Vaughan was technically brilliant, but he was able to inject so much of himself. He was the gateway artist for a lot of players of my generation. He had huge, four-minute songs and a smooth, lovely voice with well-played guitar.” Taylor left school at 15 to pursue a career in music. She met Dave Stewart of the Eurhythmics that year and he became a mentor. “He was the first person to encourage me to sing and write songs,” she said. “He saw me as more than an artist at that age, which was really big and added to my self-belief.”

Stewart also set her on the path to songwriting that has stood her in such good stead. “He sent me a list of song titles,” she said. “He’d tell me to send the lyrics. Up until then, I was trying to write the verse as one thing and the chorus off on a tangent. The song title gives me a framework. It’s an early habit that stuck with me.”

Another great influence was Joe Bonamassa, the legendary American blues guitarist, who also began his career at an early age. He has described Taylor as a “superstar in waiting.” “He’s like a big brother,” Taylor said “I met him when I released my first album. I’d ask questions about day-to-day things and he made it a lot easier. You get thrown into (the business) and nobody tells you. I left school at 15 and had no idea how to book gigs and do contracts. I have really supportive parents, but without Dave and Joe, I would be a very different artist.”

Taylor’s latest album, *Reckless Heart*, is a follow-up to her Top 20 hit, “Wild.” She’s in great form in what amounts to an album of firsts: first album made in her adopted hometown of Detroit, first produced by her close friend, Al Sutton, the first largely recorded live and the first to feature an unplugged solo performance and, by chance, a passing train. It’s

also an album that pulls the past into the present, with vintage British blues-rock given a modern makeover, while her most powerful vocals take their cue from the gritty soul greats, Aretha, Tina and Mavis Staples she was raised on. *Reckless Heart* was nominated as Best Blues Rock Album for the 2020 Blues Music Award.

For her Lyric show, Taylor said she’ll have her three-piece band and play a mix of her albums. “There will be blues, with plenty of guitar solos and a bizarre British accent,” she said.

The superstar in waiting is waiting no more.

Ultimate 60’s Jersey vs. Motones (February 14, 2022 7:00pm) Get ready to rumble! It’s a battle between the Motones and the Jerseys and the audience decides who reigns Supreme.

Two “teams” of male vocalists vie for supremacy in this song-and-dance fest. It’s the ultimate ‘60s sing-off, featuring talented singers and nearly 50 songs from artists like Marvin Gaye, the Temptations, the Drifters and Stevie Wonder dueling it out with the songs from the Beach Boys, Herman’s Hermits and the Beatles. They arrive on stage to a “Rocky”-style theme and an emcee, (female), who keeps the peace and belts a few out herself. The only rule is that there are no rules.

You’ll want to have your cell phone handy because for once, the performers want you to use them during the show. The singers perform in categories like love songs, Beatles tunes, sing-alongs and ladies of the ‘60s, and the audience votes after each category through an app on the phone. You’re probably up out of your seat and dancing, so you may have to sit down to cast your ballot. The singers even do a switch, where Jersey busts some soul moves and the Motones sing falsetto. The guys are shameless in shilling for votes, including the possible wearing of tutus.

The great thing is that the only winner is the audience, who gets to enjoy the fun, great music and sing-alongs.

Among the songs you’ll hear are “Eye of the Tiger,” “Oh, What a Night,” “Hard Day’s Night,” “Help Me Rhonda,” “I Heard it Through the Grapevine,” “Workin’ My Way Back to You,” “Dancin’ in the Streets,” “Just My Imagination” and “You Don’t Own Me.” There’s even a rendition of “O Sole Mio” thrown in.

Broadwayworld.com, reviewing a show in Denver, said that “the performers are all incredibly talented, with voices that will make you melt and moves that will make you blush.” *On Stage Colorado* noted that “it’s hard to distinguish who has a better time every night - the singers or the audience. *Motones vs. Jerseys* is a high-energy concert, full of intimately and proficiently delivered hits.”

You’ll be glad you got a seat, but you won’t stay in it. They’ll make you feel like dancin’.

An Evening with Branford Marsalis

(February 15, 2022 5:00pm & 8:00pm) A revolutionary jazz musician and Grammy-winning saxophonist, Branford Marsalis is in a league of his own. He is an NEA Jazz Master and Tony award nominee for the original score for the revival of August Wilson’s *Fences*. The New Orleans native, eldest son of pianist and educator Ellis Marsalis and the brother of Wynton, Delfeayo and Jason Marsalis, the musician began his career as a youngster, picking up the clarinet first. He eventually settled on the soprano sax and worked with Clark Terry and his brother, Wynton, in Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers while in college. In 1986, he formed his own quartet, which has become one of the most widely respected groups in jazz.

In 2015, Marsalis and his quartet received a rare invitation to join Kurt Elling in a weekend performance at the New Orleans Snug Harbor. Elling and Marsalis recorded their collaboration, which can be heard on the 2016 release *Upward Spiral*, which was nominated for a 2017 Grammy for Best Jazz Vocal Album. Now the artist and his ensemble have released *The Secret Between the Shadow and the Soul*, which capitalizes on Marsalis’ previous collaborations with Sting and Elling. “Working with Kurt for a year and a half took me back to what I learned in hindsight from my gig with Sting,” he said. “Working with a singer changes you in ways you don’t realize. When I started playing jazz, after my background in R & B, all the possibilities I discovered led me to play solos that went on and on. Sting said, ‘No, you’ve got 45 seconds,’ which did more than

An Evening with Branford Marsalis
FEB 15, 2022 | 5pm & 8pm

just cause me to edit. It taught me to focus on the melodies, to get to the point.”

The Secret Between the Shadow and the Soul received rave reviews. The magazine *All About Jazz* summed up the work by saying that it “was revelatory in making explicit just how much pleasure this group shares by playing together.” *Downbeat* said that the album was “a snapshot of where the quartet currently stands: at the top of its game.”

Marsalis and his group have longevity not often seen in the music business. Pianist Joey Calderazzo and bassist Eric Revis have been with the group for more than 20 years, and drummer Justin Faulkner, known as “the rookie,” has been with it for a decade. In addition to performing, each of the veterans, including Marsalis, is a composer and their works are heard on the recording and



in concert. For Marsalis, it’s about the non-verbal story-telling, a lesson he learned from Sonny Rollins. “Sonny Rollins provided the template for playing each piece with a ton of vocabulary and how to use the sound of one’s instrument,” he said. “With us, it’s all about the sound and the power it has to create emotion. When you deal with sound, you don’t play the same thing twice in a row. You listen to each other and every song is different.”

Marsalis has had a wildly successful career as a solo artist, working with some of the best classical ensembles in the world. He has performed with the New York Philharmonic, Chicago and Dusseldorf Symphonies, and performed his first solo concert at San Francisco’s Grace Church in 2014, a performance documented in the recording, *In My Solitude*. He served as creative director for the Ascent series for the Cincinnati Symphony in 2012-2013 and served as musical director to *The Tonight show with Jay Leno*.

Still, Marsalis finds that his band works best for him. “Some musicians may need to work in different projects to create the illusion of sounding different by changing the context,” he said. “We are confident that we can adjust our group sound so we don’t have to change the content. Staying together allows us to play adventurous, sophisticated music and sound good. Lack of familiarity leads to defensive playing, playing not to make a mistake. I like playing sophisticated music and I couldn’t create this music with people I didn’t know.”

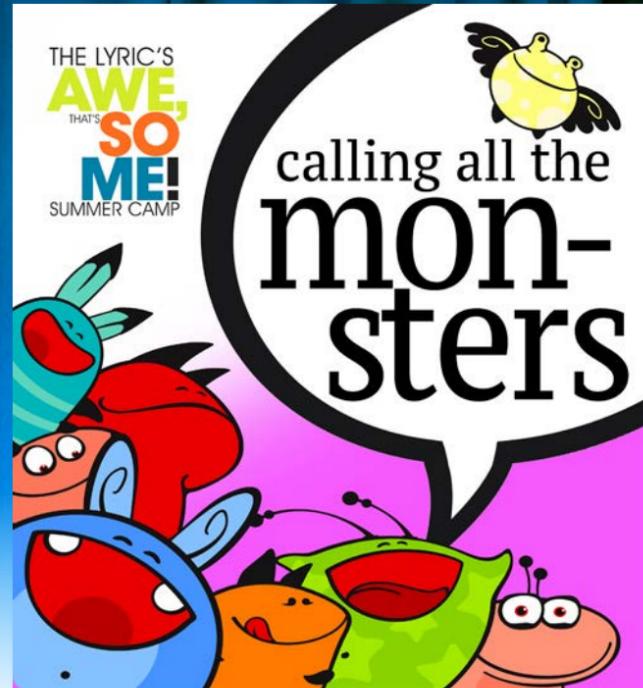
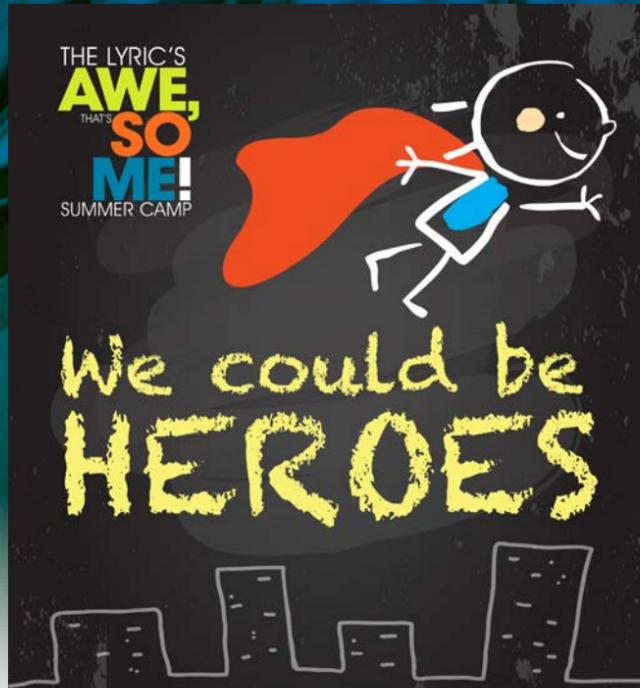
Marsalis has screen and stage credits and awards including Drama Desk and Tony nominations. His most recent film work was the scoring for *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom*, starring Viola Davis and the late Chadwick Boseman. It is the Netflix film adaptation of Pulitzer Prize winner August Wilson’s play, produced by Denzel Washington.

Marsalis has always shared his knowledge as an educator, forming extended teaching relationships at Michigan State, San Francisco State and North Carolina Central Universities and conduction workshops throughout the United States and worldwide.

Marsalis has been called “a jester and a professor, and elder-and-still today, after more than 35 years in the spotlight - a provocateur” (*Pop Matters*).

continued on page 36

The Lyric Theatre's **AWESOME!** Summer Camp



Session 1: June 6-24 **We could be Heroes**

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Session 2: July 11-29 **Calling all the Monsters**

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Pat Metheny - Side-Eye with James Francis & Joe Dyson

(February 16, 2022 7:00pm) It's rare for a musician to win one Grammy Award in a career. To have won 20 spread over Best Rock Instrumental, Best Contemporary Jazz Recording, Best Instrumental Solo, and Best Instrumental Composition is amazing. If you've won seven consecutive Grammy Awards for seven consecutive albums, you're guitarist Pat Metheny, only the fourth guitarist to be included in the Downbeat Hall of Fame.

Metheny comes from Lee's Summit, Missouri and started playing the trumpet at 8. He switched to the guitar as a teen and by 15 was working with the best Jazz musicians in Kansas City. He burst onto the international jazz scene in 1974 and spent three years with vibraphone great Gary Burton. Even as a young man, he had already shown his trademark playing style, a way of playing and improvising that was modern and yet grounded in the jazz tradition of melody, swing and the blues. With the release of his first album, *Bright Size Life*, Metheny reinvented the traditional jazz guitar sound for a new generation. Throughout his career, he has continued to redefine the genre by utilizing new technology and working to evolve the improvisational and sonic potential of his instrument.

Metheny is known for his versatility. Over the years, he has performed with artists as diverse as Steve Reich, Ornette Coleman, Herbie Hancock, Jim Hall, Milton Nascimento and David Bowie. His body of work includes compositions for solo guitar, small ensembles, electric and acoustic instruments, large orchestras, ballet and the robotic instruments of his Orchestron project, always sidestepping the limits of any one genre.

In 2020, Metheny released a new album, *From This Place*, which features 10 compositions by him. It is, he said, a work for which he has waited a long time. "From This Place is one of the records I have been waiting to make my whole life," he said. "It is kind of a musical culmination, reflecting a wide range of expressions that have interested me over the years, scaled across a large canvas, presented in a way that offers the kind of opportunities for communication that can only be earned with a group of musicians who have spent hundreds of nights together on the bandstand. Add to that the challenge of all new music and the spontaneous response it generated, channel it through the prism of large-scale orchestration and unexpectedly, *From This Place* becomes something that advances many of my central aspirations as a musician."

Now Metheny is launching a new playing environment called "Side-Eye."

"From my earliest days in Kansas City, I was the beneficiary of so many older musicians giving me a platform to develop my thing through the prism of their experience and the particular demands of what their music implied. I have been feeling like I wanted to have a specific platform to focus on some of the younger musicians I have enjoyed recently who I have felt some kind of a kinship with. I wanted to create an ongoing setting to feature a rotating cast of new and upcoming musicians who have particularly caught my interest along the way."

Metheny said that he draws as much inspiration from younger musicians as they do from him. "I find myself inspired by how they deal with the musical challenges that come with the territory of some of these older tunes and at the same time I find myself intrigued with the possibilities of what might be possible in writing new music just for them. This band setting is what it will be all about."

Come listen to Metheny and friends. You'll be inspired, too.

Stayin' Alive – A Tribute to the Bee Gees

(February 18, 2022 6:00pm & 8:30pm) You know the music. Songs by the Bee Gees like "Staying Alive," "How Deep is Your Love?" "Night Fever" and "You Should Be Dancing" fueled the disco craze and defined a decade. The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame band, founded by brothers Barry, Robin and Maurice Gibb, began in 1958, but it wasn't until the early 1970s, when hits like "Lonely Days" and "How Can You Mend a Broken Heart?"

charted that they hit it big, with appearances on *The Ed Sullivan Show* and *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson*.

When the brothers started the group in 1958, they had early success, but then they went their separate ways. It wasn't until the early 1970s, when they reunited and their songs charted that they reached a larger audience and hit it big. In the mid-1970s, at the suggestion of Eric Clapton, the group moved to Miami and started recording fewer ballads and more dance-oriented music.

In 1977, a little movie called *Saturday Night Fever* was released. Producer Robert Stigwood had asked the Bee Gees to write the songs for the movie and the soundtrack and film were both phenomenal successes, making international superstars of John Travolta and the Bee Gees. The album was the highest-selling album in history and is among the best-selling soundtracks ever. The Bee Gees, who wrote every song, as they did for their entire career, won five Grammy Awards for the album, production and individual performances. The rest, as they say, is history, with a little magic thrown in.

Stayin' Alive, the foremost Bee Gees tribute band, brings the high energy of the original group to the stage, with the up-tempo dance hits as well as the softer ballads. Starring Mitch Seekins, Todd Sharman and Tony Mattini, Stayin' Alive relives the glory days of disco and the sounds of a group at the height of its power. They perform all the big hits and enhance their show with big-screen video clips, dazzling photos and incredible imagery. Whether you lived through the disco era or just love music, Stayin' Alive will have you dancing.

Stayin' Alive sells out every time the group comes to The Lyric, so get your tickets early. You won't want to mend a broken heart.



Eric Gales

(February 19, 2022 7:00pm)

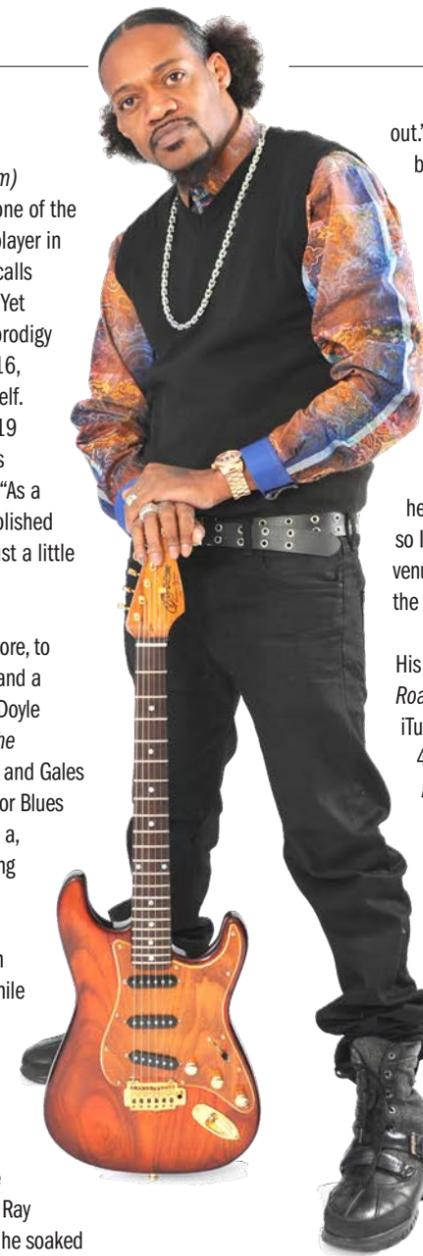
Joe Bonamassa calls him "one of the best, if not the best guitar player in the world." Carlos Santana calls him "absolutely incredible." Yet Eric Gales, who, as a child prodigy released his first album at 16, is more modest about himself. About the release of his 2019 album, *The Bookends*, Gales acknowledged a challenge: "As a guitar player, it's been established that I can play a little bit, just a little bit," he said.

For this album, he wanted more, to push himself as a musician and a vocalist. Joined by B. Slade, Doyle Bramhall II and Beth Hart, *The Bookends* topped the charts and Gales won the Blues Music Award for Blues Rock Artist of the Year. It was a, well, "Bookend" to an amazing journey.

Gales grew up in Memphis in a religious household and while his mother was at church, brothers Eugene and Manuel, later known as Little Jimmy King, blasted out Hendrix, Cream, Muddy Waters, Albert King, John Lee Hooker, Kings's X and Stevie Ray Vaughan. He was only 4, but he soaked up a grounding in the blues, hard rock and psychedelia. A right-handed player, he learned his distinctive left-handed upside down style from his brothers.

At 16, Gales' talent attracted Elektra Records, which released his debut album, *The Eric Gales Band*, in 1991. He released two more albums in the 1990s, *Picture of a Thousand Faces*, and *Left Hand Band* and then worked on a variety of projects including performing as Lil E with hip hop collectives Prophet Posse and Three 6 Mafia.

In the 2000s, the prolific Gales released albums almost yearly. In 2009, he spent time in jail for possession of drugs and a weapon. It was a turning point. "While I was in there, all the officers and guards were like, 'Bro, you know this isn't where you're supposed to be. When you get out of here, go take the world by the horns and ride it all the way



Eric Gales
FEB 19, 2022 | 7pm

out.' It took a couple of years after but I'm here."

Gales continued recording and touring, including a turn as part of the Experience Hendrix Tour, holding his own against some of the greatest guitarists in the world. "The tours were a great experience, but ultimately what they done for me is to help me get myself back together so I can go out and pack out those venues myself, that other artists on the tour were packing out."

His 2017 album *Middle of the Road*, reached Number 1 on the iTunes Blues chart and Number 4 on the *Billboard* Blues chart. As he tours with *The Bookends*, he proudly tells the story of several years of sobriety and how it has affected his work. "I guess the songs would answer the question," he said, "I definitely don't have anything clouding my view and it's definitely a much more pure place it's coming from."

As for performing live, Gales gives it everything he's got. "I try to push myself as hard as I can, especially live," he said. "It's like an extreme work out for me. It's like something else takes over. When I hit the stage, some other person is on that stage for some reason. I'm there physically as a witness, but mentally, it's another person."

Gales is known as the guitarists' favorite guitarist, and for one night, you can hear an artist at his peak.

Chris Ruggiero – Silly Love Songs

(February 22, 2022 7:00pm) Chris Ruggiero is an old soul. At 21, the music that speaks to him is the music of the '50s, '60s and '70s, breathing new life into the timeless classics that form the soundtrack of our lives. His approach to performing is more in

line with that of a bygone era, bringing to the stage the panache of Frank Sinatra or Paul Anka, coupled with the energy of Jackie Wilson.

Ruggiero first came to national attention when he performed in concert on a PBS coast-to-coast special. Since then, he has traveled the country, delivering his unique brand of vintage rock and roll and sharing his passion for the classics. He has shared the stage with artists such as Bobby Rydell, The Duprees and The Drifters. It seems almost preordained that the young man who loves the special sounds of an era is now performing on the same stages as those he admires most. The young singer was a 2020 East Coast Music Hall of Fame nominee and at the 2019 induction ceremony, he performed alongside Tito Puente Jr, singing the iconic song Tito's father wrote, "Oye Como Va."

For Chris Ruggiero, the music may be king, but the audience is royalty and entertaining is not a vocation, it's a way of life. "I try to make every move and sing every song with a touch of class that reminds the audience of a time when entertainers put their heart and soul into their songs and delivering an exceptional concert was paramount," he said. "When I'm on stage singing a classic love song and I look out into the audience and see that twinkle in their eyes, I know they're thinking about a special time and place in their life - or maybe their first kiss. It's magic. Just give me a spotlight and microphone and tell me what time I go on."

Chris takes the stage at 7. The magic will linger long after he's left it.

Through the Years with the Kenny Rogers Band featuring Don Gatlin

(February 23, 2022 7:00pm) No one knows the music of the legendary Kenny Rogers better than the musicians who backed him for more than 40 years. They knew that audiences still wanted to hear all the songs that the singer made famous. To honor Rogers and his music, they have put together the show, *Through the Years*, as a way of paying tribute to a singular artist and keeping his sound and his songs alive for a new generation. They're not just sharing the music they played with him for so long, but first-hand stories of being on the road with "The Gambler." They also share the unique perspective they have on Rogers and the songs because they

continued on page 46

2021|22 SEASON

Shows and events will be added throughout the season so be sure to scan the QR codes below for any updates and changes to the season.

AL DI MEOLA JAN 5	ELEMENTS JAN 7	SIMON & GARFUNKEL September 19, 1981 LIVE in Central Park REVISITED JAN 8	FRANK MARINO'S Divas ABSOLUTELY HER-LARIOUS!!! STARRING A CAST OF CELEBRITY FEMALE IMPASSIONATORS JAN 13	MATT SCHOFIELD JAN 14	Smokey & Me A CELEBRATION OF SMOKEY ROBINSON JAN 19	TITO JR PUENTE JAN 21	MUTT & NUTS GONE NUTS JAN 22	JAY AND THE AMERICANS "This Magic Moment!" JAN 25			
Leo Kottke JAN 29	Nashville COUNTRY LEGENDS JAN 30	Under the Streetlamp FEB 2	THE ULTIMATE ABBA TRIBUTE ABBA CADABRA FEB 3	ARTRAGEOUS FEB 4	Billy Prine & the Prine Time Band present The Songs of John Prine Prine Time FEB 5	MY SON THE WAIVER A JEWISH TRAGEDY FEB 10	MATT NAKOA FEB 11	JOANNE SHAW TAYLOR FEB 12			
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A SOLID GOLD EVENING WITH MARILYN BILLY MCCOO DAVIS JR. MAR 30	JANIS IAN Celebrating Our Years Together APR 3	LET'S HANG ON! America's #1 Frankie Valli Tribute Show APR 6	Jimmie VAUGHAN APR 8	YOUTH ARTS 2022 CELEBRATION Presented by The Lyric League APR 10	AARON DIEHL APR 20	BÉLA FLECK AND ABIGAIL WASHBURN APR 24	The Motowners THE ULTIMATE MOTOWN TRIBUTE BAND MAY 12	THE LYRIC'S AWE SO ME! SARAH COLE We could be HEROES CAMP: JUN 6-24	calling all the monsters CAMP: JUL 11-29	All shows & times subject to change WWW.LYRICTHEATRE.COM for updated information	

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knew him and the music best. The band presents the songs the way they and Kenny Rogers performed them as they traveled from Carnegie Hall to the Royal Albert Hall and from the Sydney Opera House to the Grand Ole Opry. They'll play all of the mega-hits you'd expect, like "Lady" and "Lucille" and some favorites that didn't always make it into the usual tour song list. That makes the show a special retrospective of an amazing career.

Singer/songwriter Don Gatlin, who is featured in the show, knows a lot about Kenny Rogers, too. He had his dream of having one of his songs recorded by a superstar when Kenny Rogers recorded "I Won't Forget." Kenny was also a fan of Don's voice and he asked Don and his band, Savannah Jack, to join him on the road. This led to 66 performances opening for Rogers.

Gatlin grew up in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania and he and his brother, Darryl, played at the Ponderosa Park in Ellsworth as teens. They recorded their first album in the early 1980s in Nashville after finishing second in a nationwide Seagram's 7 Battle of the Bands. Don also won the Nashville networks, "You Can Be a Star," in 1986. This was an early *American Idol*-type reality show and it won him a deal with Capitol Records. The brothers later signed with Epic Records under the name Darryl and Don Ellis, and they released two albums. Their singles went nowhere, as Gatlin remembers. "We were nominated for duo of the year seven times. We lost seven times to Brooks and Dunn."

After the brothers were dropped by Epic, Gatlin worked as a songwriter, co-writing songs with Ricky Van Shelton, Blake Shelton and others. He started Savannah Jack in 2003 because he just loved working with a band. They played Nashville and then moved on to Las Vegas, where they were regulars at The Sahara and The Tropicana.

You've loved Kenny Rogers "Through the Years." Come hear his music, played by his band and fronted by a powerhouse singer who know him well.

Popa Chubby (February 26, 2022 7:00pm) Theodore Joseph "Ted" Horowitz was born in the Bronx in 1960. At 13, he began playing the drums, but, influenced by Jimi Hendrix and Cream, he soon switched to the guitar. The young man played the blues and came to the public's attention after winning a national blues talent search sponsored by a Long Beach, California radio station. He won new artist of the year and somewhere along the way, Ted Horowitz became Popa Chubby.



The Modern Gentlemen
FEB 27, 2022 | 7pm

For more than 30 years, Popa Chubby has been hard rocking the blues in his fierce, soulful way. An imposing figure with a shaven head, tattooed arms, and a goatee, he describes his performance style as "The Stooges meets Buddy Guy, Motorhead meets Muddy Waters and Jimi Hendrix meets Robert Johnson." He is an endearing character and one of the genre's most popular figures and his career has always been about moving and carving a place for himself in the imposing terrain of the music business. He has overcome the odds and obstacles to continue growing and maturing as a creative force.

While Popa Chubby's first gigs were in the New York City punk scene, the blues were the foundation of his playing style. "Since I'd grown up on Hendrix, Cream and Led Zeppelin, when I started playing blues in New York clubs, I understood that the blues could be dangerous, too. It wasn't just from playing punk bands. Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters were dangerous men. They'd cut or shoot you if they thought it was necessary and Little Walter packed a gun and wouldn't hesitate to use it. That danger is a real part of the blues and I keep it alive in my music."

In March 2020, Popa Chubby released his 30th anniversary album, *Mighty Hard Road*. Featuring 13 original tracks and covers of Freddie King and Prince, the artist sees it as the result of 30 years of learning his craft. "Thirty years is a lifetime or a blink of the eye, depends on how you look at it," he said. "For me, every day, every show, every flight, every story, every hug has been sheer joy. I truly

believe this has all manifested for a reason. I shine as an example of the human spirit. What does not kill us surely makes us stronger and the art and music we make bares the power of an uphill climb. No matter who you are, no matter what you do, no matter what you believe, we are all the same and... it's a *Mighty Hard Road*."

Come take the trip with him.

The Modern Gentlemen (February 27, 2022 7:00pm) For the past decade, the Modern Gentlemen have been the voices behind the legendary Frankie Valli. Landon Beard, Todd Fournier and brothers Brian and Brandon Brigham have performed with the famed singer on some of the world's biggest stages, from the Royal Albert Hall to "A Capitol Fourth." The quartet, long unsung heroes of the music industry, has now stepped into the spotlight, taking on the sounds of Motown, pop, rock and doo wop.

Frankie Valli brought the group together and the gentlemen have taken years of experience to create their own, new sound influenced by musicians like Michael Bubl , the Four Freshmen and the Hi-Lo's. The Modern Gentlemen have performed in "Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons: Tribute on Ice" with Brian Boitano and in "A Capitol Fourth," where

they joined singers Michael McDonald and Patti LaBelle. They have also appeared on stage with the Beach Boys, Tony Bennett, Smokey Robinson and Manhattan Transfer. They have performed for presidents and for Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, at the esteemed Arts Club in London. They were featured on a PBS special, "Doo Wop Generations" and have appeared as headliners in Las Vegas and at their own residence in Atlantic City.

The Modern Gentlemen features vocalist and California native Brian Brigham, whose roles include a recurring spot on *General Hospital* as well as appearances on *The Voice* and *America's Got Talent*. Theater credits include *Grease*, *Saturday Night Fever*, and *Jesus Christ Superstar*. As a Los Angeles studio singer, you can hear his voice on television and film projects. He has been performing with Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons since 2003.

In 2020, The Modern Gentlemen released their first holiday album, featuring original songs by award-winning songwriters Steve Diamond, Shelly Peiken, Robbie Nevil and Mike Krompass as well as familiar classics from more than six decades of pop, rock and jazz. Their music video to the title song, "You Make it Feel Like Christmas," garnered close to half a million views on YouTube in a matter of weeks.

Brother Brandon Brigham began singing at 8 and has been seen on *The Voice*, *The Sing Off*, and *Jimmy Kimmel Live*. He has opened for Joan Rivers and Jay Leno and has appeared on stage with Tony Bennett, the Beach Boys, Melissa Manchester, Pat Benatar and the Manhattan Transfer. He has performed with Frankie Valli since 2006.

Todd Fournier began his career as an entertainer on Norwegian Cruise Lines. He worked for Universal Studios and Disney and has appeared in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Aida*, *Grease*, *Chess*, *Miss Saigon* and *Oklahoma*. He is a veteran of several soap operas and has performed with Frankie Valli since 2002.

Landon Beard got his start in entertainment early when he appeared as soloist in a Kodak commercial at the age of 3. After receiving a BFA from Cal State Fullerton, he performed in the New York production of *Altar Boyz*, and has appeared alongside Josh Groban, Roger Daltrey and Eric Benet. He has been with Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons since 2003.

If you love four-part harmony without limits, presented by a dapper quartet who know how to work it, come see the Modern Gentlemen. It's style with a little bit of 'tude and you'll love it.

Gabe Kaplan – Welcome Back (March 2, 2022 7:00pm) Comedian Gabe Kaplan wanted to be a professional baseball player and starred on his team at New Utrecht High School in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, a place that would figure prominently in his career. When he didn't make the roster of a minor league team, he took a job as a bellboy at a New Jersey hotel where many stand-up comics appeared. Kaplan started working with them, learning the trade, and began performing in clubs around New York City.

After several years touring the country with funny tales of his childhood, he landed appearances on *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson*. Producer Alan Sacks, who was working as a producer of *Chico and the Man*, went to see Kaplan at the Comedy Store in Los Angeles at the urging of Freddie Prinze. They came up with a show that hearkened back to Kaplan's less-than-stellar academic career at New Utrecht, even using the actual school as the backdrop for the opening credits of the show the two created, *Welcome Back, Kotter*. Kaplan played Gabe Kotter, who returns to his high school as a teacher of the remedial class, called the Sweathogs. Each of the misfits was someone Kaplan had used in his stand-up as he brought to life real classmates.

Welcome Back, Kotter ran from 1975-1979 and introduced John Travolta, who played Vinnie Barbarino, and the catch phrase, "Up your nose with a rubber hose" to the world. Even the theme song, written by John Sebastian, made the charts.

After *Kotter*, Kaplan continued doing stand-up and appeared in *Lewis and Clark* and the movie *Fast Break*. He did a one-man show portraying Groucho Marx, whom he often impersonated on *Kotter*. He also discovered poker and became a professional poker player and announcer. He appeared in the World Series of Poker for the first time in 1978 and won the main event at Amarillo Slim's "Super Bowl of Poker" and in the next five years, made it to the finish of the main event twice. He provided coverage on ESPN for the 2002 World Series of Poker and was a broadcaster for the only outdoor World Series of Poker in 1997 on ESPN. On television, he hosted poker shows, including *High Stakes Poker* on the Game Show Network, the Intercontinental Poker Championship on CBS and the National Heads-Up Poker Championship on NBC.

Kaplan never strayed far from his roots and his love for stand-up continued even as he succeeded as a poker player. He brings his comedy to The Lyric and all we can say is, "Welcome Back, Kaplan!"

Keb' Mo' (March 3, 2022 6:00pm & 8:30pm) At a time when a multiple Grammy Award winner might be doing victory laps with concerts of their greatest hits, blues artist Kevin Roosevelt Moore, better known as Keb' Mo', has been busy winning more awards. In 2019, 25 years after the release of his debut album under the name Keb' Mo', he released *Oklahoma*, which won him a 2020 Grammy for Best Americana album. Featuring cameos from Taj Mahal, with whom he released the 2018 Grammy winner, "TajMo";

continued on page 50

Keb' Mo'
MAR 3, 2022
6pm & 8:30pm



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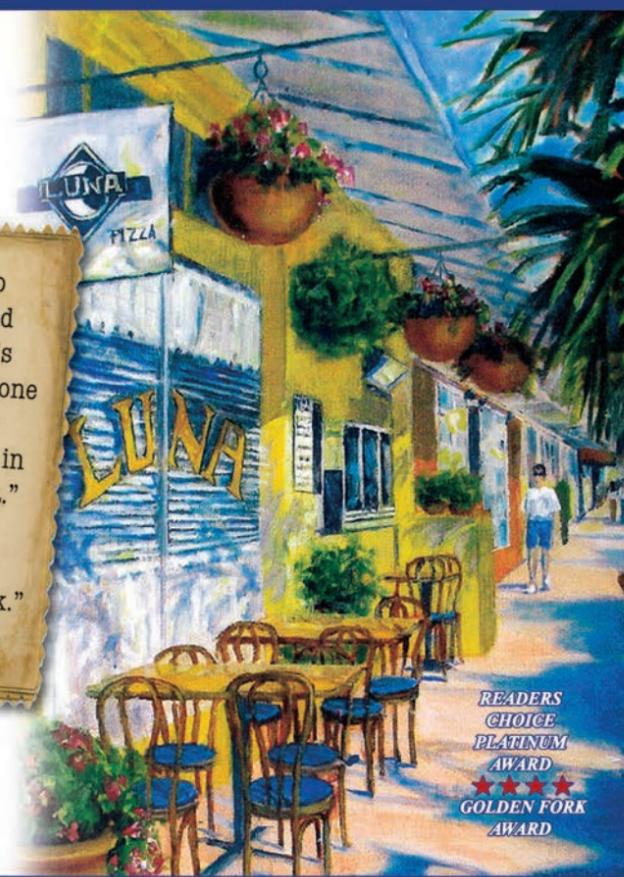


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READERS CHOICE PLATINUM AWARD
★★★★★
GOLDEN FORK AWARD

Rosanne Cash, Robert Randolph, Jaci Velasquez and Keb' Mo's wife, Robbie Brooks Moore, the album addresses topics like immigration, depression, pollution, love and female empowerment.

The inspiration for the title track, "Oklahoma" was a visit Keb' Mo' made to the state in 2013 for a benefit show after a destructive tornado. "I thought about what it must be like to live in Oklahoma and all the great people that have come from Oklahoma," he said.

He had a melody in his head but no song until he met Oklahoma native and songwriter Dara Tucker. They set out to portray the history of America as it played out in her home state, with Native American connections and tragedy, natural and man-made disasters, incredible music, the Tulsa sound, ruggedness and perseverance. They also mention the destruction of the "Black Wall Street" in Tulsa in 1921, a devastating part of race relations in the country.

The artist is proud of what he and others have created. "I'd been working on a lot of records for other people, so I worried it might be a weak record because I didn't have my eye on the ball and was spreading myself too thin," he said. "But when all was said and done, we found the songs and we got the feeling right and now I feel really, really proud of it."

Keb' Mo's career began with his playing steel drums and bass in a calypso band, he went on to play backup for a variety of bands and started recording in the 1970s with Jefferson Airplane violinist Papa John Creach. His first gold record was for a song called "Git Fiddler" that he co-wrote with Creach for the Jefferson Starship. He adopted the name Keb' Mo' in 1994 as his career took off. His albums have won five Grammy Awards with 12 nominations, in total. The talented artist has also been awarded 14 Blues Foundation Awards and six BMI Awards for his work in TV and film. He has performed at the White House for President Obama.

Over the last two decades, Keb' Mo' has fashioned a reputation as a modern master of American roots music. Artists from B.B. King to Buddy Guy, the Dixie Chicks to Melissa Manchester have recorded his songs and he has collaborated with a who's who of the music industry, including Bonnie Raitt, Taj Mahal, Vince Gill, Jackson Browne, Natalie Cole, India Arie, Lyle Lovett and Marcus Miller. His guitar prowess has garnered him three invites to Eric Clapton's acclaimed Crossroads Festival and has inspired Gibson Brands to issue the Keb' Mo' Signature Bluesmaster and Bluesmaster Royale



Steven Wright: Live in Concert
MAR 4, 2022 | 7pm

acoustic guitars and Martin Guitars to issue the HD-28KM Keb' Mo' Limited Edition Signature Model.

An artist who recognizes the role of music in social change, he is a long-time supporter of the Playing for Change Foundation, a non-profit that creates positive change through music in nine countries. He is also a celebrity mentor with the Kennedy Center's Turnaround Arts Program, which focuses on elementary and middle schools throughout the United States. Keb' Mo' is a mentor at the Johnson School of Excellence in Chicago.

"I'm more interested in pleasing myself and making records that make me feel proud and feel like I've done my best," Keb' Mo' said about *Oklahoma*. "If other people like it, that is gravy." He has consistently made music that reflects his passions and interests and earned a reputation for his ability to draw upon his extensive roots music knowledge to make deeply expressive, personal music.

Steven Wright: Live in Concert

(March 4, 2022 7:00pm) Comedian Stephen Wright, known for his distinct voice and deadpan delivery, describes his life this way: "I was born. When I was 23, I started telling jokes. Then I started going on television and doing films. That's still what I am doing. The end."

Actually, there is a lot more. Wright was ranked 15th Greatest Comedian by *Rolling Stone* in their 2017 list of the 50 Greatest Stand-Up Comics. He has an Academy Award for co-writing and producing the short film *The Appointment of Dennis Jennings*, in which he starred with Rowan Atkinson. He also has two Emmy Award nominations as the producer of *Louie*. He appeared in Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers* and Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs*, where he mispronounced the word "behemoth" in

the opening of the film. He is known for one-liners, non sequiturs, irony and paraproksians, the latter being when you start a sentence normally and end it strangely. In an interview, Wright said that he never knew it had a name.

Wright grew up in Massachusetts and got a degree from Emerson College in Boston. He began performing stand-up the year after graduation at the Comedy Connection in Boston. In 1982, an executive producer at *The Tonight Show* saw him on a bill with other local comics and booked him. He impressed Johnny Carson so much that he was asked to appear again the same week. His first album, *I Have a Pony*, was released in 1985 and was nominated for a Grammy. That landed him an HBO special in the "On Location" series at Wolfgang's in San Francisco. The popularity of the special and of his laid-back delivery gained him a cult-like following and a place on the college circuit.

In a 2019 interview, for *Las Vegas* magazine, Wright talked about his comedy. "When I think of a joke, the sentences come immediately, within 10 seconds," he said. "My mind is like a factory that only makes jokes one way. Jokes can only be made one way in my head and that's the fewest number of words to get the concept out. There's not one wasted word, because an extra word will throw the rhythm off. It's almost musical, really where you're like, 'This should change. This should end right here.' The world is like a giant mosaic painting. In these little squares is the whole world. And sometimes I'll see a square and think, 'Oh, that has the same meaning as that over there, but it could be taken in a different way.' That's how it happens."

Don't worry if you see Wright in person and bring up one of his jokes or paraproksians. He's very happy you know who he is. Otherwise, he has said that he might be digging ditches. He'd probably manage to find a mosaic there, too.

Ana Popovic (March 6, 2022 7:00pm) Bruce Springsteen called her "One hulluva guitar player." She was the only female guitar player invited to play in the All-Star Hendrix Experience, a national tour celebrating the music and legacy of another hulluva guitar player, Jimi Hendrix. She is Ana Popovic, Lyric favorite and fiery performer who didn't come to the blues in an ordinary way.

Popovic grew up in Belgrade, Serbia, in the former Yugoslavia. Music was an important part of her life as her father was a musician and often invited friends to jam. Although she grew up in the oppressive Milosevic regime, she was able to study guitar privately and before she was 20, had started her own band, Hush. They performed all over Yugoslavia, and with the fall of Communism, she was able to travel throughout Europe. She studied at the Conservatory in Utrecht, the Netherlands, and eventually signed a record deal with a German company. In 1999, Popovic formed the Anna Popovic Band and began gaining international attention with her blend of electric funk and slide guitar, jazzy instrumental and soulful blues.

By 2009, two of her albums reached the *Billboard* Blues Chart. Popovic is very aware of her role as an international artist and a representative of women. "I grew up in Serbia, but my childhood was nice," she said. "Later on, by the time I left, it was a difficult time for the family I left behind. I left at the right moment. I moved to Holland and studied jazz and world music. I was traveling to both sides of the ocean and was the first international, central European artist to be nominated for an American Blues

Award. That's when my career really started. I'm very fortunate and thankful to the audience. It's wonderful to be acknowledged for this work, and it's a huge honor to represent women and Europeans who come here to play."

The Hendrix tour has been another outlet for her representation of women. "I'm representing women and it's a great thing," she said. "I'm hoping they'll include more women. I'm here to open doors. There were women before me and it got easier with time. I wanted to play and have my own sound, not male or female. Younger women come to my shows and want to do what I do. That's wonderful. The guitar is becoming a female instrument and women are taking the lead. I think they can be as successful as men, being business ladies and taking their careers into their own hands."

Popovic practices what she preaches. She released her album *Trilogy* on her own label and it was in the Top 10 alongside Eric Clapton and Bonnie Raitt.

The musician stressed that no two shows of hers are the same. "*Trilogy* has 23 songs to choose from," she said.

"There's everything from funk to soul to rock and blues and jazz. There's lots of guitar, melodies, jazzy standards, funk and soul. There's a little bit for everyone. If you've seen other shows before,

it's not the same show. That's not how we roll. It's fun for the band and me."

That makes it fun for the audience, too, and a great night of music.



Ana Popovic
MAR 6, 2022 | 7pm

Neil Berg's 50 Years of Rock & Roll

(March 8, 2022 7:00pm) Neil Berg, who has paid tribute to 100 Years of Broadway history, turns his attention to the music that is the soundtrack of our lives: rock 'n roll. He celebrates 50 years, from its birth in the 1940s, to the glory years of the '50s, '60s and '70s, all the way through the 1980s and MTV. He provides the fascinating stories and groundbreaking music of everyone's favorite genre with a cast of Broadway headliners and rock 'n roll icons, including performers from the Trans-Siberian Orchestra. Along the way, you'll hear the best of Chuck Berry, Elvis, The Who, Aerosmith, Springsteen, Journey and more.

Berg has a long history in the theater. A composer and lyricist, he has written the off-Broadway musical, *The Prince and the Pauper*, and is the composer and lyricist with playwright Robert Schenkkan, of the rock musical, *The 12*. He produced the off-Broadway revival of *Closer Than Ever*, which won the off-Broadway Alliance Award for Best Musical revival. His *Neil Berg's 100 Years of Broadway* has played in more than 120 cities a year for over a decade. As a film composer, he scored and was music supervisor for the film *Once Upon a Time in Brooklyn*, starring Armand Assante. He was the recipient of the 1995 Bistro Award for Best Musical for his show *Asylum in the Night* and has performed at well-known clubs like Joe's Pub and Feinstein's. As the owner of Leftfield Productions, an entertainment company based in Nyack, New York, he has produced more than 1,000 Broadway concerts worldwide with artists such as Michael Crawford, Bernadette Peters, Audra McDonald, Rita Moreno, Liz Callaway and Ben Vereen. He has also produced concert versions of the musical, *The Secret Garden*, in association with its composer, Lucy Simon; *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Chess* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

Berg is co-founder of the SJR Theatre workshop, a theater camp for students in Montvale, New Jersey, which instructs more than 200 young artists and singers each year and now operates year-round.

A long-time rock fan, Berg toured with the rock band Joe D'Urso & Stone Caravan and played on seven of their CDs. He also performed with them on the 100th Anniversary Tour for Harley-Davidson.

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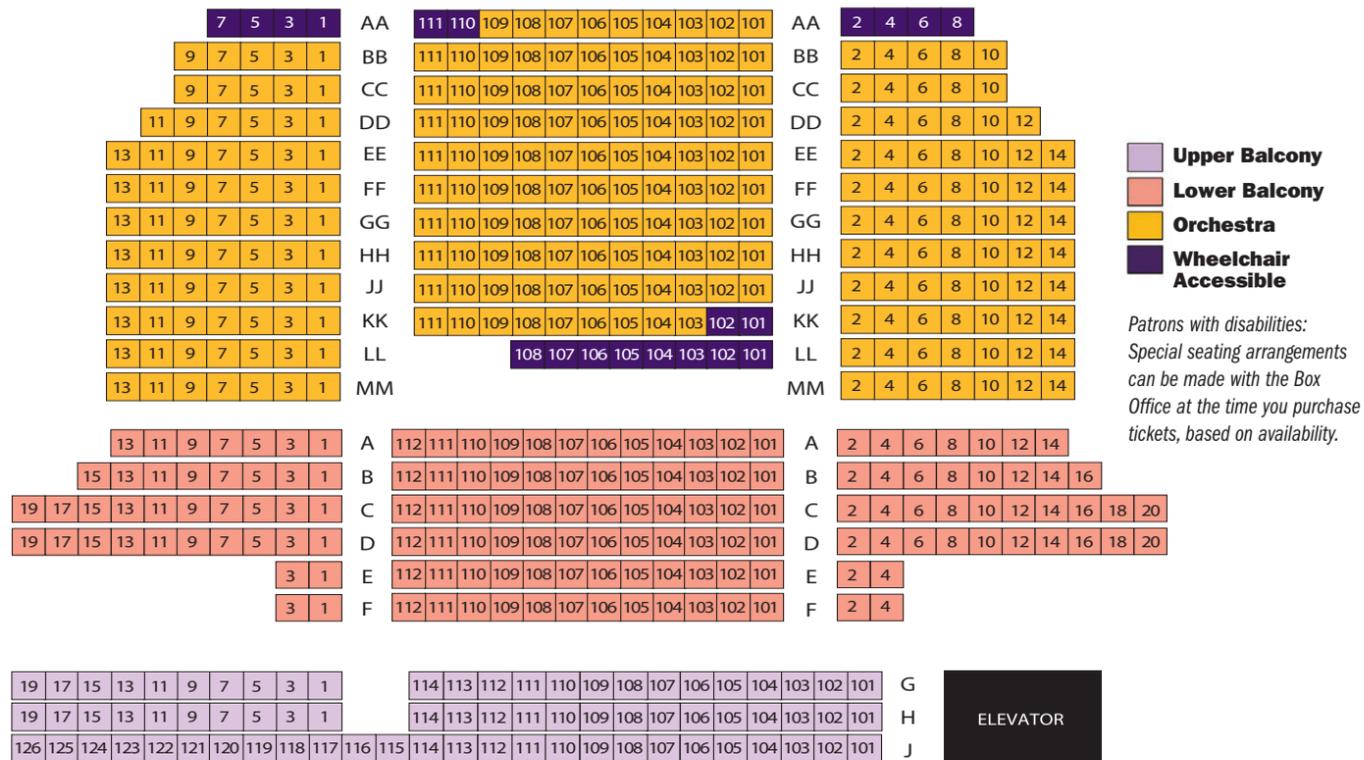
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Theater Etiquette
 As a courtesy to the performers and other audience members, please do not leave your seat until the end of the act. If for some reason you must leave, please wait for a pause in the program.

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Please know that we are doing our best to navigate these difficult times. We take your concerns and your safety seriously, as well as that of our artists, volunteers, and staff. These guidelines will continue to evolve as the environment changes, and we will communicate any updates accordingly.

Some events at The Lyric Theatre may have additional health and safety guidelines as required by the artist. Please check the individual event pages on our website for event-specific requirements. Ticket purchasers will be notified by email of any specific safety requirements prior to the day of the event.

- **Masks are STRONGLY ENCOURAGED for all guests.** Patrons are encouraged to bring their own masks; however, we will have complimentary masks available.
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There is always a risk of exposure to COVID-19 in a public place where people are present. By visiting The Lyric Theatre and/or attending our shows or other activities, you voluntarily assume all risks related to exposure to COVID-19.

The Lyric realizes that we cannot eliminate all risks to those coming to our facility. Our efforts do not replace important practices to keep yourself well, including vigilant hand hygiene, staying home when symptomatic and social distancing wherever possible.

- If you have been exposed to anyone diagnosed with COVID-19, traveled to or from areas of substantial community spread, or have experienced any of the symptoms (fever of 100.4 degrees or higher; shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; new loss of taste or smell; cough and/or sore throat; other flu-like symptoms) PLEASE STAY HOME.
- If you cannot make a performance for illness, or the performance is cancelled, or for other COVID-19 related causes, you may call the box office to receive a full refund or donate your unused ticket(s). If a performance is rescheduled, your tickets will be held for that new date.

If you are uncomfortable with the performance environment, please call the Box Office at 772-286-7827 for a refund.

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FREE TICKETS: *KidTix* for Non-Profit Youth Organizations!

The Lyric Theatre, along with the aid of Women Supporting the Arts, is committed to strengthening our commitment to educate and inspire our leaders of tomorrow by providing access to all Lyric Theatre performances through our new Arts & Education Program *KidTix*. *KidTix* provides FREE tickets to non-profit organizations that serve low-income and/or at-risk youth. Providing access to arts and culture is essential to strengthening the power of change, making our community a better place to live, work and play. It is well documented that arts and cultural programs offer enrichment, inspiration, education and entertainment to individuals and communities. Children involved in the arts are usually more successful in school, more confident, knowledgeable and well-rounded.

KidTix are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. For more information about *KidTix* and The Lyric's Arts & Education programs, contact Sue Nauss, Arts & Education Coordinator at 772-220-1942 x203 or Sue@LyricTheatre.com



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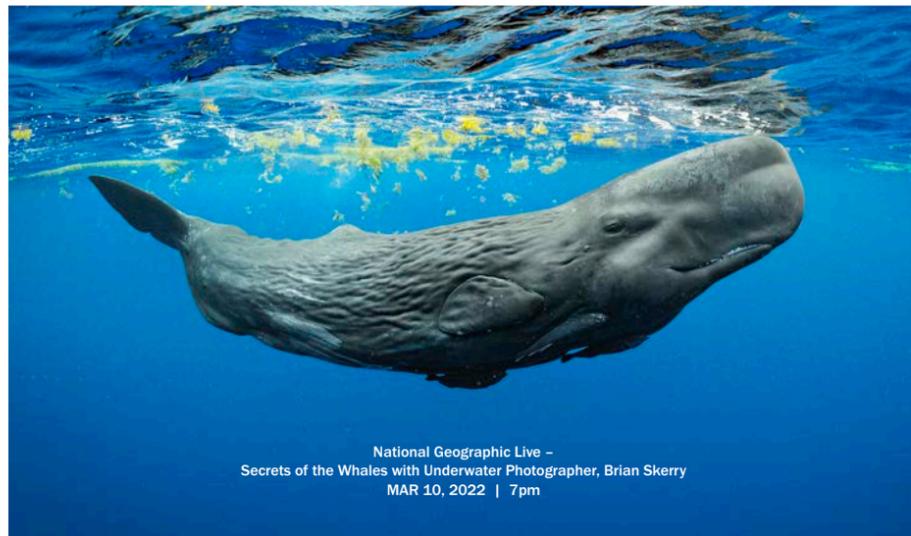
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National Geographic Live –
Secrets of the Whales with Underwater Photographer, Brian Skerry
MAR 10, 2022 | 7pm

Jazz at Lincoln Center Presents Songs We Love

(March 9, 2022 7:00pm) Jazz is a uniquely American art form, and for more than three decades, Jazz at Lincoln Center has been a leading advocate for jazz, culture and arts education globally. Under the direction of Wynton Marsalis, Jazz at Lincoln Center has brought the jazz from the heart of New York City to more than 466 cities in more than 40 countries. It is dedicated to inspiring and growing audiences for jazz through performance and education, including concerts, national and international tours, residencies, radio programs, recordings, an annual high school jazz band competition and festival, a band director academy, jazz appreciation curricula for students and interactive websites.

Now Jazz at Lincoln Center has collaborated with IMG Artists to create Jazz at Lincoln Center Presents, a new touring initiative to present great jazz programming to an even broader audience. Featuring up-and-coming musicians who have been identified as rising stars at Jazz at Lincoln Center, the initiative allows Jazz at Lincoln Center to expand its mission to entertain, enrich and expand a global community for jazz. As Wynton Marsalis explains, “This select group of gifted, intelligent and soulful young musicians come from all walks of life. They are virtuoso performers and dedicated teachers who understand that listeners must be invited into the feeling and tradition of this music. ‘Songs We Love’ is an entertaining and engaging program that will lift you to a higher place and inspire confidence in the future of jazz. This music still has a lot to say to us. Let them show you.”

“Songs We Love” is the initial show in the series and was first presented as the 2016 season opener

at Jazz at Lincoln Center. Under the direction of Riley Mulherkar, “Songs We Love” is a journey through the first 50 years of jazz. Three guest vocalists will join an all-star band made up of New York’s rising stars. Combining their distinct talents, the group will take you on a trip through four decades of music, beginning with the early blues and jazz of the 1920s and ending in the early 1950s. Among the iconic singers to be explored are Ma Rainey, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra and Judy Garland. The music is timeless, the songs unforgettable. They still have a lot to say to us.

The Lyric’s Family Fun Series presents National Geographic Live – Secrets of the Whales with Underwater Photographer, Brian Skerry

(March 10, 2022 7:00 pm) Celebrated National Geographic explorer and photographer Brian Skerry has spent nearly four decades exploring and documenting the Earth’s oceans. With his latest project, “Secrets of the Whales,” you will dive deep into the groundbreaking science of whale families and their startling human parallels. Skerry turns his lens to one of the world’s most beloved animals to illuminate startling new insights into their lives and culture.

For this project, Brian Skerry spent more than two years in 24 locations around the world, capturing remarkable images and video for a landmark *National Geographic* book, magazine story and television series, *Secrets of the Whales*. You will hear his behind-the-scenes stories and get an inside

look at the groundbreaking science of whale culture. Discover the extraordinary communication skills and intricate social structure among four different species of whales, from the international cuisines of orcas to families of beluga whales playing at their “summer resort.” See the multi-generational childcare systems and female-led families of sperm whales. Explore the culture of singing competitions among humpback whales.

Skerry began his career shooting shipwrecks in New England. Since 1998, he has been a contributing photographer for *National Geographic*, covering a wide range of subjects and stories. Soon, he began to ask for stories on ocean-related issues that showed both the magic and the dark side of the ocean, from the harp seal’s struggle to survive, to the staggering decline in the world’s fisheries to damaged coral ecosystems rebuilding themselves. He has shown the world that its actions have consequences, whether it’s by choosing not to wear harp seal fur or having tuna for dinner.

The Lyric’s Family Fun Series presents Music of the Knights – A Celebration of Three of Britain’s Legendary Songwriters

(March 11, 2022 7:00pm) Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber, Sir Elton John and Sir Paul McCartney have a lot in common. They are all British-born, they each have an Academy Award and multiple Grammys and they have all been knighted by Her Majesty, the Queen. They are also three of the most successful songwriters of all time, with careers that span decades. From Broadway to the top of the pop charts, these three musical geniuses have created an incredible legacy.

Just think of the songs. From “Memory” and “I Don’t Know How to Love Him,” to “Yesterday” and “Hey Jude” to “Your Song” and “Circle of Life,” these three composers have written some of the most memorable music of the last 50 years. Now, their work is assembled in a theatrical concert that will have the audience members on their feet and singing along to the soundtrack of their lives. The cast consists of three or four accomplished vocalists and a piano, bass and drums. The show is directed by Scott Coulter, its creator, who has received five MAC Awards from the Manhattan Association of Cabarets and Clubs, five Bistro Awards and two

Nightlife Awards for Outstanding Vocalists. He has performed at New York City’s top rooms, including Birdland, 54 Below, The Oak Room at the Algonquin, and Feinstein’s at the Regency, where he spent a record-setting eight months. His self-titled debut CD won the 2003 MAC Award for Outstanding Recording. He was director and star of *A Christmas Carol: The Symphonic Concert*, in its world premiere with the Baltimore Symphony and reprised his role in the Emmy-nominated PBS production which premiered in December 2013.

Susan Agin, executive and artistic director of the Queensborough Performing Arts Center, said the show was great family entertainment. “Music of the Knights is the freshest theatrical concert I’ve experienced in years. Cheers erupted throughout the concert and when it was over, the multi-generational audience left spellbound. The joyful energy and excitement all around us was almost unbelievable.”

Here’s your chance to make a wonderful “Memory.”

Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder

(March 12, 2022 4:00pm & 7:00pm) He is a member of the Country Music Hall of Fame, the International Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame, the Musicians Hall of Fame, the National Fiddler Hall of Fame and the Gospel Music Association Hall of Fame. He has 15 Grammy Awards and more Country Music Association and Academy of Country Music Awards than most artists can dream of. Ricky Skaggs has truly spent “a life full of music,” and he and Kentucky Thunder will again grace The Lyric stage with songs from his long and illustrious career, including “Sis Draper,” “Return to Sender” and “Road to Spencer.”

Skaggs was born in Kentucky and first took the stage at 6, playing the mandolin with bluegrass pioneer Bill Monroe. When Monroe came to town for a performance, the crowd wouldn’t let up until “Little Ricky Skaggs” got up to play. The father of bluegrass called the boy up and put his own mandolin around his neck, adjusting the strap to fit the boy’s frame. By 7, he was appearing on television with Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs. Still a teen, he began his professional career in 1971, when he and his friend Keith Whitley were invited to join the legendary Ralph Stanley band, the Clinch Mountain Boys. He never looked back.

Not content with the status quo, and always reaching into new realms, Skaggs pushed the limits of the bluegrass genre with progressive bands such as Country Gentlemen and J.D. Crowe and the New South. By the late 1970s, he had turned his focus to mainstream country music and joined Emmylou Harris’ Hot Band. In 1981, he released his debut album, *Waitin’ for the Sun to Shine*, which topped the country charts with two Number One hits. His stay at Epic Records would result in 12 Number One hits and garnered him eight Country Music Association Awards including the coveted Entertainer of the Year trophy in 1985.

In 1997, Skaggs returned to his bluegrass roots with *Bluegrass Rules!* released on his newly-formed Skaggs Family Records label. A series of Grammy-Award winning albums with his band, Kentucky Thunder, followed. Kentucky Thunder was winning awards of its own, as eight-time winners of the International Bluegrass Music Association’s “Instrumental Group of the Year.”



Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder
MAR 12, 2022 | 4pm & 7pm

For Ricky Skaggs, it has been about making and keeping alive the roots music that is so much a part of the fabric of our society. Quite simply, he wants to share the music he loves with audiences across the country and around the world. Another legend, Chet Atkins, once credited Ricky Skaggs with “single-handedly saving country music,” but he continues to forge ahead with cross-cultural, genre-bending musical ideas and inspirations. Come spend some time with him and his lifetime of music.

Shelée - Natural Woman: A Night of Soul

(March 15, 2022 7:00pm) Whitney. Cher. Adele. Aretha. There are those select few who only need one name to identify them. Singer, songwriter and pianist Shelée seems poised to enter that rarified atmosphere. She has performed at the White House for the Obamas. Stevie Wonder, a friend and mentor, plays the harmonica on her hit song, “Love Fell on Me,” the theme song for the Angela Bassett film, *Jumping the Broom*. Quincy Jones asked her to be the first vocalist at his jazz club at the Palazzo Versace Dubai. She has a sultry sound that blends traditional pop, jazz, R & B, and soul with a contemporary edge to classics and a classic touch to contemporary pop standards.

Shelée began her musical career as a child, playing a wooden piano from her sisters and singing in the church choir. That makes it truly fitting that she portrayed gospel singer Dorinda Clark Cole in the 2020 Lifetime biopic, *The Clark Sisters: The First Ladies of Gospel*. She has said that hearing Natalie Cole’s album, *Unforgettable...with Love*, was the inspiration for her career as a singer and she first began to think of music as a profession at Oakwood University, from which she received a degree in music with an emphasis on piano. She told *singersroom.com* that her college experience set her on her path. “That was my first time being immersed in music culture like that, with late nights in the studio, writing and producing,” she said. “That’s when I felt like, ‘I want to do this on my own.’”

continued on page 62

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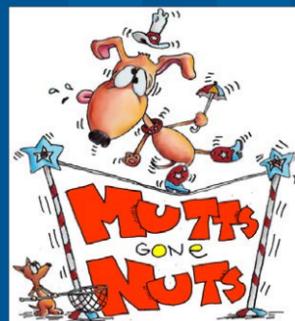
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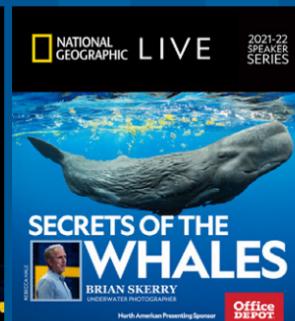
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Sheléa began her career as a songwriter/vocalist with producers Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis. She wrote and produced for Chanté Moore's album, *Love the Woman*, and recorded the soundtracks for *Hotel Rwanda*, *Akeelah and the Bee* and *Be Cool*. In 2008, she teamed up with the Grammy-winning group, Take 6, singing "Someone to Watch Over Me" for their Grammy-nominated album. Her debut album, *Love Fell on Me*, not only featured Stevie Wonder, but had Brian McKnight and Narada Michael Walden on board, as well. It charted for more than 22 weeks on *Billboard's* R & B list.

While Sheléa had considerable success in R & B, she was noticed in other arenas and genres. She was invited to the White House in 2012 to honor Burt Bacharach and Hal David with the Gershwin Prize. She made her Carnegie Hall debut in 2017 with a tribute to songwriter Jimmy Webb and performed at the Library of Congress for ASCAP's "We Write the Songs." She impressed legendary songwriters Alan and Marilyn Bergman during the rehearsals; they wrote many of Barbara Streisand's hits, and her 2019 album, *Pretty World: Through the Eyes of Alan and Marilyn Bergman*, has songs picked for her by the duo and features Stevie Wonder and Kirk Whalum. Also in 2019, Quincy Jones produced a PBS special, *Quincy Jones presents Sheléa*. Her body of work knows only two imperatives: great songwriting and singing.

The artist believes in giving back. In 2012, she joined Herbie Hancock, Patti Austin, the South Adrian Children's Choir and others at the Kennedy Center for the UN International AIDS Conference. She is a staunch advocate for female empowerment

and as a member of The Recording Academy, has shared her insights with high school students on the value of music, the craft of songwriting, vocal technique and professional development.

You may not yet know her name, but you will. A chance to hear her perform live, in the intimate setting of The Lyric, is a special treat you won't want to miss.

The Doo Wop Project

(March 17, 2022 7:00pm) Two of the founders of The Doo Wop Project are named Dominic, which is confusing, especially as they are both such nice guys. Dominic Scaglione played Frankie Valli in *Jersey Boys* on Broadway and Dominic Nolfi played Tommy DeVito. The two agree that The Doo Wop Project first saw the light of day on the third floor of the August Wilson Theatre during their run in the hit musical.

"It really was Dominic (Scaglione's) idea," said Dominic Nolfi. "He felt there was a lack of guys our age singing traditional doo wop. We could fill that void."

Fill that void they have, and more. The talented group has made it a mission to bring back harmony singing and introduce it to a new generation. Nolfi finished a run as Crazy Mario in the Broadway production of Chazz Palminteri's *A Bronx Tale* to devote full time to The Doo Wop Project. He is mega-talented, as is Dominic Scaglione, who was asked

by Frankie Valli to sing at the latter's induction ceremony into the New Jersey Hall of Fame. Who better than the man who played him on Broadway? Charl Brown originated the role of Smokey Robinson in *Motown: The Musical*, and received a Tony nomination for it. Russell Fischer, who has the falsetto, won his role in the Broadway company of *Jersey Boys* on his 22nd birthday. Dwayne Cooper has been compared to a "modern day Sammy Davis Jr. meets Barry White and founding member and arranger Sonny Paladino served as music supervisor for the revival of *Smokey Joe's Café*.

The Doo Wop Project starts at the beginning of the unique sound, when five guys sang tight harmonies on street corners, and takes the audience on a musical journey through the Crests and Belmonts to Smokey Robinson and the Temptations to the Four Seasons and modern Doo Wop-ified songs from Maroon 5, Michael Jackson and Jason Mraz. They have the authentic sound and vocal chops and creativity to recreate or reimagine some of the biggest hits in pop and rock history and they are always Lyric favorites.

For Nolfi, bringing back the sound means more to him than Broadway. "It's my priority," he said. "We're just maximizing its potential and we're on a mission to keep the music alive. We have ideas to bring it to first, second and third graders and get them interested in harmony singing. We did our first show at my daughter's school and they had a blast. I want to be an old man, listening to kids singing this music and understanding where it came from, with its African-American roots and how every group: Italian, Jews and Irish, had a stake in it."



The Doo Wop Project
MAR 17, 2022 | 7pm

Chris Hillman - Time Between: An Evening of Stories and Songs featuring Herb Pederson & John Jorgenson

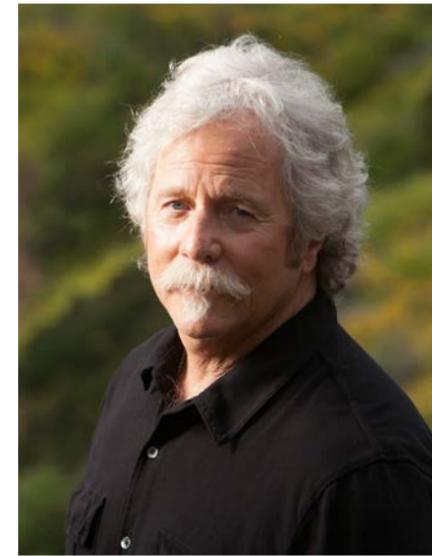
(March 18, 2022 7:00pm) Oh! The stories he'll tell! Chris Hillman has been described as the only one in the room who doesn't think he's a legend. The co-founder of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Band, the Byrds, the Flying Burrito Brothers, Manassas and the Desert Rose Band, Hillman is considered an architect of country rock. It took a kid from Southern California who had a love for old-time music and bluegrass to set American music on a different track.

Hillman grew up in California in the 1950s. His sister, who he has described as "the bohemian in the family," came home from college with recordings by Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie, Leadbelly and others. At 15, Hillman fell in love with folk music. When he heard old-time music and bluegrass, his world changed and so, later, did ours.

Hillman was at U.C.L.A when he got an invitation to join Roger McGuinn, David Crosby, Gene Clark and Michael Clarke in a new band, the Byrds. Hillman was recruited to play bass guitar, an instrument he'd never played before. The group's first single, "Mr. Tambourine Man" was an international hit and one of the first folk rock tunes. With songs like "Turn! Turn! Turn!" "Eight Miles High" and "So You Want to Be a Rock 'n' Roll Star," the Byrds were among the most popular groups of the 1960s and Hillman developed as a songwriter, bringing out his bluegrass and country roots. They are on *Rolling Stone's* list of "100 Greatest Artists;" their entry was written by Tom Petty, who has acknowledged a debt to the seminal band.

When infighting left only Hillman and McGuinn and Hillman's cousin, Kevin Kelley in the band, they hired Gram Parsons to replace Crosby. With the album, *Sweetheart of the Rodeo*, Hillman and Parsons changed the group's direction to country rock. Later, Hillman teamed with Parsons again to form the Flying Burrito Brothers, continuing the move toward a country rock sound with albums like *The Gilded Palace of Sin* and *Burrito Deluxe*. Before the band broke up, Hillman joined Stephen Still's band, Manassas, where he stayed for several years.

By the 1980s, Hillman had returned to his bluegrass and country roots, recording two albums with



Chris Hillman - Time Between: An Evening of Stories and Songs featuring Herb Pederson & John Jorgenson
MAR 18, 2022 | 7pm

singer/guitarist, banjo player Herb Pedersen, a former member of The Dillards. Hillman and Pedersen formed the Desert Rose Band and their self-titled album produced two Top Ten country hits: "Love United" and "One Step Forward" and the number one single, "He's Back and I'm Blue." The band recorded from 1987-1993 and had 17 country music hits and won several Academy of Country Music Awards before they disbanded in 1994. The band, which also included JayDee Maness, John Jorgenson, Bill Bryson and Steve Duncan, had a reunion concert in 2008.

Hillman's 2017 album, *Bidin' My Time*, was produced by Tom Petty, with Herb Pedersen as executive producer. A masterwork of folk, rock and roll, bluegrass, and the country-rock Hillman helped to bring to life came together seamlessly, whether the song was written 60 years ago or in the last few years. The album features appearances by Petty, Crosby, McGuinn, Jorgenson, Pedersen, Jay Dee Maness, Mark Fain and others. While the album pays homage to the past, with songs like "Here She Comes," a song co-written by Hillman and McGuinn and only recorded on a live album in Australia, and the Everly Brothers' "Walk Right Back," it also reminds his audience of what a great songwriter Hillman still is.

The album was a true labor of love from a man who is happy with his life and happy to be doing what he loves with his friends. Others have praised the album, but Hillman is, as ever, more modest. "I did my very best," he said. "That's all any of us can do. There's nothing I want. I've had a great life and it's not over - we're not done."

Married to Broadway Featuring the Sharpe Family Singers

(March 23, 2022 7:00 pm) It's a very special "Take your kids to work day" when Ron and Barbra Sharpe bring their kids and extended family, collectively known as the Sharpe Family Singers, to celebrate Broadway and beyond. The group, which call itself a "modern-day Partridge Family," has gained more than 5.5 million followers on TikTok.

The elder Sharpes are the stuff of Broadway legends. They met onstage in the original Broadway production of *Les Miserables*, where they played Marius and Cosette. After being married on stage more than 1000 times, they decided to make it legal. They put together a show called *Married to Broadway*, featuring the best of the Great White Way.

Ron Sharpe was the first actor to play both male leads, Marius and Jean Valjean, in *Les Mis* on Broadway. Other Broadway credits include original productions of *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, *The Civil War*, and Disney's *King David*. He reprised his role as Jean Valjean for the 25th anniversary production of *Les Mis*, when it returned to Broadway in 2014 and was featured in the production of *Sweeney Todd* at Live at Lincoln Center with Emma Thompson.

In addition to performing as Cosette, Barbra Russell has portrayed Luisa in *The Fantasticks*, and Laurie in *Oklahoma* and has appeared in *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Side by Side by Sondheim*, and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. She has performed in concert around the world and conceived, produced and performed on the CD *Sweethearts*, the music of Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy. Both Sharpes have performed at the White House.

The Sharpe family has grown and they bring their two adult children, Samantha and Logan and their identical twin boys, Aidan and Connor, plus three adopted family members (the boyfriend, best friend and loveable uncle) to perform as The Sharpe Family Singers. Their family will take your family on a musical journey through rock 'n roll, Disney and classic Broadway.

Samantha Sharpe is the latest family star. The young singer told interviewers that she's been singing since she was 1 and watching *American Idol* since its first season, when Kelly Clarkson won. Now, she is appearing on the talent competition. "I told my mom and dad, 'that's going to be me, one day,'" she said. "I can't believe it actually happened. I

continued on page 66

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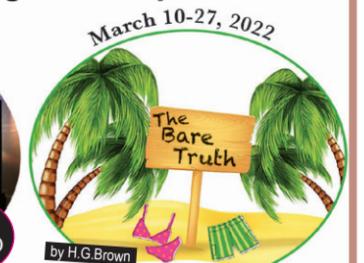
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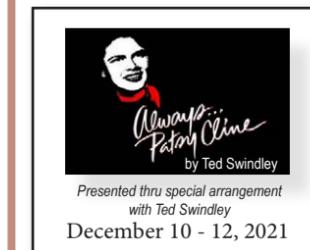


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just wanted to go and sing my best. I had my family there, I felt I did the very best I could. I was hoping I could get to experience this whole thing with my family and that made it so much better. I do everything with them when it comes to singing and having them there was like my rock the whole time.”

Featuring the best music from the Broadway stage and pop world, this show has something for everyone. Bring the kids, the grandkids and visiting relatives. You and they can't help but enjoy how the show lifts the spirits the way only a true family musical can. You'll know every song and want to sing along.

Come make memories with your family and the Sharpe family.

An Evening with Rita Rudner

(March 26, 2022 4:00pm & 7:00pm) Comedian Rita Rudner has one of the longest-running marriages in Hollywood, but that doesn't mean that the foibles of her family are off-limits. "I love being married," she has said. "It's so great to find that one special person you want to annoy for the rest of your life."

Rudner, named Las Vegas' "Comedian of the Year" some dozen years in a row, nearly didn't become a comedian at all. She came to New York at 15 to become a dancer. She appeared in several Broadway shows, including Stephen Sondheim's *Follies* and she danced for nearly 10 years. Then she stopped and she's still not sure why. "I noticed there weren't too many female comedians and loads of dancers," she said. "You gotta pioneer it. It's a position of power. You're controlling people's emotions, making people laugh."

For the former dancer, becoming a comedian wasn't a lot of laughs, at least at the beginning. It took a lot of preparation, including research on comedy at the Museum of Broadcasting, where she came to admire Jack Benny. "He would just stand there and deliver it as if it weren't funny," she said. "He would just look at the audience and didn't have to say anything. That's professional."

She also admired the writing of Woody Allen and watched many of his specials, although she found his persona too intense for her own personality. Benny was a more laid-back presence. "Jack Benny was so understated and Woody Allen was

the best joke writer," she said. "I listened to both a lot and did a combo: Woodybenny or BennyAllen."

Making people laugh has been Rudner's stock in trade for years. She has had several HBO specials, including *Rita Rudner's One Night Stand*, and a BBC show that later appeared in the United States on A&E. Her two one-hour specials for HBO, *Born to be Mild*, and *Married Without Children* were hits and she has filled Carnegie Hall in New York three times and the Universal Amphitheatre in Los Angeles

twice. In 2008, *Rita Rudner: Live from Las Vegas*, was PBS's first ever stand-up comedy special.

Not content to keep 'em laughing on stage and screen, Rudner has written five books, including *Naked Beneath My Clothes: Rita Rudner's Guide to Men* and *I Still Have it...I Just*

Can't Remember Where I Put It. The audio version of *Naked Beneath my Clothes* was nominated for a Grammy.

Rudner was friends with both Phyllis Diller and Joan Rivers, two of the very few female comedians around at the time. "They were such wonderfully smart women with very aggressive personalities," she said. "I didn't have an aggressive personality. I tried to do it the way I am, instead of imitating."

Like Diller, Rudner has found humor in her own life, including her marriage to producer Martin Bergman and her life off-stage. "It's about being married, being a mother and not knowing anything about technology. I bought a new car and it might as well say, 'Stupid, you pushed the wrong button.' I don't like to talk about things unrelated to what I've experienced."

Rudner has said that she writes on torn pieces of paper with coffee stains, but she is actually very organized when she performs. "I have to know exactly what I'm going to do," she said. "You don't go into a heart operation unprepared. If something happens, I have to respond. In a show, I was attacked by a moth. I had to do something. I always leave space at the end for questions and answers for spontaneity."

Rudner has said that in Hollywood, marriage is a success if it outlasts milk. Fortunately for her audiences, Rudner's career has a much longer shelf-life.

Sierra Hull

(March 27, 2022 7:00pm) Sierra Hull is a Lyric favorite. The bluegrass singer, mandolinist and guitar player first played the Grand Ole Opry when Alison Krauss called her to the stage. She was 11. Now in her late 20s, she has played the White House, Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center and was the first bluegrass musician to receive a Presidential Scholarship to the Berklee College of Music.

Hull was raised in Tennessee and began playing the mandolin when she was 8. She put out a self-released album when she was 10 and began jamming with other musicians in her family. By the time she was 10, she was entering

local talent contests and her parents took her to bluegrass festivals. During the International Bluegrass Music Association festival, Rounder Records discovered her and she was mentored by Krauss, who knew something about being a child prodigy. On Nov. 21, 2011, Hull and Krauss, along with Dan Tyminski, performed in the White House.

As she entered her twenties, Hull found she wanted more than the music she made as a teen. She talked to Krauss, the mentor who was now a confidante. She advised Hull to talk to banjo-master Béla Fleck. "Sierra lives in the border area where new ideas mix to create hybrids and sometimes brand new directions," he said. "Her own voice was quietly telling her something that was hard to hear over all the advice she was getting."

Fleck asked her to play her new songs for him without accompaniment other than her voice and the mandolin. "Even when I was fronting a band, I'd always been an ensemble player," Hull said. "To do something by myself made me rethink everything."

The result was the 2016 album *Weighted Mind*, produced by Fleck. It was nominated for a Grammy for Best Folk Album. To the mandolin and her voice, she added bass player Ethan Jodziewicz. Fleck is heard, as are Krauss, Abigail Washburn and Rhiannon Giddens. While the album certainly pays homage to its bluegrass roots, this music is Hull. She wrote 11 of the 12 songs and arranged the 12th. "She plays the mandolin with a degree of refined elegance and freedom that few have achieved," said Fleck. "And now her vocals and songwriting have matured to the level of her virtuosity."

For Hull, it's about being herself. "The moment you start to be yourself, there's an honesty about that, that people connect with," Hull said. "This album feels like the story of my early twenties, of that searching. Now it feels like everything worked out the way it was supposed to."

Hull continues to grow as an artist and a storyteller. She has produced *25 Trips*, a nod to a momentous year in her life, when she married fellow bluegrass musician Justin Moses and released *Weighted Mind*. "There's a lot of push-and pull on this record, where in some moments I feel like everything's happening so fast and I wish I could slow it down so that I can really enjoy it," she said. "Then there are also times where I'm looking forward to the day when the craziness has died down a bit and life's calmer."



A Solid Gold Evening with Marilyn McCoo and Billy Davis Jr. MAR 30, 2022 | 7pm

A Solid Gold Evening with Marilyn McCoo and Billy Davis Jr.

(March 30, 2022 7:00pm) A new album, the first in three decades, from music legends Marilyn McCoo and Billy Davis Jr. is an event. Their new album, *Blackbird: Lennon-McCartney Icons*, is not only a tribute to the songwriting talents of the two Beatles. It is a call for social justice and equality, a cause close to the couple.

McCoo and Davis won six Grammy Awards with the Fifth Dimension and a seventh as a duo, for "You Don't Have to be a Star." They have 15 gold and three platinum albums. They released the single, "Blackbird," February 26, and the album quickly became one of America's top-selling presale albums, reaching #2 on the R & B charts, according to iTunes.

McCoo and Davis, who have been married for more than 50 years, did not plan to release another studio album at this stage in their career. They made it clear that the new work had to reflect something that truly matters in the world. After the album's release they were asked, "Why Blackbird?" and "Why Now?" "It is a reflection of the truth we are living today," they said. "When a blackbird leaves our mother's nest, one day, it will not return. In 2021, mothers throughout our country live in the fear that our blackbirds may prematurely not be able to return because of bigotry and violence.

The new album continues the musical journey Hull began with *Weighted Mind*, a body of work that built on Hull's bluegrass roots and ventured into entirely new terrain. While its predecessor had a sparse and stripped down palette, *25 Trips* embodies a far more intricate sound: an effect achieved with the help of peers like guitarist Mike Seal, bassist Ethan Jodziewicz, violinist Alex Hargreaves and fiddler Christian Sedelmyer. Along with integrating electric instrumentation and percussion into her material for the first time, Hull dreamed up the album's eclectic textures by embracing free-flowing process that often gave way to lightning-in-a bottle improvisation.

"There were songs that we created from the ground up, where I'd go and play by myself," she said. "From there we'd bring in other musicians and add more and more layers," she said. "It was really wonderful to work that way, where we started from a place of mystery and then just let the song show us what it wanted or needed to become. One of the things that I enjoyed most about making this record was getting to show the wide variety of music I love. I don't really know what category the album falls into, but I also think that matters less and less. What matters to me is trusting myself to be who I am, and just putting my voice and my heart out there in the most sincere way that I possibly can."

The result is an artist at peace with herself and her talent, making the best music of her life.

continued on next page

'Blackbird' is dedicated to the life and humanity of every blackbird, whether living now or lost in battle. We always admired the talents of Paul McCartney and John Lennon and knew, what some did not, that the song 'Blackbird' is a Civil Rights anthem, written after the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, which took the lives of four babies. In this project, each song, image, timeline and video praises everyone who dares to fight hatred."

The album uses the title track and nine other Lennon-McCartney tunes, including "Help!" "The Long and Winding Road," and "The Fool on the Hill" to weave the themes of social justice and equality.

The two know something about breaking barriers and fighting for what they believe. They were the first African-American couple to host a network television show, *The Marilyn McCoo and Billy Davis Show*, and McCoo went on to host *Solid Gold*.

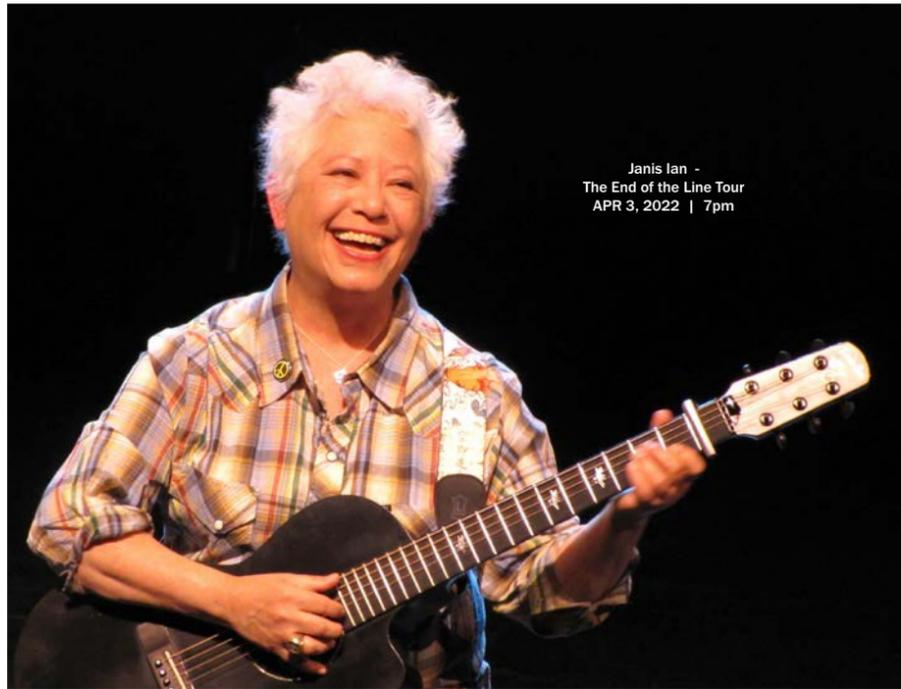
Any show McCoo and Davis present brings the audience back to the music that is the soundtrack of their lives. "Of course, it will include music we're known for, songs that made it possible to still be working" McCoo said in an interview. "They were so profoundly important in our lives."

That could include songs by Jimmy Webb, Burt Bacharach and Hal David and Laura Nyro like "Stoned Soul Picnic," "Aquarius/ Let the Sun Shine In" and "Wedding Bell Blues." There will probably be some love songs, which Davis said reflects who they are to each other. "Billy won't get off the stage without a blues number," McCoo said with a laugh. "He's from St. Louis."

Janis Ian – The End of the Line Tour

(April 3, 2022 7:00pm) When she was 12, Janis Ian wrote her first song, "Hair of Spun Gold." It was published in the folk magazine *Broadside*, and that led to a performance at a weekly hootenanny at the famed Village Gate, where she met Tom Paxton. Her father had to drive her into New York City because, of course, she was too young to drive. "Janis sat between Len Chandler and me," Paxton recalled. "We adopted her. She was a little drink of water from New Jersey. We made her sing another song. We loved her. She became a star a year later."

Now in her fifth decade of writing songs and performing, Janis Ian has been nominated for 10



Grammy nominations in eight categories, most recently in 2016. Her last Grammy, for Best Spoken Word Album, beat out Bill Clinton, Michelle Obama, Rachel Maddow and Ellen DeGeneres. For Ian, whose first single, "Society's Child," was written more than 50 years ago and for which she received death threats over its focus on an interracial couple, words are everything. "We artists are the last alchemists, pulling your dreams, your hopes, your deepest desires out of thin air and turning them into something you can hear, play and sing... We don't sell music. We sell dreams," she said.

Ian's seminal album, *Between the Lines*, and the single from it, "At Seventeen," became her signature. The song and album received five Grammy nominations, at that time, more than any solo female artist had ever received. Along with "Society's Child," this song about a young girl who feels that she is a misfit in high school was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame. Both songs gave voice to themes as relevant today as the day they were written.

Ian's songs have been recorded by artists as diverse as Cher, John Mellencamp, Celine Dion, Hugh Masekela, Nana Mouskouri, Charlie Daniels, Nina Simone and Roberta Flack. She's sung her own songs in duets with Dolly Parton, Willy Nelson and Mel Tormé. That performance, "Silly Habits," was a Grammy nominee for Best Jazz Vocal Performance, Duo or Group. After Johnny Cash died, she learned that he kept a well-thumbed copy of her first book of poetry, "Who Really Cares?" in his library. She was the first musical guest on a new show, *Saturday*

Night Live, which also featured George Carlin and she said that very few of the regulars thought it would last for more than a short time.

Ian is a fan of science fiction and has written short stories in the genre. She has co-edited an award-winning book with author Mike Resnick, *Stars: Original Stories Based on the Songs of Janis Ian*, where 30 science fiction writers used her songs as backdrops for their imaginations. "It's like jazz," she said. "It's the cutting edge. It deals in the possible and the improbable and asks a lot of questions I would ask. It takes no prisoners. My brother and I grew up on it. My father read (us) Poe."

Ian had a close relationship with both of her parents and she began the Pearl Foundation, named after her mother, who was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1975. Ian and her brother convinced their mother to follow her dream of going to college and her mother enrolled in Goddard College's adult education program. After her mother's death, the siblings began the foundation to raise money for older continuing education students. Ian still runs the Pearl Foundation, which has endowed more than \$900,000 in scholarships to returning students.

The esteem in which Ian is held by other artists is exemplified in a quote from another writer: "I played an album a lot in those bad years... the album was by Janis Ian (*Between the Lines*) and it played and it played and I listened and I could hear the storyteller and the great singer and I could sense

pages turning and lives changing and there was fog in the distance. She had fog in her stories - much had been created and much had been shared - but the fog didn't make it to my shores, although it made it to my heart. It's a remarkable album... it popped and crackled and skipped, but I kept it dropping and re-playing and it was a marvel." The writer? Tennessee Williams.

Don't miss the multiple Grammy-winning folk icon's last North American tour: "The End of the Line."

Let's Hang On! (April 6, 2022

7:00pm) The music of Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons is as popular today as it was 50 years ago. Shows like *Jersey Boys* have introduced this great sound to new audiences and new generations. The Lyric Theatre will rock 'n roll when the tribute group Let's Hang On! brings the sound of the 1960s to the stage.

Let's Hang On! is a group of six performers, four guys, two gals and a four-piece band, one of the few shows that still uses live music. The singers and musicians bring to life the music and style of Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons by capturing the trademark vocal virtuosity, tight harmonies and crisp choreography that made their reputation. The production contains all of the memorable hits, including "Sherry", "Big Girls Don't Cry," "Walk like a Man," "Can't Take My Eyes Off Of You," "December of 1963," "Who Loves You" and more. They also feature music from other major hit makers of the 1960s and from Motown and pay tribute to the show *Jersey Boys*. The full-staged show will have you tapping your toes, singing along and even dancing in the aisles.

For 10 years, Let's Hang On! has been entertaining crowds at venues from coast to coast. They perform for intimate groups and crowds as large as 5,000. Many of the dates are return engagements and they are invited back again and again. They have sold out six consecutive shows over the last three years at a major casino showroom in Las Vegas.

Presenters and audience members alike have rave reviews about the show. Frequent comments from audience members talk about the memories the show brought back and ask when they're returning. Presenters have said, "This is more than a tribute to Frankie Valli, it's a brilliant piece of showmanship that will leave you breathless. 'Let's Hang On!' had our audiences on their feet, singing along and wanting more. They are phenomenal."

Indeed, they are. The music is great and the performers are, as well. They do justice to the songs and entertain the audience with their energy, their sass and their talent.

If you love the music, and who doesn't, come to The Lyric and relive the glory days. As they put it, "If you like *Jersey Boys*, you'll love Let's Hang On!

Jimmie Vaughan (April 8,

2022 7:00pm) He comes from a legendary blues family and a family that knows how to play the guitar. The older brother of Stevie Ray Vaughan has four Grammy Awards in a career that spans decades. The Texas artist is that rarity, a living legend whose first group played Dallas' Hob Knob Lounge six nights a week. Vaughan was still in high school, and he learned lessons about music and life that you can't learn in school. He found the blues early on and that set the path of his life.

In the 1970s, Vaughan hitchhiked to Austin and carved out a crew of blues players who shared his love for the genre. He had worldwide success in the 1980s with the Fabulous Thunderbirds, but he knew when it was time to leave the band and go out on his own, exploring different approaches to the blues. He discovered that he could take the music in any direction because there were no boundaries. "I wanted to find out what I could really do and when I started singing, it gave me a whole new side to explore. When I was young, I didn't really pay attention to categories of music. I just heard what I liked and decided to explore that. And that's really what I'm still doing."

For the past few years, Jimmie Vaughan has been recording a series of albums dedicated to the songs he's always held in high esteem, recorded by artists that inspired him from his earliest days of performing. The sessions were held in studios near Austin, with musicians who understood that music is intended to ignite the heart and fill the soul. The music comes from writers and performers, some well-known, and others not known outside the blues world. On his latest release, *Baby, Please Come Home*, some of the original artists honored include Lloyd Price, Lefty Frizzell, T-Bone Walker, Etta James, Fats Domino, Gatemouth Brown and Jimmy Reed. That the album moves from blues artists like Reed to a founding father of country, Frizzell, proves Vaughan's point, that music is not what the label says, but how it makes the listener feel. That the music is played by Jimmie Vaughan's long-standing A-team band of musicians ensures that listeners will feel.

The sessions were mostly held at San Marcos, Texas' Fire Station Studio, and were the kind of recordings based on musicians who have been playing this music for decades. They've come to a near-silent style of communication, where a look or smile communicates much more than words could. As bandleader, singer and guitarist, Jimmie Vaughan is the master of how everything is captured for posterity. His singing voice has grown into a study in strength. While he sometimes says, "Sometimes you can sing and sometimes you can't," like everything he does, he knows when it's right and doesn't stop until it is. He has always looked to his soul as the ultimate barometer of when the music is right and when it is, he knows he has found the spot where the music is ready to be shared.

Jimmie Vaughan has dedicated his life to making sure the blues not only stay alive, but remain full of life and an inspiration to all who listen. It's a spirit he holds close to himself and after holding it close for more than 50 years, he isn't about to stop now.

Come share a night with Jimmie Vaughan and his music. You'll feel it, heart and soul.

The Lyric League presents

Youth Arts Celebration (April 10, 2020

6:00pm) Prepare to be amazed by Treasure Coast student performers in the 5th annual Youth Arts Celebration presented by The Lyric League! Young entertainers, grades 12 and under, will take to The Lyric stage in this dynamic talent showcase to represent their passions and dedication through various forms of performing arts.

The Youth Arts Celebration is not a contest, but rather an opportunity to recognize these students for their commitment to their craft, the courage to express themselves and their love of the arts. The emerging artists are diverse in their talents and backgrounds, but all are united by their love of performing. While not all of the participants have aspirations of performing professionally, they are clearly benefiting from their arts education demonstrating positive, respectful, focused behavior and support for one another. Beyond the appeal of the bright lights and thunderous applause, these talented performers also benefit from the sharing and exchanging of ideas, exposure to different styles of artistic expression and a sense of camaraderie. Reinforcing how arts education instills discipline and values so vital

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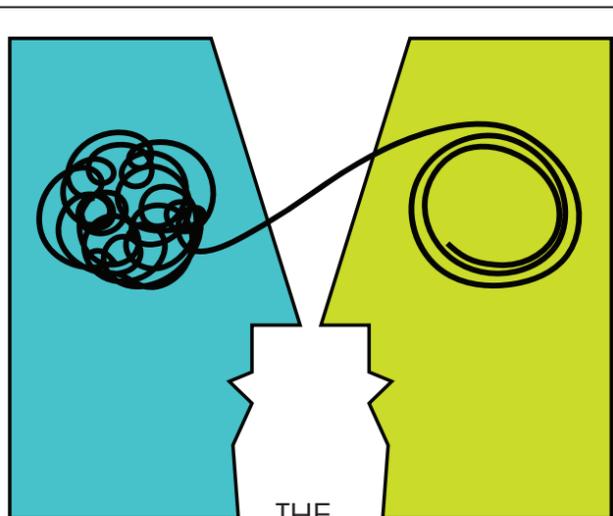
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to becoming a quality human being. The parents and educators deserve equal credit, as there is no denying the level of commitment these families have made to their children.

This annual event is spearheaded by The Lyric League to expand *The Lyric Theatre Arts & Education Programs* affording Treasure Coast youth even more educational opportunities for cultural enrichment. *The Lyric's Arts & Education Programs* provide master class and residency opportunities for students in area schools; The Discovery Series for Young Audiences, a series of school-time shows exposing students to live theatre and correlating theatrical content to standards-based curriculum; Family Fun Series provides the magic of live entertainment, reinforcing the fundamental values of time spent as a family; and building character on and off the stage at The Lyric's AWESOME! Summer Camp.

Aaron Diehl (April 20, 2022 7:00pm) Jazz pianist Aaron Diehl comes from a musical family. His grandfather, Arthur Baskerville, was a trombonist who also played the piano. He had several electric keyboards in the basement and he took his grandson, then about 5 years old, downstairs to teach him some "simple" tunes from Duke Ellington, "Satin Dog," and "Take the A Train." "He understood early on that I was interested in music," Diehl said. "When I was 4 or 5, we went to church every Sunday and they had a big pipe organ. I wanted to go to the choir loft to see it. From a very early age, I loved the sound of music and the feeling it gave me."

The accomplished Diehl, who made his New York Philharmonic debut in 2016, a day before his 31st birthday, attended the National Music Camp at Interlochen, Michigan, a place where he really learned to love jazz. He was a finalist in the Jazz at Lincoln Center's Essentially Ellington competition and was named Outstanding Soloist. At 18, he toured with Wynton Marsalis before attending Juilliard. The Marsalis tour was a formative experience for the young artist. "I was like a fish out of water," he said. "It was a critical moment. Wynton wanted to show me what it was like to be a travelling musician, night after night, at a high level. He wasn't easy on me. It was trial by fire. After, Juilliard was kind of a breeze. For a lot of

musicians, it's a vocation, not a job. Even passion is not a strong enough word. It's a calling and it's how much you want it."

Diehl has released several albums on the Mack Avenue label. His first, 2013's *The Bespoke Man's Narrative*, reached No. 1 on the *JazzWeek Jazz Chart*. In 2014, he was the Monterey Jazz Festival Commission Artist, one of the youngest to receive the honor. He has won numerous other awards, including the 2011 Cole Porter Fellowship from the American Pianists Association and the 2012 Prix du Jazz Classique from the Académie du Jazz. In an effort to nurture young artists, he was named the first director of the Catskill Jazz factory.

Diehl is known for his fascination with seemingly disparate sound palettes in which he finds similarities, from Monk and Ravel to Gershwin and William Grant Still. Still, in particular has inspired Diehl's ongoing curation of Black American composers into his own programming. He has also worked with composer Philip Glass for several years. Of his work with Glass, one of the most influential composers of the last 50 years, he said there was a lot to absorb. "It was a nice learning curve to understand his tone and sound," he said. "I wanted to figure out how to adapt it to jazz. He has an encyclopedic knowledge of music and how to take unusual sources and apply it to his own language. It's a lot of fun exploring and improvising and taking key components of his composing style and applying it to an improvisational style."

A pilot, Diehl has had a long fascination with flying. "My father flew for several years," he said. "When I was young, we flew all the time. He had a single engine and then a twin engine. I flew a lot and it always fascinated me. A lot of my passions originated from my childhood. I love cloud chasing and coming out to blue skies."

The New York Times has said he plays "magnificently," and *DownBeat* said that he "gracefully melds two worlds, merging the improvisational spirit of jazz with the compositional intricacies of Western classical music." That's probably why he is known by audiences and critics alike as "the real Diehl."

Béla Fleck and Abigail Washburn

(April 24, 2022 7:00pm) He is a 16-time Grammy winning banjo player named after three classical musicians. She plays the claw hammer banjo and almost became a lawyer in China. They met at a square dance where he was playing and she was

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Save Our Manatees

How water pollution and seagrass loss is killing Florida's beloved sea cows

January 26 • 7pm
at The Lyric Theatre

Photo: Save the Manatee Club



Aaron Diehl
APR 20, 2022 | 7pm

dancing. They're husband and wife and the parents of two young sons. They're Béla Fleck and Abigail Washburn and a visit from them is a visit from musical royalty.

New Yorker Béla Fleck was named after Béla Bartok, Anton Webern and Leos Janacek, but he took up the banjo after hearing Earl Scruggs and the theme from *Deliverance*. His grandfather gave him his first banjo when he was 15 and he taught himself to play, using an instructional book by Pete Seeger. He attended the prestigious High School of Music & Arts in New York City. After high school, he went to Boston and became a street performer. He was asked to join New Grass Revival, where he played for nine years and recorded a solo album, *Drive*, which was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Bluegrass Album.

In 1988, Fleck and Victor Wooten formed Béla Fleck and the Flecktones and Fleck, who has been nominated for Grammy awards in more categories than any other musician, continued to collaborate with a wide array of artists from many genres. He worked with Edgar Meyer on *Perpetual Motion*, an album of classical music played on the banjo, which also featured Lyric favorite Joshua Bell as well as Evelyn Glennie and Gary Hoffman. It won Grammy Awards for Best Arrangement and Best Classical Crossover Album. He and Meyer composed a double concert for banjo and bass, which they debuted with the Nashville Symphony Orchestra. Fleck has also recorded with traditional African musicians, co-written a documentary, *Bring it Home*, about the Flecktones, co-produced *Song of the Traveling Daughter*, his wife's debut album, and recorded as member of the Sparrow Quartet, featuring Washburn, Ben Sollee and Casey Driessen.

Abigail Washburn is a singing, songwriting Illinois-bred, Nashville-based claw hammer banjo player. When she was offered a recording contract at a bluegrass convention, she decided to become a traveling folk musician instead of the lawyer she had planned to be. Washburn, who speaks Chinese, has traveled widely in Asia and tours and performs their regularly. She was named a TED fellow and gave a talk in 2012 about building US-China relations through music. Two songs on her album with the Sparrow Quartet were recorded in Mandarin. The *New York Times* praised her 2011 release, *City of Refuge*, written with collaborator Kai Welch, saying the songs "mingle Appalachia and folk pop with tinges of Asia and Bruce Springsteen." Her most recent release, in 2017, *Echo in the Valley*, was recorded with Béla Fleck and is a follow-up to their self-titled album that



Béla Fleck and Abigail Washburn
APR 24, 2022 | 7pm

earned the 2016 Grammy for Best Folk Album. For Fleck, *Echo in the Valley* is reflective of where the two are right now. "Some of the most interesting things in the world come together in strange and unique ways and show our diversity," he said. "The banjo is just one of those things. It's a great example of how the world can combine things and create surprising hybrids. We're expressing different emotions through past techniques and going to deeper places."

The Motowners

(May 12, 2022 7:00pm) It's been more than 60 years since Berry Gordy founded the Motown label and the Motowners take you back to the time when The Temptations and The Four Tops ruled the airwaves and everyone was listening to Diana Ross and The Supremes, Smokey Robinson, Marvin Gaye and Stevie Wonder.

The group was founded some 15 years ago by Derrick Hadley, a native New Yorker who had a

family background in music of a different kind. His maternal grandmother attended the New England Conservatory in Boston in the 1920s and his mother, who had the greatest impact on his music, was an accomplished pianist and choral music teacher. Hadley's vocal talents were first developed and nurtured while singing gospel in his Youth AME church choir. He went on to the Dillard School for the Performing Arts in Fort Lauderdale and spent the early part of his career acting off Broadway and performing a one-man singing act, which he developed after working for the Songs of Broadway Company.

The Motowners feature powerful vocalists and a tight rhythm section and perform all the best of soul and blues classics with style. Their show is sing-along-able and family-friendly and they are familiar faces on festival stages, cruise ships and casinos. In 2010, they opened for the legendary Spinners and in 2012, they performed for First Lady Michelle Obama.

Get ready for the Motowners. You'll be dancing in the streets. ■

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