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PROGRAM



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CHANDLER CULTURAL FOUNDATION

Dynamic leaders, loyal supporters and visionaries describe the Board members of Chandler Cultural Foundation. The Chandler Cultural Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit corporation established in 1989 to program and raise funds for the Center's artistic and outreach programs. Ticket sales and other earned income cover only part of the Center's programming expenses, which means that the Chandler Cultural Foundation's fundraising efforts play a vital role in delivering quality arts programs at an affordable cost to the public.

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WELCOME TO THE CHANDLER CENTER FOR THE ARTS!



On behalf of the staff and volunteers of the CCA, welcome to Chandler Center for the Arts. Thank you for joining us for our 34th Season!

It is an honor to serve you in Downtown Chandler's premier arts and entertainment destination. It is our commitment to create an experience that is welcoming for everyone. If you have feedback about your experience while you are here, please share that with me or a member of our staff.

In addition to the diverse range of artists and genres that make up this year's season, we are very proud to present two musical theatre productions on the Steena Murray Mainstage. *North: The Musical* (Feb 23-24, 2024) features an original score filled with jazz and Black roots music and an uplifting story set against the backdrop of the Underground Railroad. Created by composer, musician, and vocalist Ashli St. Armant and co-commissioned by Chandler Center for the Arts, *North: The Musical* will make its return as part of its national tour. Be our guest at *Disney's Beauty and the Beast: Live in Concert* (Mar 23-24, 2024), a vibrant concert version of the Disney Broadway show with an orchestra and chorus on stage, accompanying a costumed cast and dazzling animated scenery.

We could not present an outstanding season like this one without the incredible support through your ticket purchase, membership, or donation. Your support enables us to provide free arts experiences to over 15,000 families, seniors, and veterans each year. If you want to do more, visit chandlercenter.org/donate and consider a deeper investment in your local arts center.

Let us dim the house lights, turn up the stage lights and forget the world outside. It is showtime!

With gratitude,

Michelle MacLennan

General Manager, Chandler Center for the Arts

Michelle MacLennan

2023/24 SEASON

OUR IMPACT

In the **2022-2023 SEASON**, the Chandler Center for the Arts had the following impact on our community.

50 cultural and nonprofit organizations used the CCA for their performances, recitals, and events

3,099 creative workers engaged

215 volunteers donated **8,700** hours of their time to the CCA

7,000 young people were reached with performing and visual arts programs through Connecting Kids

160,530 patrons experienced the arts through diverse programming, of those individuals, **15,500** attended **FREE** programs



WELCOME TO CHANDLER CENTER FOR THE ARTS!

On behalf of the City of Chandler, thank you for choosing Chandler Center for the Arts. With so many unique and vibrant entertainment options, I am confident you will have an exceptional experience.

Chandler Center for the Arts is an integral part of Chandler. The diversity and dynamic energy that makes up our unique community are showcased and celebrated beautifully through a variety of artistic performances at the Center. They offer a range of entertainment from all categories, the 2023-2024 Season includes La Marisoul (acclaimed lead singer of GRAMMY®-winning band La Santa Cecilia), Clint Black (country music icon), and Howie Mandel (comedy legend and judge from *America's Got Talent*) just to name a few.

With outstanding customer service, some of the best entertainment in the Valley, and Chandler's bustling and lively Downtown, you are sure to have an unforgettable experience.

Enjoy the performance, we look forward to seeing you again soon.

Mayor Kevin Hartke
City of Chandler



CHANDLER CITY COUNCIL

Front row, from left: Councilmember Jane Poston, Councilmember Angel Encinas, Councilmember Matt Orlando, Councilmember Christine Ellis. **Back row, from left:** Councilmember OD Harris, Mayor Kevin Hartke, Councilmember Mark Stewart.



CHANDLER CULTURAL FOUNDATION

Back row, from left: David Woodruff, Christopher McMullan, Michelle Mac Lennan
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Not pictured: Mike Halle, Candy Yu, Jeanne Forbis, Ellie Watland and Jyoti Pathak



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A Distinct Performing Arts Center

Chandler Center for the Arts serves as a leader and one of the most collaborative multi-theatre performing and visual arts facilities in the country. Through a partnership between the City of Chandler, the nonprofit Chandler Cultural Foundation and Chandler Unified School District, the Chandler Center for the Arts is the central space for Chandler's cultural activities. Serving a diverse community comprised of many ages, backgrounds and interests, the Center presents outstanding performances, exhibitions and events for the public each weekend, while providing a state-of-the-art facility for Chandler's students to use for their arts curriculum and school performances during the week.

The Chandler Cultural Foundation, which was formed upon the Center's opening in 1989, oversees all artistic programming and operations, and provides fiscal oversight for the Chandler Center for the Arts on behalf of the city.

The Chandler Cultural Foundation is comprised of 15 board members; all of whom are appointed by the Mayor. The members review and approve proposed management policies of the CCA, as well as review the budgets of the CCA's operating and endowment funds.

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Jerry Brooks Legacy Society

Mayor of Chandler from 1984-1988, Jerry Brooks was a visionary leader, dedicated to the cultural life of Chandler. In his honor, the Chandler Cultural Foundation established the Jerry Brooks Legacy Society. Those who give to the Legacy Society are dedicated to ensuring a lasting foundation of support for Chandler Center for the Arts, in keeping with Jerry's vision for a strong cultural center for Chandler and its residents.

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DICK CLARK'S COUNTDOWN TO THE '50S & '60S



SUNDAY, APRIL 7, 2024 | 3:00 P.M.



TODD MEREDITH (Guitar/Buddy Holly) is an actor/musician originally from Albany, NY. He is thrilled to have been performing with Showtune Productions for over ten years. Todd is the lead singer/guitarist for the band THE RAVE-ONS, a Buddy Holly tribute band. He has written and starred in several Buddy Holly tribute shows, a tribute to the Winter Dance Party called *Buddy, Ritchie, and The Bopper*, and a rockabilly Christmas show. He has played the role of the title character in 19 productions of *BUDDY: The Buddy Holly Story*, including two national tours. Since 2011, Todd's Buddy Holly tribute band has performed at different theaters all over the

country and guest-entertained on cruise lines like Holland America, Norwegian, and Celebrity all over the world. You can learn more about them and their other tribute shows at www.rave-ons.com. Todd has also released a Buddy Holly tribute CD entitled *Rock, Rhythm, & Blues* and an EP of original music entitled *One Track Mind*, which you can purchase at www.toddmeredith.com or in the lobby after the show.



JEREMY RENNER

(Guitar) is an accomplished guitar player since the age of 16. Jeremy began playing with The Rave-Ons in Reno, NV, where he played Tommy Allsup in the Jersey Shore Entertainment production of *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story*. He has since understudied the title role at the New Theater in Kansas and has played both Niki Sullivan and Tommy Allsup on the 2013 National Tour and at The Riverside Center in Fredericksburg, VA. Jeremy hails from New Jersey where he writes his own original music and tours the local circuit as a solo acoustic performer and with his own group, The Jeremy Renner Band.



JACOB CALLIS

(Bass) became a member of The Rave-Ons in 2016 and started standing on his bass shortly thereafter. Since joining the group, Jacob has assisted in expanding the group's repertoire to include ever more crowd-pleasing hits from Rock n' Roll's golden age. Prior to joining The Rave-Ons, Jacob performed as an orchestral bassist in such productions as *Hair, Joseph*

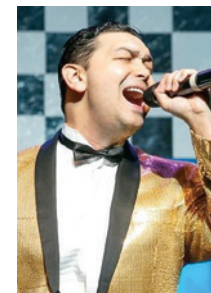
and *the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Once on this Island, Million Dollar Quartet, and Tommy.*



MATT WATSON

(Drums) was born in Chandler, AZ and went to Chandler High School! Matt is a graduate of Arizona State University, and now resides in Brooklyn, NY, as a freelance musician/percussionist with his beautiful wife Michelle. Matt has been playing percussion for over seventeen years and is currently drummer on the Off-Broadway hit *Titanique*. His performing background ranges from participating in drum corps, percussion ensembles, and symphony/pit orchestras to playing in cover bands, jazz combos, and show bands. National tour credits include *Aladdin* (2018), *A Christmas Story: The Musical* (2015), *Memphis, The Musical* (2015), *Fiddler On The Roof* (2013), and *All Shook Up* (2011). In addition to touring, Matt has completed four contracts with Princess Cruise Lines as a show band drummer and emergency fill in. For more information and media content, please visit www.mattwatsondrums.com.

RYAN JAGRU (Dick Clark/Ritchie Valens) is excited to be back in Arizona again with Showtune Productions and The Rave-On's portraying the great Dick Clark! This spring you can see him performing at The King's Castle Theatre in Branson, MO, in *Jersey Nights, a Tribute to Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons*. Other credits include *Buddy, The Buddy Holly Story*



RYAN JAGRU

(Dick Clark/Ritchie Valens) is excited to be back in Arizona again with Showtune Productions and The Rave-On's portraying the great Dick Clark! This spring you can see him performing at The King's Castle Theatre in Branson, MO, in *Jersey Nights, a Tribute to Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons*. Other credits include *Buddy, The Buddy Holly Story*

National Tour (Ritchie), Bruno Mars Tribute (Bruno), One Direction Tribute (Zayn), Altar Boyz (Juan) and Disney's Believe (Aladdin).



TRISHA DITSWORTH (Vocalist) is a local singer, musical theatre artist, teacher and director. Favorite acting credits: Maria (*The Sound of Music*), Mary Poppins (*Mary Poppins*), Fanny Brice (*Funny Girl*), Sarah (*The Toxic Avenger*), Catherine (Pippin) Johanna (*Sweeney Todd*), Martha (*The Secret Garden*), Percy (*The Spitfire Grill*), Sister Mary Robert (*Sister Act*), Pickles (*Trailer Park*), Annabel (*Lucky Stiff*), Eden (*Bullets Over Broadway*). BFA Musical Theater, University of Arizona. By day Trisha teaches private voice and acting lessons and also enjoys painting. Drop by the Upstage Boutique at The Phoenix Theatre Company in the lobby to see her artwork. www.trishaditsworth.com

Company in the lobby to see her artwork. www.trishaditsworth.com
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LEDISI: THE GOOD LIFE TOUR



FRIDAY, APRIL 12, 2024 | 8:00 P.M.

After a distinguished two-decade career, **Ledisi** earned her long overdue and first GRAMMY® award in March 2021 for Best Traditional R&B Performance for her hit song, “Anything For You.” That year, during the pandemic, Ledisi launched her own label, releasing *The Wildcard* LP, which included her GRAMMY®-winning song and first *Billboard* Number 1 radio hit in the Summer of 2020 and by December 2020 she co-produced her very first PBS Special *Ledisi Sings Nina Simone*. On the heels of the huge success of *The Wild Card*, Ledisi released *Ledisi Live at The Troubadour* in April 2021 accompanied by a pay-per-view virtual concert.

Growing up, Ledisi was heavily influenced by many soulful music icons, one in particular being Dr. Nina Simone. Ledisi finally completed and released her dream project on her label entitled *Ledisi Sings Nina* with the Metropole Orkest, conducted by Jules Buckley and The New Orleans Jazz Orchestra conducted by Adonis Rose. The album also features vocalists Lizz Wright, Lisa Fischer and Alice Smith. Ledisi’s tour de force jazz project has received rave reviews:

In November of 2021, the powerhouse performer received her 14th GRAMMY® Nomination for *Ledisi Sings Nina* for “Best Traditional Pop Album.” Ledisi has also garnered 3 Soul Train Music Awards, 19 NAACP Image Award Nominations, an NAACP Theatre Award and this year, an NAACP nomination for Breakthrough Performance In a Film for her role as Mahalia Jackson in *Remember Me*. Ledisi also received two LA Alliance Ovation Award Nominations, one for Best Featured Actress in a Musical.

Born in New Orleans and raised in Oakland, CA, Ledisi has wowed fans with her unparalleled vocals. She has truly earned a place in the pantheon of the

greatest singers of her generation. Ledisi is a favorite of the Obamas and a long list of icons including the late Prince, Patti LaBelle, Smokey Robinson, Stevie Wonder, Chaka Khan and so many more. She has headlined four nationally sold-out tours, and performed alongside many artists like Dave Matthews, Gary Clark, Jr, Vince Gill, Keb Mo and Maxwell as well as jazz greats Herbie Hancock, Robert Glasper and Patti Austin.

No stranger to the film and television world, Ledisi landed her first feature singing in the George Clooney-directed film *Leatherheads*. In 2015, she landed a role in the Oscar-nominated movie *Selma*, portraying the great Mahalia Jackson, and had a notable performance in Gabourney Sidibe’s Shatterbox Anthology film, *The Tale Of Four*. Ledisi also secured her first major television role, playing the legendary Patti LaBelle on the hit BET hit series *American Soul* followed by a standout performance on the FX hit series, *POSE*. She can also be seen in *Twice Bitten* with her co-star Lisa Raye on BET Plus. In 2022, Ledisi landed a starring role, portraying the great Mahalia Jackson in *Remember Me*, a biopic starring Columbus Short, Wendy Raquel Robinson, Janet Hubert and Keith David. Finally, Ledisi portrays the legendary Gladys Knight in the biopic *Spinning Gold*, a film about Casablanca Records Chief Neil Bogart released on March 31, 2023.

Ledisi is extremely passionate about being an advocate for the arts, lobbying for young musicians and protecting the rights of creatives. She is currently the President of the Recording Academy, Los Angeles Chapter, focusing her efforts on increasing and giving voice to diversity. In August of 2021, Ledisi had the esteemed honor of becoming an Honorary Member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated.

The Tail of her line-sisters, Michelle J. Howard, Abby Phillip, Joy-Ann Reid, Ambassador Shabazz, Collette V. Smith and Ledisi are collectively known as “The Justice League.”

Utilizing and developing her versatile skills as a communicator, advocate, singer/songwriter, music producer, author, playwright, film producer and now CEO of her record label Listen Back Entertainment/BMG, Ledisi is excited about launching more projects in the future for herself and others.

When you speak of women in entertainment Ledisi has brazenly put herself square at the head of the conversation. “I am finally owning my lane as a creative, while understanding what it means to be me...Ledisi, a black woman, a wife, a bonus mom, a daughter, a sister, a professional storyteller, passionate advocate and a stronger businesswoman. All of this.. right? It feels good.”

“Her vocal performance is the picture of bravura self-assurance, bounding across her range with a declaratory power.”
- Nate Chinen , WBGO Radio.

“As a contemporary vocalist, there’s almost no one I can think of in the world that sings as skillfully as she does. In terms of her range, dexterity, clarity, versatility, she can do anything she wants. She’s one of the great singers in the world, period.”
- John Legend

“‘Ledisi Sings Nina,’ an album that features seven of Simone’s most popular songs redone in orchestral, jazz and pop arrangements. They showcase both the diversity and depth of Simone’s musicianship and the breathtaking range and reach of Ledisi’s own voice.”
- Salamishah Tillet - New York Times



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WHEN IN DOUBT

Call our box office at **480-782-2680**.

THE PEKING ACROBATS



FRIDAY, MAY 3, 2024 | 7:30 P.M.

For the last thirty-two years, **THE PEKING ACROBATS®** have redefined audience perceptions of Chinese acrobatics. They perform daring maneuvers atop a precarious pagoda of chairs and display their technical prowess at such arts as trick-cycling, precision tumbling, juggling, somersaulting, and gymnastics. They push the limits of human ability, defying gravity with amazing displays of contortion, flexibility, and control. THE PEKING ACROBATS are often accompanied by live musicians who skillfully play traditional Chinese instruments; the time-honored Chinese music coalesces with high-tech special effects and awe-inspiring acrobatic feats to create an exuberant entertainment event with the festive pageantry of a Chinese carnival.

Since their founding in 1986, THE PEKING ACROBATS have been featured on numerous television shows and celebrity-studded TV specials. These include Nickelodeon's *Unfabulous*, *Ellen's Really Big Show* (hosted by Ellen DeGeneres), *The Wayne Brady Show*, *That's Incredible*, ABC's *Wide World of Sports*, and NBC's *Ring In The New Year Holiday Special*. They have also appeared on HDNet TV's *In Focus* series, and have appeared regularly in 3D on NBC/Comcast's new 3D Channel. THE PEKING ACROBATS set the world record for the Human Chair Stack on FOX Network's *Guinness Book Primetime* television show in 1999: they balanced six people precariously atop six chairs twenty-one feet up in the air without safety lines, astounding audiences with their bravery and dexterity. THE PEKING ACROBATS have also made their way onto the silver screen - company members were featured in Steven Soderbergh's hit film *Ocean's Eleven*, playing alongside Julia Roberts, Brad Pitt and George Clooney. PEKING ACROBATS' alumnus Shaobo Qin also appeared in that film's two sequels, *Ocean's Twelve* and *Ocean's Thirteen*.



CLASSIC ALBUMS LIVE: BILLY JOEL'S THE STRANGER



SUNDAY, MAY 19, 2024 | 7:00 P.M.

Relive the nostalgia of *The Stranger*, Joel's fifth studio album, released in September 1977. An album that helped define the '70s, it won two GRAMMY® Awards in 1978 for Record of the Year and Song of the Year. Four songs from the album were on the Billboard 100: "She's Always a Woman," "Movin' Out," "Just the Way You Are" and "Only the Good Die Young."

Classic Albums Live

Founded in 2003 by Craig Martin, Classic Albums Live takes the greatest albums and recreates them live on stage - note for note, cut for cut, using the best musicians. "Think of it as a recital," says Martin, "these albums are historic and stand the test of time." Forgoing costumes and impersonations, Classic Albums Live has found success in concentrating solely on the music. "We don't dress up or wear any sort of costume. All of our energy is put into the music. We want the performance to sound exactly like the album," says Martin.

With 100+ shows a year across North America, Classic Albums Live has seen massive success in performing arts centres and theatres. Fans in Texas, Florida, California, New York and central and east coast Canada have all continued to support the series and make it a sustaining, successful show. "We grew while others withdrew," says Martin, commenting on the decline of concert ticket sales, "We created something that endures and connects. These albums are sacred to people. We deliver exactly what we promote - 'note for note, cut for cut' accuracy." It's this type of accountability that works for the series.

Craig Martin

Founder, Classic Albums Live

ARTS AND CULTURE MEAN BUSINESS IN A CITY

Results of the Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 National Survey

THE ARTS IN CHANDLER...

Generates Revenue

the Arts and Culture segment generated

\$12.1 MILLION

in economic activity during 2022

Supports Jobs

the Arts and Culture segment supported

194 JOBS

providing \$8.2M in personal income

Builds Community Vibrancy

the Arts and Culture segment attracted

182,396 EVENT ATTENDEES

keeping residents engaged locally
and inspiring community pride

chandlercenter.org/AEP6

BETH HART



SEP 6

7:30 P.M.

*Experience the
GRAMMY®-
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powerhouse
vocalist with her
raw, powerful
blues-rock
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CHANDLER Symphony Orchestra

Vanja Gjumar Nikolovski, Conductor

Chamber Music Series Concert III
 Sunday, April 14, 2024 | 5 p.m.

Our third Chamber Music Series concert will be a Musician's Choice concert. This popular concert is sure to offer variety and music that you haven't heard before.

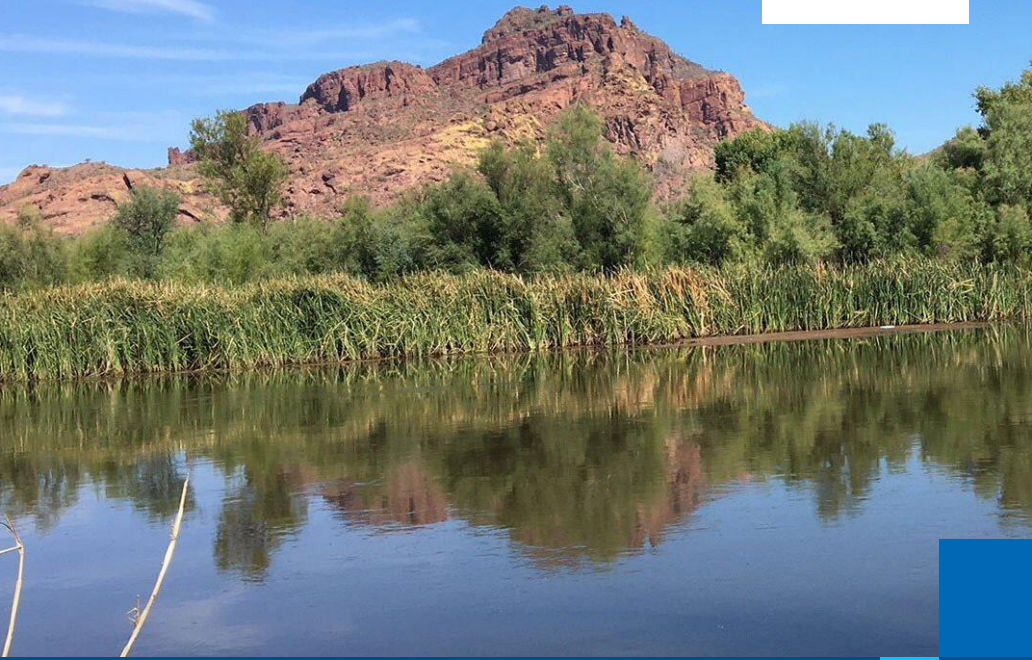
Risen Savior Lutheran Church | No charge for admission and donations are gratefully accepted.

Celebrate!
 Sunday, May 5, 2024 | 5 p.m.

Vanja Gjumar Nikolovski, Conductor; Pyotr Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5; Genaro Codina: Zacatecas; Aaron Copland: El Salon Mexico; Arturo Marquez: Danzon No. 2

Chandler Center for the Arts | Admission is by donation | Doors will open at 2:30 pm for open seating.

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