



NYE: BEST OF BROADWAY

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**PROGRAM**



**CHANDLER  
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FOR THE ARTS



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# PROMOTING THE ARTS, TOGETHER.

The arts celebrate culture and enrich our lives. A vibrant arts community is a key indicator of a thriving economy. That's why SRP is proud to support organizations like the Chandler Center for the Arts that are committed to unifying our region through creativity, innovation and shared experiences that connect us all.

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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.

### Board of Directors

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Candy Yu

# 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 34<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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

**Front row, from left:** Jennifer Sanchez, Julia Marreel, Mari Jo Woolf-Whitaker, LaTricia Woods, Susan Baker, Terri Rettig, Erica Castro, Peppur Chambers, Sherida McMullan

**Not pictured:** Steena Murray, Mike Halle, Candy Yu, Jeanne Forbis



### CHANDLER UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT (CUSD) GOVERNING BOARD

Jason Olive, President,  
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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.

# THANK YOU

## TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

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**\$50,000 - \$99,999**

Steena Murray

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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.

Harriet Rickert Barnes  
Sheila & Jerry Brooks  
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List of supporters as of July 1, 2023 - December 4, 2023.

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# BECOME A MEMBER



Chandler Center for the Arts Members are an important group of individuals who, through their support, help provide performances and visual arts to more than 210,000 people, in addition to vital education programs for Chandler's youth.

You can become a member for as little as \$50 per year, with increasing levels of benefits and perks according to your level of giving.

## MEMBER BENEFITS INCLUDE:

Exclusive Advance Presales

Special Members-Only Events and Performer Meet-and-Greets

Refunds and Exchanges On Tickets

Visit [chandlercenter.org/member](http://chandlercenter.org/member) or call 480-782-2680

Become a member  
**TODAY!**

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# NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATION: BEST OF BROADWAY



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2023 | 8:00 P.M.



**LAURA ALARCON (Vocals)** is an accomplished musical theatre artist whose career spans over 15 years. With a repertoire ranging from operetta to rock musical – and everything in between – she has enjoyed diverse and challenging roles with several companies in the Phoenix area, including Arizona Broadway Theatre, Nearly Naked Theatre, and TAD Management. When she's not on stage, Laura runs a successful coaching practice, where she helps moms of kids with autism manage their stress and anxiety, so they feel better about themselves and about motherhood. Her greatest roles to date are wife to her esposo fabuloso José, and matriarch of the entire clan: Joel, Omri, Angelo, Isaac, and Ian!



**MATRAVIUS AVENT (Vocals)** is a Phoenix-based vocalist and actor. Originally from Denver, Colorado, Matravius moved to Phoenix to attend Arizona State University where he received a Master of Music in Voice Performance. Since graduating, Matravius has been active performing on stages across the US and in Japan. Selected credits include Tokyo Disney Resort's *Big Band Beat*, *The Alexander Project*, *Hamilton Tribute Tour*, *Ragtime*, *Jekyll & Hyde*, *Rent*, and *Les Miserables*. [www.matravius.com](http://www.matravius.com) @matravius



**ELLIE BARRETT-HARVEY (Vocals)** is a passionate triple-threat performer crossing her work in musical theatre and opera styles of singing. Favorite credits include: *42<sup>nd</sup> Street* (Anytime Annie,

u/s Maggie and Dorothy), *Something Rotten!* (Sexy Omelette/Ensemble), *The Producers* (Usherette/Ensemble), *A Chorus Line* (Lois, u/s Cassie, Sheila) Moonlight Stage Productions; *Joseph...Coat* (Potiphar's Wife/Ensemble) La Mirada/McCoy Rigby; *Anything Goes* (Virtue, u/s Reno) SDMT; *Bandstand* and *Singin' in the Rain* (Dance Swing) Phoenix Theatre Company. Performed at Feinstein's 54/Below, Welk Resort, San Diego Opera, Hale Centre Theatre, and studied with The Radio City Rockettes. She gives thanks to Bloc Talent Agency, family, and incredible husband. Arizona State B.M. Musical Theatre '22. Praise God! @elliebarrettharvey [www.elliebarrett.org](http://www.elliebarrett.org)



**JORDAN BLUTH (Vocals)** trained in voice at Indiana University and has since performed as a vocalist with companies across the United States. He is an award-winning recording artist, with multiple solo albums and collaborative projects, and he is frequently sought as a concert soloist. When he's not making music, Dr. Bluth maintains a busy optometry practice in Apache Junction and spends time making messes and noise with his three sweet kids and his lovely wife, Kaitlynn. For more information about his recording projects, visit [www.jordanbluthmusic.com](http://www.jordanbluthmusic.com).



**MICHAEL PARNELL (Vocals)** is delighted to be included in this cast of incredible artists. A native of Montana, Jamie is now a resident of Arizona and the Production Coordinator at Arizona Broadway Theatre. He studied Theatre and Voice at the University of Montana and has sung on stages across the nation.

Jamie was most recently seen on stage as 'Billy Flynn' in *Chicago* and 'Walter Hobbs' in *Elf*. Favorite credits: 'Dr. Frank-n-furter' *Rocky Horror*, 'Lancelot' *Camelot*, 'Georges' *La Cage aux Folles*, 'Bob Cratchit' *A Christmas Carol*, 'Nicky Arnstein' *Funny Girl*.



**COURTNEY WASHINGTON**

(Vocals) is a Los Angeles-born singer/actor now living in Mesa, Arizona. A proud graduate of the American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York City, she's had the privilege of performing in corporate shows, concerts, musicals and national tours across the US and Canada. A few favorites include the role of Tina Turner in *The Wedding Singer* National Tour and *Beehive: The 60's Musical* National Tour, *Hairspray*, *All Shook Up*, and *Nuncrackers*. Courtney will be starring as Mrs. Potts in *Disney's Beauty & The Beast* here at the CCA in March. When not performing, she can be found hanging out with her favorite audience: her husband and two children.

**JR McALEXANDER (Producer/Musical Director)** is Owner/Musical Director of Arizona-based Showtune Productions, which has produced over 60 different productions since 2010 including *The Music Man in Concert* and *Singin' in the Rain in Concert* at the Orpheum in Phoenix and will be producing *Beauty and the Beast in Concert* here at the CCA this March 2024. He is a 35-year veteran of the professional theatre and has music directed almost 400 productions throughout the United States and Canada including Broadway National Tours of *Sunday in the Park with George*, *All Shook Up*, *The Wedding Singer*, *Anything Goes*, *Footloose* and *Beehive!*, *The Musical*. JR has worked with numerous stars including Donald O'Connor, Gloria Loring, Gloria DeHaven, Van Johnson and Ken Page and many West End and Broadway stars. Music Supervisor for Prather Entertainment Group for 18 years, he has also served as Musical Director for such prestigious theatres as The Guthrie of Minneapolis, Theatre Under the Stars of Houston, The Fulton Theatre in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Cumberland County Playhouse in Tennessee, Galveston Island Opera House, Fireside Playhouse in Wisconsin, Little Theatre on the Square, Circa '21 in Illinois and Arizona Broadway Theatre. He really enjoyed a new adventure as music director/vocal coach at UA Musical Theatre School in Tucson last year. JR feels very blessed to have worked with such talented artists over the past 35 years and hopes you enjoy the show. Thanks for supporting live theatre!

**M. SETH REINES (Artistic Director)** has served as Artistic Producer of Little Theatre on the Square, Illinois' oldest Equity Stock Company for 25 years, Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre and Prather Entertainment Group for 10 years. A member of the Society for Directors and Choreographers and Actors Equity, he has staged over 500 productions for stage and television including national tours of *All Shook Up*, *The Wedding Singer*, *South Pacific*, and the Tenth Anniversary tour of *Sunday in the Park with George*. He has worked with such stage luminaries as Sierra Boggess, Emily Loesser, Tom Wopat and Peter Allen. Seth served as Artistic Director of Utah Musical Theatre in Ogden, Utah, Promise Valley Playhouse in Salt Lake City, Waldo Astoria and Tiffany's Attic Playhouses in Kansas City, Missouri and was Director of the BFA/MFA Musical Theatre Program at Chicago's Roosevelt.

**SHOWTUNE PRODUCTIONS** is an Arizona-based entertainment company dedicated to bringing live professional performances to audiences throughout the United States, from Maine to California, including all over the state of Arizona. Performers and musicians are cast nationally and Showtune's original tribute and variety shows feature popular songs from country, early rock & roll, big band, 60's & 70's pop, Broadway and beyond. Showtune Productions will be producing *Disney's Beauty & The Beast* this March along with the fourth season of the "Showtime Series" here at the CCA. In 2017, Showtune Productions produced *Music Man in Concert* at the Orpheum Theatre in Phoenix with over 90 people onstage and *Singin' In The Rain in Concert* in December 2018, and it has produced over 60 shows since 2010 including such hits as *Buddy, Ritchie and The Big Bopper*, *Walkin' the Line*, *Remember Patsy Cline*, *Riders in The Sky*, *ELVIS, The Early Years*, *Country Gals*, *Ted Vigil As John Denver*, *You've Got A Friend*, *We've Only Just Begun*, *Legendary Sisters of Soul*, *Swingtime*, *Take It Easy*, *Early Rock and Roll Live*, and *Hooray for Hollywood* to name a few. For their complete schedule, visit their website at [www.showtuneproductions.com](http://www.showtuneproductions.com).

**ORCHESTRA MEMBERS**

- Musical Director / Conductor / Piano . . . . . JR McAlexander
- Keyboard . . . . . Denise Minter
- Violin . . . . . Chrystal Smothers
- Cello. . . . . Li Ma
- Reed 1. . . . . Kevin Blatchford
- Reed 2 . . . . . Wen Wu
- Trumpet. . . . . Dave Coolidge
- Trombone. . . . . Charles Hopkins
- Bass . . . . . Dan Stotz
- Drums. . . . . Emerson Laffey



# THE RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS

## BILL MEDLEY & BUCKY HEARD



**SATURDAY, JANUARY 20, 2024 | 7:30 P.M.**

Blue-eyed soul pioneers **The Righteous Brothers** are back! With a string of #1 classics, including the most played song in radio history, “You’ve Lost That Lovin’ Feelin’,” the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame duo of Bill Medley and Bobby Hatfield topped the charts in four decades. After Bobby’s death in 2003, Bill Medley continued to perform to sold-out crowds around the world, but fans and friends pleaded with him to keep The Righteous Brothers alive. Says Medley “... No one could ever take Bobby’s place, but when I caught Bucky Heard’s show it all came together – I found the right guy to help me recreate the magic.” The concert experience features their biggest hits – “Lovin’ Feelin’,” “Soul & Inspiration,” “Unchained Melody,” “Rock and Roll Heaven,” “Medley’s GRAMMY®-winning *Dirty Dancing* theme “The Time of My Life,” and much, much more!

The Bill Medley/Bucky Heard pairing came as something of a happy accident. Medley says it just seemed right. “I’d been friends with Bucky for years, but when I caught his show he just killed me! The next day it hit me – that’s the guy, someone I could sing hard with, laugh hard with, love and respect – on and off stage. He fits **The Righteous Brothers** live performance show perfectly. And, we’ve even recorded some new material together, I’m really excited!”

**Bill Medley** is truly one of the iconic figures in American music history. His instantly recognizable baritone voice has anchored some of the biggest recordings of all time. He’s won a GRAMMY®, an Oscar, a Golden Globe, and an American Music Award.

The Orange County, California native began writing songs as a boy and had his breakout as a songwriter and singer when, in 1963, the Medley-penned “Little Latin Lupe Lu” became a regional hit for Bill and Bobby Hatfield, as their first release as The Righteous Brothers. Other regional hits followed, “Justine,” “Koko Joe,” and “My Babe,” which led to a regular spot on ABC-TV’s national *Shindig!* broadcast. The show, featuring a cast of regulars, along with guest stars every week, catered to the teen audience, something new for TV at that time. *Shindig!*’s smash success coincided with The Righteous Brothers opening for both The Beatles and The Rolling Stones on their first US tours.

Soon, The Righteous Brothers caught producer Phil Spector’s attention and he signed them to record what would become, according to BMI, the most played song in the history of American radio – the Barry Mann/Cynthia Weil classic, “You’ve Lost That Lovin’ Feelin’.” A string of top hits followed until 1968 when Medley and Hatfield agreed to part ways to pursue solo efforts. Medley soon scored with top ten hits, “Peace, Brother, Peace” and “Brown-Eyed Woman.” In 1974, Bill and Bobby re-united and within a few weeks had yet another monster hit with “Rock and Roll Heaven.”

From then, until Bobby’s passing in 2003, The Righteous Brothers never stopped performing to packed crowds. During that period Bill also recorded the chart-topping duet with Jennifer Warnes, “The Time of My Life,” for the movie *Dirty Dancing*. It went on to sell over 32 million copies worldwide. Then, shortly before Bobby passed away, in 2003 Righteous Brothers fan Billy Joel inducted the pair into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame with a glowing seven-minute speech.

Always active and stretching his creative talents, Medley has also sung on the soundtracks or performed the theme songs for 33 movies and TV shows and, in 2014, released his memoir, *The Time of My Life*, published by Da Capo Press.

**Bucky Heard**, an Alabama native and Auburn University alum, is one of the most popular and versatile performers in America. For several years, he has headlined countless shows in major venues. His reputation as a gutsy rock and roll singer with an incredible vocal range has garnered much critical praise and a legion of fans.

He’s been hand-selected to share the concert stage with legends like Andy Williams and Glen Campbell, and honored as “Male Vocalist of the Year” by entertainment publications. Credited with being one of the hardest working and in-demand performers, Bucky has rocked his way across America with his 10-piece horn band, and also starred in numerous national production shows.

Multi-talented and always seeking to expand his musical horizons, he recently created, wrote, and produced an original children’s musical variety show called *Rock U Mentally*, which headlined the American Bandstand Theatre for two consecutive summers

Heard says teaming with Bill Medley in The Righteous Brothers has been a wonderful gift. “Performing with Bill Medley is like getting your PhD in show business! He is more than a legend; he puts everything into every performance, and really understands how to connect with an audience. He motivates me to be my best and I’m so grateful for this opportunity!”



2023/  
2024

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**La Marisoul  
& The  
Love Notes  
Orchestra**  
2/17/24

**Country Gals**  
2/18/24

**NORTH: The  
Musical**  
2/23/24 -  
2/24/24

**The World-  
Famous  
Glenn Miller  
Orchestra**  
2/25/24

**The Wailin'  
Jennys**  
3/3/24

**Trinity  
Irish Dance  
Company**  
3/9/24

**PROUD Tina:**  
The Ultimate  
Tribute to Tina  
Turner  
3/10/24

**iLuminate**  
3/15/24

**Joss Stone**  
3/16/24

**Disney's  
Beauty And  
The Beast:**  
Live in Concert  
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3/23/24

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Countdown  
To The '50s  
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La Marisoul &  
The Love Notes  
Orchestra



# Cinderella

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*Shows and dates subject to change.*



# ARTIST Q & A



## Ashli St Armant

### ***What is new about NORTH this year?***

This time around, we're exploring new ways to let the props, blocking and costuming support the storytelling. To achieve this, our focus is on incorporating materials and theatrical conventions from the time period of the story (mid-1800s). Think antique gardening tools, shadow play, and the tradition of Bouffon clowns. It's wild -- and really exciting!

### ***How has NORTH progressed since you started out?***

Now that we've seen the show on its feet, we understand the relationships between the characters. This allows us to identify what aspects are functioning effectively and what elements require modification in order to enhance the overall narrative. The phrase we continue to ask ourselves is, "Has this been earned?"

### ***Were there any unforeseen difficulties between creating NORTH and seeing it through to production? What about triumphs?***

Our biggest challenge has been budget! I'm a big dreamer, and those dreams don't always fit neatly into spreadsheets. Lucky for me, I have an incredible creative team that always finds ways to turn these dreams into reality. And actually, building this creative team -- which is really a family now

-- has been the greatest triumph of this show. I'm so proud of what we've created.

### ***What is or has been your favorite part about being a performing artist?***

I never forget how blessed I am to wake up every day and create whatever I want. I still can't believe that people want to hear what I have to say. I don't take that lightly.

### ***What musicians/bands are you listening to right now?***

I'm listening to a lot of neo-folk and neo-soul as of late: Alabama Shakes, Brandi Carlile, Lucius, and Emily King, to name a few.

### ***Best concert or performance you've been to?***

The musical *Fela!* kind of changed me. It's this immersive play, concert, and storytelling event, all rolled into one -- served on a bed of Afrobeat. It really expanded my understanding of what is possible in theater.

### ***If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be and why?***

Portugal. They've got it all: history and arts, amazing food, beaches, forests, hip cities, ancient villages, diversity, rich queer culture, free health care, affordability, and loads of castles. CASTLES! It's just magical.



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# TAKE IT EASY: SONGS OF THE '70S



**SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, 2024 | 3:00 P.M.**

## Starring

Laura Alarcon  
Jordan Bluth  
Kyle Sorrell  
Thomas Strawser  
Jordan Bluth

## Band

Guitar (Electric) . . . . . Jason Brown  
Guitar (Acoustic/Electric) . . . . . John Knowlton  
Guitar (Acoustic) . . . . . Kyle Sorrell  
Guitar/Banjo/Mandolin/Saxophone . . . . . Dan Puccio  
Keyboard . . . . . JR McAlexander  
Bass . . . . . Dan Stotz  
Drums . . . . . Emerson Laffey



### LAURA ALARCON

(Vocals) is an accomplished musical theater artist whose career spans over 15 years. With a repertoire ranging from operetta to

rock musical – and everything in between – she has enjoyed diverse and challenging roles with several companies in the Phoenix area, including Arizona Broadway Theatre, Nearly Naked Theatre, and TAD Management. When she's not on stage, Laura runs a successful coaching practice, where she helps moms of kids with autism manage their stress and anxiety, so they feel better about themselves and about motherhood. Her greatest roles to date are wife to her esposo fabuloso José, and matriarch of the entire clan: Joel, Omri, Angelo, Isaac, and Ian!

multiple solo albums and collaborative projects, and he is frequently sought as a concert soloist. When he's not making music, Dr. Bluth maintains a busy optometry practice in Apache Junction and spends time making messes and noise with his three sweet kids and his lovely wife, Kaitlynn. For more information about his recording projects, visit [www.jordanbluthmusic.com](http://www.jordanbluthmusic.com).



### THOMAS W. STRAWSER

, originally from the small town of Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania, enjoys a full and diverse career as a performing artist in

both the music and theatre communities here in Arizona. His professional choral experience includes The Philadelphia Singers during the organization's tenure with the Philadelphia Orchestra, The Manhattan Chorale, a choral residency at St. Alban's Cathedral in England, Art Renaissance Initiative, Arizona Bach Festival, the Grammy-Nominated True Concord Voices & Orchestra, and the Grammy-Award Winning Phoenix Chorale including their album *Rachmaninoff*:



### JORDAN BLUTH

(Vocals) trained in voice at Indiana University and has since performed as a vocalist with companies across the United States. He is

an award-winning recording artist, with



*All-Night Vigil* which received the 58<sup>th</sup> GRAMMY's® "Best Choral Performance" award. Thomas recently finished his 10<sup>th</sup> season at Childsplay Theatre as both a company actor and music director for local and national tours. Tommy also serves as music director for Empowered Theater & Arts, an organization that provides theatre skills and performance training for adults with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities. He acts with other Valley organizations including Arizona Opera, Arizona Broadway Theatre, The Phoenix Theatre Company, and Showtune Productions. Thomas is employed by Pinnacle Presbyterian Church as their Music Associate and Youth and Children's Music Director where he leads both choral and handbell ensembles. He is also an adjunct voice professor at Mesa Community College. Thomas holds a Master of Music in Opera/Musical Theatre Performance from Arizona State University and a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from West Chester University of Pennsylvania.



#### KYLE SORRELL

(Vocals/Guitar) is very pleased to work with Showtune Productions in *Take It Easy* after starring in their *You've Got A Friend: Songs of*

*Carole King & James Taylor* production. A singer/songwriter from Phoenix, Kyle currently performs as both a solo musician and with his band The Bonnie Boat at clubs, restaurants, and resorts across the valley. As an actor/musician, Kyle and his guitar have appeared in numerous stage productions at The Phoenix Theatre Company (*Once, Mamma Mia, Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*), Southwest Shakespeare Company (*Romeo and Juliet, As You Like It*), and Childsplay (*The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane, Wonderland: Alice's Rock*

and *Roll Adventure*). His award-winning original compositions have been featured at Childsplay, Southwest Shakespeare Company, and Black Theatre Troupe.

**SHOWTUNE PRODUCTIONS** is an Arizona-based entertainment company dedicated to bringing live professional performances to audiences throughout the United States, from Maine to California, including all over the state of Arizona. Performers and musicians are cast nationally and Showtune's original tribute and variety shows feature popular songs from country, early rock & roll, big band, 60's & 70's pop, Broadway and beyond. Showtune Productions will be producing *Disney's Beauty & The Beast* this March along with the fourth season of the "Showtime Series" here at the CCA. In 2017, Showtune Productions produced *Music Man in Concert* at the Orpheum Theatre in Phoenix with over 90 people onstage, *Singin' In The Rain in Concert* in December 2018, and it has produced over 60 shows since 2010, including such hits as *Buddy, Ritchie and The Big Bopper, Walkin' the Line, Remember Patsy Cline, Riders in The Sky, ELVIS, The Early Years, Country Gals, Ted Vigil As John Denver, You've Got A Friend, We've Only Just Begun, Legendary Sisters of Soul, Swingtime, Take It Easy, Early Rock and Roll Live, and Hooray for Hollywood* to name a few. For their complete schedule, visit their website at [www.showtuneproductions.com](http://www.showtuneproductions.com)



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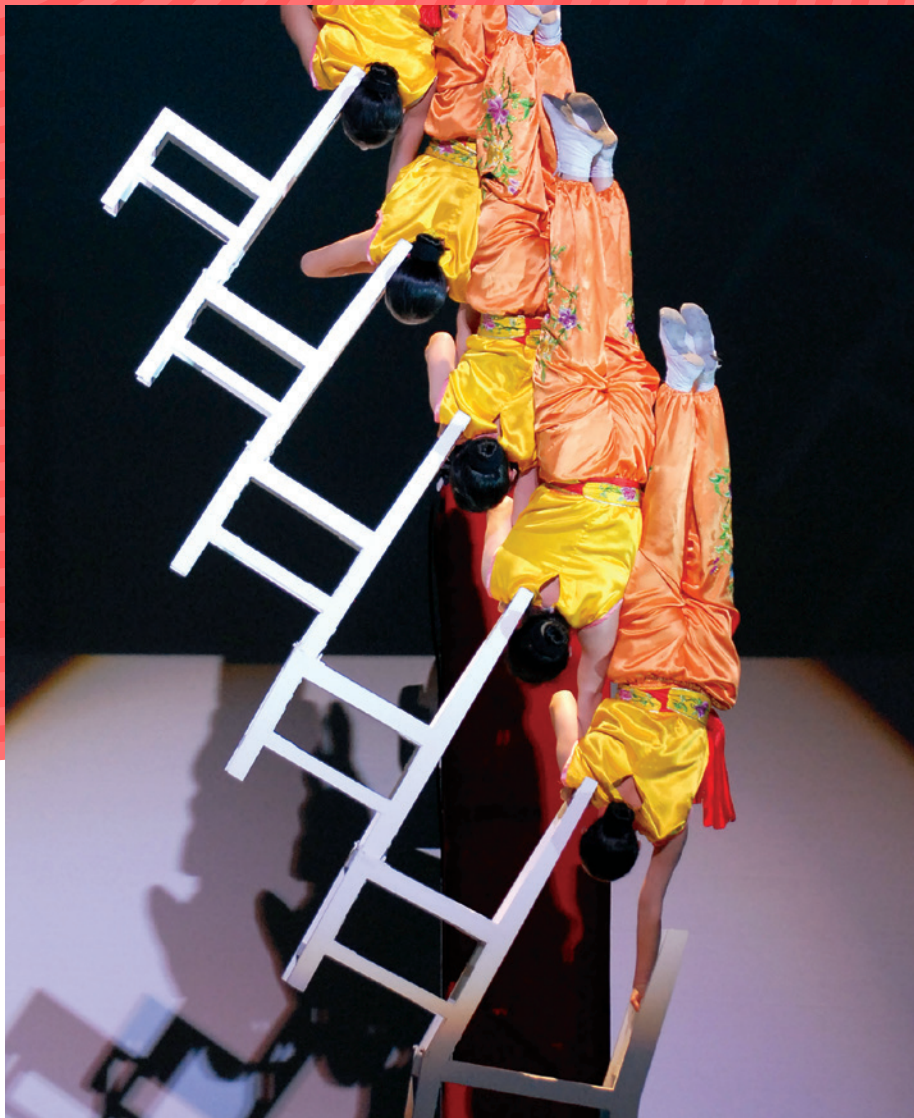
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# THE PEKING ACROBATS



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2024 | 3:00 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*.





# ARTIST Q & A



## Cynthia Dike-Hughes of The Peking Acrobats

Chandler Center for the Arts staff sent a Q & A to The Peking Acrobats President & CEO of 30 years, Cynthia A. Dike-Hughes. We wanted to know more about the show, her own preferences, and her take on the performing arts industry.

### *Can you tell us a little bit about how The Peking Acrobats started?*

THE PEKING ACROBATS was the brainchild of my husband and business partner of over 40 years, Don Hughes, and his colleague at the time, Ken Hai. They formed a partnership in South Africa (SA), where Don was originally from. Ken was looking for a manager for his acrobatic group, and Don seized the opportunity to tour the show in SA and around the world. In 1986, they went to China and met with the then China Performing Arts Agency, and THE PEKING ACROBATS® were born. We bring different groups of acrobats from China each year to tour as THE PEKING ACROBATS, as many of the groups have obscure names that won't mean much to the Western audiences. Thanks to our work over these many years, THE PEKING ACROBATS has become synonymous with excellence in the traditional art of Chinese Acrobatics and this is what your audiences will see at your performances.

### *Tell us a little about the acrobats' training?*

The acrobats begin training at a very young age. They attend specialized schools that

are the equivalent to our magnet schools here in the West. Often, they are the children of acrobats who have gone before them. They learn their 3 "Rs" in the morning (reading, writing and arithmetic) and train at their craft in the afternoons. They become adults at the age of 16 in China, and so are able to tour the world, sharing their art and culture with audiences everywhere.

### *What do you think is surprising about performing as an acrobat that people don't usually know?*

They are NOT elastic people! They are just like you and me, but are specially trained in the acrobatic arts that is a unification of the body and the spirit. They elevate their cultural tradition through innovation and ingenuity. Each act takes years to perfect and they have a great time doing it!

### *What is your favorite thing about the performance?*

I think for the performers it is the sheer transference of joy between the artists and the audience. You can't get that from a movie, or the internet. It's the actual moments of astonishment in live performance, that anything can happen

(and, often does!) that makes the theatre so compelling. When we experience those moments together, that intangible is so rewarding and it truly is the secret to our success!

### *If you weren't in the performing arts industry, what other profession would you want to have?*

I don't think the performers would live any other way. They get to travel the world, see other cultures and meet great people. I've been a theatre producer for almost 40 years, and it really is a fantastic way of life, if you don't weaken...as my Don used to say! HA!

### *If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be and why?*

Regardless of politics and world tumult, there truly is no place like home, because that is where the performer's family and friends are and this, after all, is what life is all about – the close connections that we all treasure. No matter where they go, they are always happy to be HOME, just like we all are.

### *Do you have anything you would tell someone who wants to be in the performing arts industry?*

Be persistent. Don't give up on your dreams. Sometimes, it may seem like it's too hard, or too tough, but you have to believe in what you are doing and why you are doing it. I can't think of a better way.

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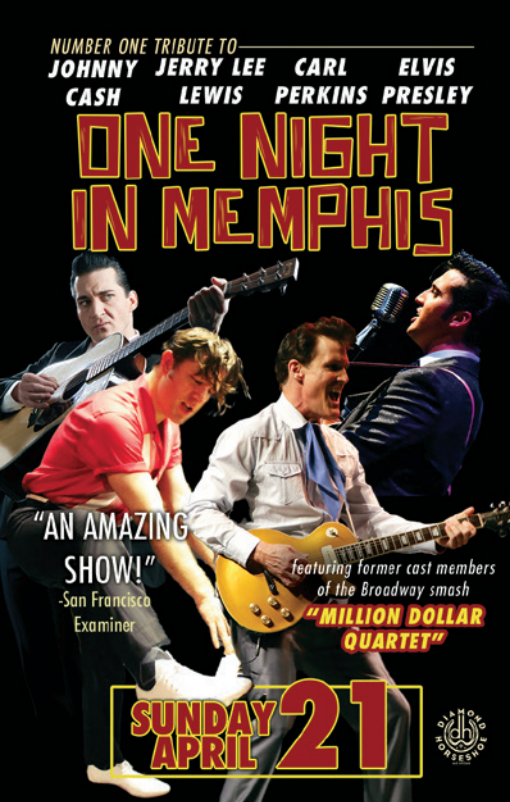
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## CHANDLER Symphony Orchestra

Vanja Gjumar Nikolovski, Conductor

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### Beethoven's Fifth

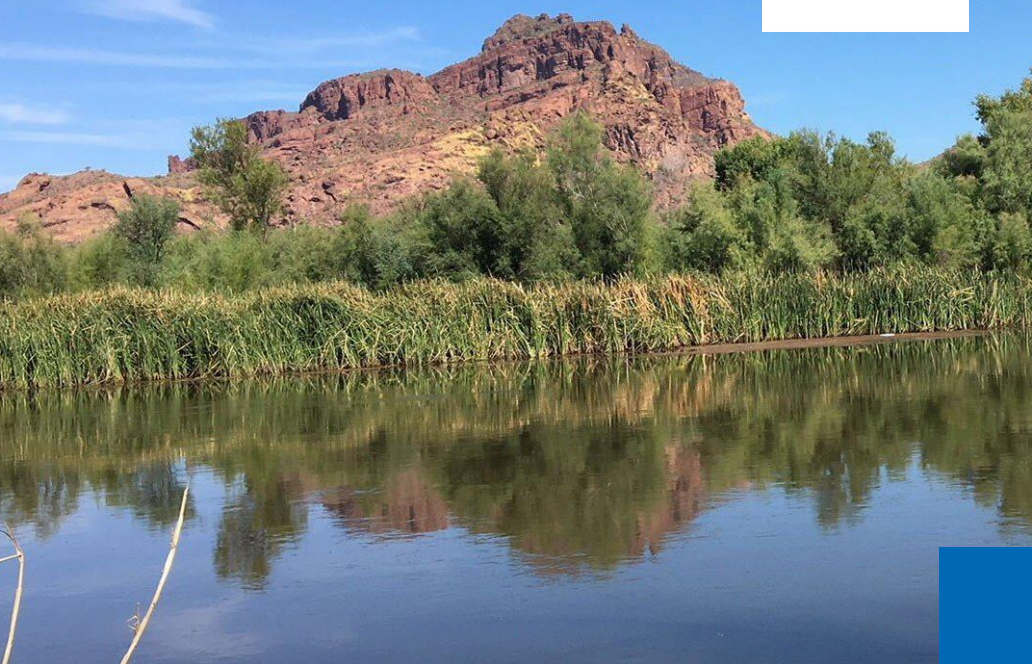
Sunday, March 17, 2024 | 5 p.m.

Giuseppe Verdi: La Forza Del Destino Overture; Sergei Rachmaninov: Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Rachid Bernal, piano soloist; Ludwig van Beethoven: Symphony No. 5.

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