OCA Goes Virtual With Online Variety Show

Greetings from West County’s home for the arts. It’s been pretty quiet around here since early March, and we’re anxious to organize music events, art exhibitions, classes, meetings, and more. But, we know how important it is to think long-term and follow the safety guidelines issued by County authorities. We hope that everyone in our OCA family and communities are healthy and safe, and finding lots of ways to enjoy music and art from home.

And even though we miss being able to see everyone in person, we’re working to stay connected with you during this time by presenting a very special ‘Virtual Variety Show’ on Saturday, May 16th. This will be OCA’s first online event, and we are overwhelmed by the support we received from musicians when we asked for their help and participation! Look inside for information on the lineup - many OCA favorites are taking part, and there is sure to be something for everyone in this event. There will also be special community announcements, as well as a spotlight on the many ‘faces of OCA’.

This virtual concert will be available free to all via YouTube (find the direct link on our website, in our upcoming events email, or via social media). Speaking of YouTube, we’ve also curated some great performance videos from the past that you can enjoy at any time – just click the “playlists” tab on our YouTube channel.

We can’t wait to welcome you back to OCA when the time is right. Until then, stay safe, and be sure to enjoy lots of music and art from home!

– Tina Marchetti, Executive Director
Volunteer Spotlight - Diane Masura

Diane is one of those tireless, smart, competent people who make organizations work without needing to draw attention to themselves. She has been around since the beginning of OCA, making herself useful in myriad ways. Her reward for an incalculable amount of volunteer work? “I love to build community”.

Born in Detroit under the sign of Taurus in 1943, Diane attended the University of Michigan, starting out as an engineering major, then trying physics and ending up getting a BA in English Literature. Diane’s working career has been as varied as her collegiate interests: first she worked for the US Weather Bureau, then went on to teach public school students from kindergarten to high school seniors, followed by a long stint as an organic gardener – mostly as a participant in various intentional communities. Along the way she was married for twelve years to Ukrainian John Masura and raised their daughter Nadja. Finally, she settled in Occidental and became the area’s premier tile setter, marrying Larry Rau.

Because she so enjoyed singing around a bonfire in 1979, Diane spearheaded the founding of the Occidental Community Choir and still sings with them, 41 years later.

In addition to her role as a perennial member of the Choir’s Board of Directors, Diane is also a vital member of the OCA Board. Diane keeps us connected with all of Occidental’s local groups and organizations and maintains a busy schedule as community liaison. Her participation in all of these groups provides critical communication pathways and promotes collaboration between the various organizations, all for the benefit of the humans of Occidental.

Diane’s tile work can be seen as accents at the ends of our rows of dedicated pavers. She is also frequently encountered behind the gate table at OCA events, wearing yet another hat in support of our community. Thank you, Diane! – Contributed by Steve Fowler

Diane Masura (right) with Annie Murphy Springer, providing comic relief at our Jan. 2020 Talent Show.

Support OCA while clearing clutter from your home!

OCA will be holding it’s annual fundraiser at the Rainbow Cattle Company later this year. Now is a great time to clean out those closets and gather raffle items to donate! Anything goes at this charitable smorgasbord of gifts, knick knacks, collectables, art, books, home decor, re-gifts, white elephants - you name it!

If you have raffle items to donate let us know, and we’ll arrange a time for you to drop them off at OCA when the shelter in place is lifted.

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Lobby Progress

We continue to make steady progress on our auditorium’s new lobby. Over the past several months we’ve installed fire sprinkler systems throughout our entire facility; sheetrocked, drywalled and painted the lobby interior walls; run rough electric and installed working outlets & lights; and installed the new doors. Team members Patrick Fanning, Chris Riebli, Ken Bellucci, Kelly McCool, Diane Masura, John Dean and Everett Traverso and have all provided volunteer expertise and labor, and we’re very grateful for their efforts!

Our next step will be installing carpet. If you’d like to help with the physical workload please contact Patrick Fanning at 707-478-5538 or email fanning@sonic.net. We’re so thrilled to be nearing the home stretch of this project! At this point we have raised and utilized $115,000. We still need to raise more funds in order to complete the lobby and plaza. If you can help support this project financially, please visit our website and click on the “support” tab, or mail us a check. All contributions are tax-deductible as a charitable donation.

Lobby progress April 28, 2020

Essence Goldman & Danny Evans performing as Johnny Cash & June Carter Cash on 2/29/20. They’ll be joining us for the virtual variety show May 16th!

Do you shop at amazon? Amazon will give a percentage of every purchase you make to OCA - at no extra cost to you! Signing up is easy - just go to smile.amazon.com and click “your account”. Then type in Occidental Center for the Arts as your selected charity - it’s easy!
A Virtual Variety Show
brought to you by
Occidental Center for the Arts

With special live-from-home performances by

Meredith Axelrod
Sarah Baker
Michael and Shay Black
Claude Bourbon
Peppino D’Agostino
Danny & Essence
Dirty Cello
Patrick Fanning &
Nancy Kesselring
Stella Heath
Emily Lois

Laurie Lewis
Benjamin Mertz
Occidental Community Choir
Mariah Parker
Chris Riebli
David Rosen
Kevin Russell &
Candy Girard
Teresa Tudury

And more!

Saturday, May 16th at 8pm on YouTube
visit occidentalcenterforthearts.org
for more information
Watercolor Class Goes Virtual

Patrick Fanning’s popular watercolor class started last fall, meeting Thursday mornings in the auditorium. He typically lectures with slides briefly, then demonstrates how to creatively design a painting from a photo. An average of 15 students paint along with him, and almost everyone finishes a painting by noon. Since the pandemic hit, the class has moved online. The lessons are emailed weekly on Saturday, with a Zoom critique meeting the following Friday. Pictured at right is Darcy Reinier’s rendition of barns in Bloomfield.

In the Gallery - “She Persisted” Exhibition

Although our ‘She Persisted’ exhibition was cut short by the shelter-in-place, artists really stepped up with works that paid tribute to women throughout time. Thank you to all of the artists who contributed to this wonderful exhibit!

‘If you choose to betray us, we will never forgive you” by Chris Cheek. Awarded Best in Show.

“Minnie Mouse” by Saroj Heron

“Dangerous Times” by Mylette Welsh

“Liberty” by Marylu Downing

“Sarah Grimske - Suffragette” by Johanna Regan Ottenweller

Honoring Jane Lathrop Stanford by Lesley Pickford
The connection between music and our health & happiness runs deep, and is evidenced throughout history. The ancient Greeks put one god, Apollo, in charge of both medicine and music. Plato explained that “Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything else.”

It is amazing how explore how many ways music helps us heal and thrive, both mentally and physically. It is widely evidenced that istening to music reduces blood pressure, heart rate and anxiety. An article on Harvardhealth.com boasts a long list of healing benefits derived from listening to music while recovering from various conditions and surgeries. For example, one study revealed significantly improved verbal memory and focused attention in those recovering from strokes. Another study demonstrates that patients who listened to music needed lower doses of sedative post-surgery.

One of the newest studies, published in February of this year by the British Academy of Sound Therapy, actually specifies the number of minutes of listening required to release sadness (13 minutes) and the number required to improve happiness (9 minutes). So, consider prescribing yourself a daily dose of at least 25 minutes of enjoying music to improve your mood and benefit your health. It’s good medicine! – Contributed by Tina Marchetti