

Stars align at Vesper’s fundraising concert Sept. 16

CAPE MAY – The most exciting musical event of this season is coming up Sept. 16. It’s the Jazz Vespers Benefit Concert. Seven terrific acts will be featured in the concert including: Grammy-nominee George Mesterhazy, Grammy-winner Barry Miles, Lois Smith, Gina Roché, Jim Maher, Herb Moore and the Antfarm Quartet.

The concert will be held at First Presbyterian Church of Cape May. The church is downtown, at the corner of Hughes and Decatur. The show begins at 7 p.m.

“This is a benefit concert to

raise money for the restoration of our church’s beautiful but seriously endangered stained glass windows,” says Bruce Jeffries-Fox, chairman of the church’s Resources Team which is responsible for raising the necessary restoration funds. “We are so thankful to all the great musicians who are donating their time and talents to make this a really amazing concert.”

The church’s historic windows are well over 100 years old and are in danger of falling out after battling the elements in Cape May for so long. “For the past couple of

years we’ve been coming into the sanctuary in the morning and finding pieces of the window or window frame lying on the floor. We knew we had to act-and act fast before some big winter storm just took them out completely.”

The church began fundraising in earnest at the beginning of 2007. “It’s been a real challenge for our little congregation,” says Jeffries-Fox. “We quickly learned that the cost of restoring the windows in a historically appropriate way would cost a lot of money. In fact it would cost a little over \$200,000,

which is far more than our modest congregation could put together among ourselves. We knew we had to broaden our sights and include all the people and the businesses that have been touched by this church in one way or another.”

The church’s fund-raising efforts have included numerous bake sales, bazaars, a July 4th BBQ, tailgate sales, card and dinner parties. “But the biggest event of the year is this Vespers Benefit Concert,” says Jeffries-Fox who also happens to be the musical director of the

Vespers concert series. “The church has been so good to us in providing a great venue for Jazz Vespers and supporting us with advertising and publicity, it was only natural to offer to help them out with this windows project. Every single performer I approached about participating agreed on the spot. Everyone in our congregation, the musical community, and the larger Cape May Community is pulling together to make this windows restoration happen. It’s a beautiful thing.”

The concert features musi-

cians playing a wide range of jazz musical styles. From mellow standards to high-energy original tunes, the extremely fine musicianship of all performers promises to make this a very special evening. Tickets are \$25 and will be sold at the door. The concert will use open seating, so come early to get the best seats. The concert is on Sept. 16, at 7 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church of Cape May at Hughes and Decatur. The church is wheelchair accessible, and limited free parking is available. Call 609-884-0680 for info.

Theatre

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opers to invest \$12 million into the complex.

Jackson said the BTF wants to make the restoration of the theater seem obtainable to a potential investor.

The foundation will use fundraising and corporate sponsorships and provide minor adjustments to the building before they propose a vision for the theater to developers. The purchaser is expected to pay for some or all of the renovations.

Mayor Jerome Inderwies reminded council that in the case of loan default the taxpayers will not be responsible for replacing the loan funds, but that money would not be available for future loans.

Inderwies said he appreciates the watchdog position of the Taxpayers Association of Cape May which expressed opposition to the loan. He thanked the BTF for being tolerant with the city’s policies and procedures “to make sure this doesn’t haunt us.”

Deputy Mayor Neils S. Favre did not attend the spe-

cial meeting but he said he approved of the loan since his objective to protect the taxpayers was relieved under the new guidelines stating taxpayers would not be burdened in the case of default.

The revolving loan funds were created when the city received a \$600,000 Department of Community Affairs grant that was used and repaid by Congress Hall for revitalization. The funds are now set aside for economic development expected to benefit future generations. The account has acquired interest and was almost \$700,000 prior to the BTF loan.

Council member David Craig said the foundation’s application was the catalyst for council to hire Triad and create a consistent agreement for the revolving loan fund. The new loan procedures require that all applications be reviewed for the same criteria such as collateral and personal guarantee(s).

“The Beach Theatre

Foundation reminded council of this loan asset,” Craig said. Council member Linda Steenrod said the city deserves the opportunity to try the monumental task of saving the Beach Theatre.

“I’m glad that the details of repayment have been addressed. The duration and dedication of those involved is admirable,” Steenrod said.

BTF President Steve Jackson said the foundation has not yet determined a schedule for theater operation under BTF management through he said it might be a limited weekend schedule combined with additional events. The foundation plans a cinema trivia fundraiser Wednesday, Sept. 26 at 7:30 p.m. in the ballroom of Congress Hall. The event is open to the public for \$15 admission.

“To the best of our ability we’ll keep it open and sell as many tickets as we can,” Jackson said.

“Our pledge to the city is to save the theater and repay

this loan and we can do it because we know we have the support,” Jackson said.

“Future generations will

look back and thank us. This is a chance for the city to save a precious landmark but we need everyone to work

together, volunteer, contribute, and go to the movies,” council member David Kurkowski said.

Water

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Environmental Protection (DEP) requests a feasibility study to see if the re-charge plant will be cost effective.

Norkis said a re-charge plant might not be the most cost effective but possibly the most eco-friendly. He included the demonstration grant is

intended to demonstrate a new system, not the most cost-efficient. He said the USGS would not perform a cost study, which leaves the DEP to seek a private consultant.

Norkis said the grant money originated from a 1981 water

supply bond act and he doesn’t suspect the money will be taken away if not used, though he does suggest using it soon because the cost to build the plant will continue to increase.

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