Utahans Celebrate 50 Years of the Val A. Browning Center for the Performing Arts with Free Public Concert Featuring World-Renowned Performers

Featured performances by Joe McQueen Quartet, Ta’u Pupu’a, Jerry Steichen, André Ward, Ginger Bess Simons, Celena Shafer, Hill Air Force Base Gospel Choir, Ballet Folklorico NEWARA, Picket Dance Ensemble, The Dance Establishment and Tria Fata

Ogden, Utah – Dec. 10, 2014 – The Val A. Browning Center for the Performing Arts at Weber State University (http://weber.edu/cah), is Northern Utah’s largest venue for arts and entertainment. During the past 50 years, the Browning Center has become one of the most highly regarded performing arts venues in the country. On January 9, 2015 at 7:30 p.m., the venue will celebrate its rich history with a free, public concert featuring some of the world’s most acclaimed performers. For a preview of the event please visit: (http://youtu.be/qMeNOMh3kVQ).

“The Val A. Browning Center is a cultural hub for this region and has become a place to experience the most innovative performing artists in the United States,” said Madonne Miner, Dean of the Telitha E. Lindquist College of Arts & Humanities. “During the past fifty years, we have welcomed nearly 10 million patrons, served nearly a million students and have helped create countless memories. From theatre and music to dance, the Browning Center includes ground-breaking new works, productions of classics and free arts events that enrich our lives and community. We look forward to continuing to serve as a center of arts and culture for the entire region.”


“There is truly something profound about the opportunity to experience the passion, immediacy and power of live performances that you do not receive through television, mobile devices or on the printed page,” said Frank Bradshaw, executive director of the Browning Center. “This event is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for all ages to not only experience this wonderful venue, but interact with a collection of performers in one evening that is unmatched.”
Featured Performers at the 50th Anniversary Event Include:

Joe McQueen Quartet
McQueen has been performing for more than 80 years. He continues to perform more than 60 shows a year with his quartet featuring Ryan Conger on Hammond organ, Brad Wright on guitar, and Dr. Don Keipp on drums. The quartet currently has two albums set to be released in early 2015. Arriving in Ogden, Utah on December 7 1945, McQueen originally intended to play only a week at the famed Porters and Waiters Club, but ended up staying and making Utah his home. During his lifetime, McQueen has had the opportunity to perform with such noted legends as Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Ray Charles, Nat King Cole, Louis Armstrong, Cab Calloway, Lester Young, and Charlie Parker.

Ta’u Pupu’a
Pupu’a is a graduate of the Juilliard Opera Center and is a native of the Polynesian Kingdom of Tonga. He attended Weber State University on a football scholarship during which time he was drafted into the NFL. After sustaining an injury, he changed career direction to follow his first passion – opera. In the 2011-2012 season, Pupu'a made his professional opera debut with San Francisco Opera in its world premiere of Heart of a Soldier. He made his European debut as Bacchus in Ariadne auf Naxos with Theatre der Stadt Heidelberg and appeared at Opera Santa Barbara as Radames in Aida, Lyric Opera of Baltimore as Borsa in Rigoletto and Hawaii Opera Theatre as Cavaradossi in Tosca.

Jerry Steichen
Gerald Steichen is Principal Pops Conductor for the Utah Symphony. For sixteen season he served as Music Director for the Ridgefield Symphony. Steichen has also served as guest conductor for the Boston Pops, New Jersey, Detroit, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Oregon, Columbus, Oklahoma City, Hartford symphonies, Florida Orchestra (Tampa), Little Orchestra Society (NYC), and New York Pops. Steichen also was involved with the New York City Opera for ten seasons including the following operas: La bohème, L'elisir d'amore, Jake Heggie's Dead Man Walking, The Little Prince, and The Mikado. He also was part of the Broadway and national tours for The Phantom of the Opera, The Secret Garden, Peter Pan, and Cats.

André Ward
Ward graduated from Weber State University in 1995 and immediately moved to New York City to pursue a career in theatre. He has held roles in Broadway productions of “Xanadu,” “The Producers,” and “Saturday Night Fever,” and in regional productions of “Pippin,” “Finian’s Rainbow,” and “Lucky Duck.” In film, he can be seen in “Lifelines” and Oliver Stone’s “World Trade Center.” In television, he has had guest roles in “30 Rock,” “The Miraculous Year,” “Lipstick Jungle,” “One Life to Live,” and “Without a Trace.” André is currently a cast member of “Rock of Ages” on Broadway.

For more information about the event or to reserve free tickets, please visit weberstatetickets.com. Tickets can also be picked up in person at the Dee Events Center (4444 Event Center Drive) or Val A. Browning Center (3950 West Campus Drive) ticket offices or by phone at 801-626-8500.
About the Telitha E. Lindquist College of Arts & Humanities
The Weber State University Telitha E. Lindquist College of Arts & Humanities teaches students to excel as they seek, understand, question and express complexities critical to the experience of being human. The Lindquist College of Arts & Humanities offers undergraduate degree programs in the following five areas: Communication, English, Foreign Language, Performing Arts and Visual Arts. Master’s degrees also are offered in Communication and English. The college serves nearly 2,000 undergraduate majors and 200 graduate students. The Lindquist College of Arts & Humanities is the Western region’s foremost institution for student-centered teaching and research that investigates the human experience and aims to educate global citizens who are responsible, creative and critical artists, performers and communicators. For more information please visit (www.weber.edu/cah).

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