

MUSIC AT OLD ST. HILARY'S

By Dave Gotz

For more than 40 years the Belvedere-Tiburon Landmarks Society (LMS) has presented concerts at Old St. Hilary's Landmark (OSH). The 129-year-old redwood and Douglas fir structure provides acoustic warmth and resonance that creates a perfect environment for voice and acoustic instruments; and its small size creates an intimate setting for the musicians and the audience.

The life of Old St. Hilary's as a landmark building and concert hall began in 1958 when it became known that the Archdiocese of San Francisco was preparing to sell St. Hilary's. The little mission church on the hill was no longer needed because the new St. Hilary church had been opened four years before. Several Belvedere and Tiburon residents formed the non-profit Landmarks Society expressly to raise funds and purchase the church and half acre of land around it. The sale was completed in 1959, made possible by a single donation of \$10,000 from Mrs. Susanna Dakin.

Once OSH was cleaned up and repaired it immediately became a popular site for weddings and eventually LMS began hosting concerts at the former church. While concerts were sporadic for many years, about ten years ago the Tiburon Heritage & Arts Commission joined LMS to help promote the concerts and since then we have produced over 60 concerts.

The performances have been from a wide range of musicians and singers, from classical string quartets and wind quintets to a tango ensemble featuring harp and dancers, piano jazz trios, acoustic guitarists, and a women's vocal ensemble. The latter being Musae who will be performing their 13th consecutive winter

program on December 4th this year. "Musae has been performing at Old St. Hilary's for over a decade, and we look forward to returning each season. The beautiful, peaceful space provides the perfect setting for choral music, and the audiences there are always warm and engaging. Our December concert at Old St. Hilary's is the highlight of our holiday season."

In March of 2017 we had the pleasure of presenting two leading innovators of the guitar, GRAMMY® winning classical guitarist, Andrew York, and GRAMMY® nominee and Windham Hill superstar, Alex de Grassi who joined forces to fuse the sounds and traditions of steel and nylon into a unique duo program at OSH. The sold-out audience was delighted to be in such an intimate setting with these world renowned musicians and the guitarists truly appreciated the opportunity: "Old St. Hilary's is hands-down the most beautiful venue in California. The exquisite old church is delightfully charming and ambient, and is only surpassed by the breathtaking panorama of the bay when stepping outside. The Landmarks Society is enriching the community by bringing world-class music to Tiburon at OSH, and is also giving musicians the opportunity to reawaken their muse by playing in such beautiful surroundings."

CFA Our fall/winter season begins on September 17th with soprano Caroluna performing favorite opera arias with piano trio, and on October 15th we feature singer-songwriter Toney Rocks. All shows are at 4 p.m., complete information can be found at: <http://landmarkssociety.com/events/concerts/>.

Photo by Dave Gotz



Photo by Annie York



Photo by Annie York