

VELOSO: Event will help fund medical costs for cancer treatment

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biography in high school.

“It clicked that I could make a living playing music,” said Veloso. “And I wanted to go to New York.”

After graduation he moved to New York City to attend The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music, where he received his degree in jazz performance. Founded in 1986, The New School boasts one of the most demanding, intimate music programs. Through their integration of music — along with encouraging their students to take classes in other departments — their graduates are able to pair their musical artistry with a solid academic foundation. Students in The New School also have the opportunity to perform on a variety of stages throughout New York and the world.

“It was a big change (from living in Sisters), moving to New York,” he recalled. “The first building I lived in had 2,000 people.”

Veloso began playing jazz in high school and focused his efforts in college the first few years toward the same style. After a few years in college,

he says his professors “leaned more to the left of the jazz style” and he became more liberal in his music and began to expand his style.

After Veloso graduated in 2010, he stayed in New York City working, playing music and touring. He has toured on his own as well as with several bands both across the U.S. and through many European countries.

“All told, I’ve probably spent eight months outside the U.S., traveling with my music,” he said.

Veloso moved back to Sisters last year. He still tours and now enjoys teaching drums in both private and group instruction. He worked as an instructor at the Americana Song Academy for Youth as well as within the Sisters Park & Recreation District Community Preschool Program earlier this year. In addition to drums, Justin plays a little guitar, keyboard and piano as well as composing his own music.

Veloso’s world changed in February when he was diagnosed with papillary thyroid cancer.

“I was diagnosed on February 17 and had surgery to remove my thyroid and several lymph nodes on March 30, followed immediately by radiation treatment,” he said. “Now I am in the process of

getting my hormone levels balanced.”

Although Veloso will be on hormone replacement medication for the remainder of his life, he feels lucky that he will not have to get chemotherapy at this time for his form of cancer and says he has an 85-90 percent chance of beating the disease.

“I’m one month shy of my six-month appointment,” he said. “The doctors want to wait until that appointment to determine if I will need additional treatment.”

Community members and friends have rallied around him and planned a benefit, “One of Our Own,” on September 15 at The Belfry to ensure his medical bills and hormone replacement costs are supported. There will be an auction and live music provided by many of Justin’s friends — Justin will also step to the stage to play a bit. Music will begin at 6 p.m. and a live auction at 7 p.m. — tickets are \$20 and available at the door.

“I am so grateful to have this support and a community that puts in the effort for me,” Justin said. “I couldn’t imagine or dream of anything like this happening.”

As much gratitude as Veloso feels for his friends and the Sisters community, he wants to be sure to point



PHOTO BY ERIN BORLA

Justin Veloso has continued to teach students in Sisters.

out there are others who are struggling with more difficult prognoses.

“Just because you are 25 doesn’t mean you are invincible,” Veloso said.

Justin is quick to thank all of the people who have supported him and are working hard on his benefit. A special thank-you from him to Audrey Tehan, Benji Nagel, Carys Wilkins, Jen McCrystal, Dennis McGregor, Andy Armer and Angeline Rhett and all of the other community members who have donated or helped in other ways.

Even immediately after his diagnosis, Veloso continued to teach drum lessons. His students vary in age; the youngest drummer is 6.

He has also continued to tour, and just returned from a tour through the month of July with Jolie Holland.

“I see myself staying in Sisters,” said Veloso, now 28. “I have a vision for some sort of cultural space with resident artists, where we could teach music and host other musicians.”

For more information about the benefit visit www.justinveloso.eventsmart.com.



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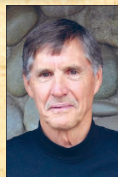
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