

JAZZ: Sisters man plans concert series in coming months

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had to take a back seat to building a career in education and raising a family, it never left him. From Nevada City, where he was a radio volunteer and jazz DJ; to Ashland, Oregon, where he built Varsity Theater “Backstage,” a cabaret; to Eugene, where he taught English at Lane Community College and created and operated The Jazz Station, a nonprofit, live jazz venue, Sposato has been a tireless apostle of the music he loves.

Now, he’s brought that passion to Sisters.

“The jam is kind of a foot in the door, because I’m an educator at heart,” he said.

Tyler Cranor has built a strong band program in Sisters schools, and some 15-20 of those young musicians are turning out for jam night. Sposato brings in accomplished local jazz musicians to play and work with the young players.

“A big part of it is mixing these kids with real jazz musicians, with adults,” he said.

He described the February jam:

“What a night of music! This month we were joined by two guest artists: jazz drummer Dave Wentworth and jazz



PHOTO PROVIDED

Young Sisters musicians are growing in jazz in a monthly jam session at The Belfry.

pianist Ryan Camastral. Both were incredibly generous to our young players and really wowed the audience when they stepped in to support the music. Both were shining examples of where a life in jazz can take you.”

The next jam is set for March 17 at 7 p.m. and will feature drummer Justin Veloso and pianist Andy Arma. Veloso was once a student in Sisters, and went on to study in New York. He is highly regarded as a creative jazz drummer.

Sposato has his eye on a young drummer who may well follow in Veloso’s footsteps. The jazz promoter admitted to being a little taken aback at the idea of a fourth-grade drummer taking the stage — but Frankie Deggendorfer soon proved

himself to be the real deal.

“Frankie blew us away on the skins — never mind that he’s still in elementary school,” Sposato noted. “A mind-boggling prodigy. He’ll be an old pro by seventh grade.”

Sposato says that what makes a great jazz musician is one with a high level of innate talent, who works at it — and above all listens. The heart of jazz lies in improvisation, which places a premium on really listening to what other players are doing and having the chops to create within that framework.

The depth, sophistication and perennial freshness of the music is a constant reward for Sposato, one that he is determined to share with a Sisters audience.

“I want to hear jazz,” he

said. “so usually that means I do it. I produce shows that I want to hear. I have irons in the fire to do a series — a jazz series in Sisters.”

Sposato will provide more information on that series as it comes closer to fruition. And he will continue to expose young artists to what a life in jazz can be — a life-long passion that starts right ’round midnight.

Sisters salutes...

Dan Fouts of Sisters has been named among those who will be inducted into the Pac-12 Hall of Honor in Las Vegas. They will be honored March 13 before the semifinals of the Pac-12 Tournament at T-Mobile Arena in Vegas.

Fouts is a former NFL MVP and six-time Pro Bowler and currently works as a CBS color commentator for NFL games. He led the NFL in passing yards each year from 1979 through 1982 and was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1993. He threw for nearly 5,000 yards in 1980 and 1981, leading the league.

He has served the Sisters community for many years, particularly in raising funds for the Sisters Schools Foundation.

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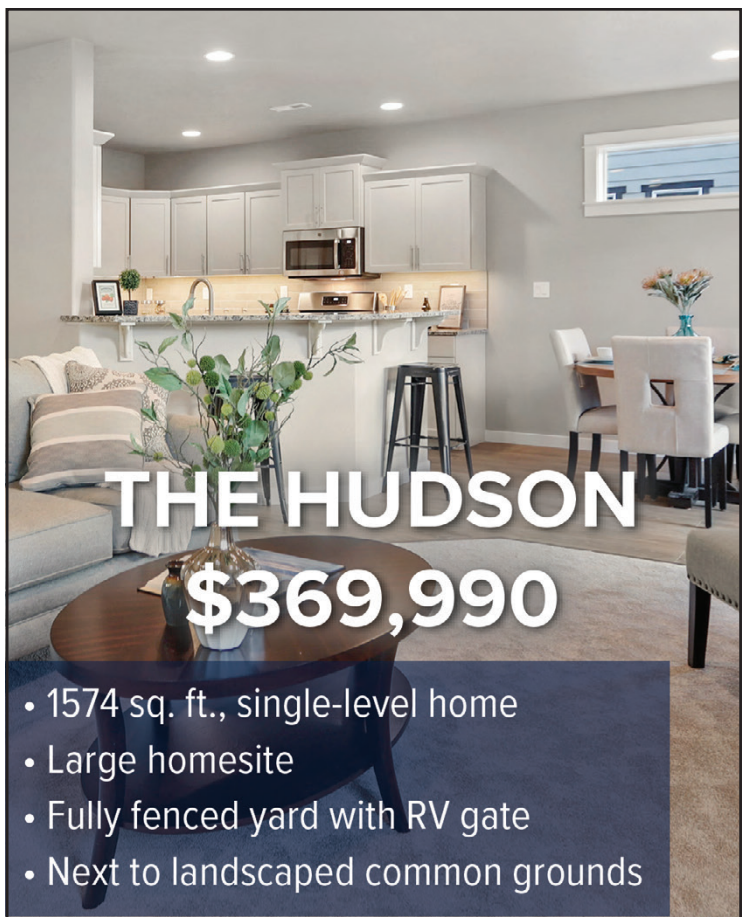
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