

coverstory

BY JAY BOBBIN

Kevin Bacon lets music 'Play On' to do good in new CBS special

While he may be better known for making movies, Kevin Bacon also makes music. Partnered melodically with sibling Michael as the Bacon Brothers, the veteran of such films as "Footloose" and "Apollo 13" combines his love of song with his philanthropy as a co-host (with Eve) and executive producer of "Play On: Celebrating the Power of Music to Make Change," a CBS concert special airing Saturday, Dec. 5. A wide-ranging lineup of artists performs from three cities to raise funds (through Bacon's SixDegrees.org initiative) to benefit WhyHunger and the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc.

"There's a yearly fundraiser in New York called Love Rocks NYC," Bacon explains of aligning with its producers for the "Play On" hour, "and the Bacon Brothers played it one year, then I went back and did some announcing for it. (Those organizers) came up with the idea of doing a television event in the early days of the coronavirus pandemic, trying to put music out there and raise money for some good causes."

Bringing it to fruition as "Play On" has been "very, very challenging," allows Bacon, "and the fact that it's coming together gives us all a great sense of satisfaction." The event's executive producers also include LL Cool J and "CBS This Morning" co-anchor (and music buff) Anthony Mason.

Bon Jovi, Maren Morris, Sheryl Crow, Yola (backed by The Highwomen), Snoop Dogg, Ziggy Marley, Andra Day, Gary Clark Jr. and Jon Batiste are among talents the special showcases at three legendary sites: New York's Apollo Theater, Los Angeles' Troubadour and Nashville's Bluebird Cafe. Bacon notes such venues "have been hurting" during the pandemic: "I've played at two of them and been to all three, so we're highlighting them as well."

Bacon currently is at work on the second season of the Boston-based Showtime drama series "City on a Hill," while wife Kyra Sedgwick is on the opposite coast filming her



Ziggy Marley and Andra Day perform in Saturday's new CBS concert special "Play On: Celebrating the Power of Music to Make Change."

upcoming ABC sitcom "Call Your Mother." Also with movie projects lined up as either an actor or a director, Bacon says he's glad to get back to business, though he realizes these uncertain times could put another halt to that at any point.

For the moment, though, Bacon maintains that "Play On" is "a show that I would be front-and-center for even if I had nothing to do with it. I would watch it live, I would put it on my DVR – even before this pandemic, I didn't feel there was enough live music on television. I grew up watching 'Don Kirshner's Rock Concert' and 'The Midnight Special' and, later on, 'Austin City Limits.' Here, you'll see great performances and the music will be really strong, and that's important to us."

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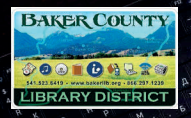
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