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# WEEKEND BREAK



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## CALLING ALL ANGELS

### Performing arts center seeks support from community

By ZOË BUCHLI  
For The Astorian

If you've been looking for a way to support the local performing arts scene, the Charlene Larsen Center for the Performing Arts has an event that not only provides an opportunity to see great local performances, but also bolster Astoria's arts community.

The center will host a "Be an angel for an afternoon" fundraiser at Bridgewater Bistro on Wednesday at 3 p.m. Attendees can expect light food and an afternoon filled with lively performances from members of the North Coast Symphonic Band, Astoria Tuba Quartet, North Coast Chorale, Cascadia Chamber Opera, Dave Drury and more.

Partners for the PAC Executive Director Bereniece Jones-Centeno said she's excited that the variety of scheduled performers will give guests a taste of the many kinds of the different types of performances that happen at the Larsen Center.

"It's a nice little way for folks to get a chance to go, 'oh! This is what happens at the Larsen Center,'" Jones-Centeno said. "They'll get to see these nice little splashes."

Jones-Centeno stressed the importance of a local venue for the Oregon Coast's thriving arts scene, so the community doesn't have to travel to Portland or Seattle to see an opera or play.

The building is slowly inching toward its 100th birthday. Built in 1936 as Trinity Lutheran Church, it became a performing arts center in 1977 when it was acquired by Clatsop Community College. It has an audience capacity of 250 people, a characteristic the arts community finds valuable.

"It's super important for us to have outlets for our performers who live here, and for the community so folks can come to watch things and be a part of events right here in our own area," Jones-Centeno added. "We need it here. It's wildly important to keep this group active."

Funds raised by the event will chiefly be used to repair the building, which Jones-Centeno explained is old and in need of some significant repairs. Proceeds from the event will also be used for other bills and to keep the doors open.

Another goal of the fundraiser is to bolster community support for the performing arts center, which in turn can make it easier to secure grants, Jones-Centeno explained. This is the first event of this kind for the center.

"People who are more willing to donate sums of money that are significant want to be sure you already have support in your own backyard," she said, adding the center has had strong support from local donors but there's more work to be done.

The center has a host of events already scheduled for 2022. Concerts are planned for the winter months, and a pianist is slated to teach a masterclass in the new year. Celtic and American folk band Four Shillings Short will be making an appearance, and the Cascadia Chamber Opera will perform two operas. Locals can also look forward to the Pete Seeger Tribute Concert in late April. The theme this year is "Pete's Legacy" and will include music from and information about other musicians who were influenced by Seeger.

"It's so exciting to be able to be contacting folks and having people call asking to book our space," she said. There's still some trepidation concerning the pandemic, but things are moving in a positive direction and performers are looking forward to getting dates on the calendar."



The Charlene Larsen Center for the Performing Arts.

Nikki Davidson/The Astorian



Charlene Larsen pulls back the curtains to a beautiful stained-glass window at the center.

Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

#### THE CHARLENE LARSEN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS FUNDRAISER

Wednesday at 3 p.m.  
partnerfortheprac.org

503-338-9132

Reservations are \$100 each or \$500 to sponsor a table of four.

Masks and proof of vaccination are required.



Nikki Davidson/The Astorian

The stained glass windows from when the center was a church are now part of the performance space today.



A group of performers fill the stage of the Charlene Larsen Center for the Performing Arts during a concert.