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A concerted effort

By Loni Nannini

SPECIAL TO THE ARIZONA DAILY STAR

If you have ever belted out a tune in the shower, this is the concert for you.

On Feb. 13, a handful of Tucson business owners and community leaders will leap from shower to stage in "An Evening of Love Songs," which benefits the Glassman Foundation's Concerts in the Schools series.

"I am confident that every musician has at one point sung in the shower, imagining that they are famous and singing with a back-up band in front of an audience," said Rodney Glassman, the Tucson businessman who founded the Glassman Foundation in 2002. The foundation aims to raise funds for nonprofit organizations that help Southern Arizona children gain new experiences in the arts, recreation and education.

"We also wanted to highlight the fact that so many different people can participate in music," Glassman said.

Glassman and the concert's volunteer musical director, Jeff Haskell, coordinator of jazz studies at the University of Arizona, have assembled a cast that ranges from attorney Burt Kinerk and neurosurgeon Hillel Baldwin to Tom Sundt and Carolyn Russo of the UA School of Music and Dance. The UA's Studio Jazz Ensemble, one of Haskell's groups, will play back-up to many of the performers, with Haskell conducting Lawrence Welk-style.

Haskell said the Valentine's theme gives the concert both diversity and special meaning.

"Our Western culture and American popular song is filled with great love songs of all different stripes," he said. "What could be more fun than an evening to explore some of this material which is humorous and heartfelt and giddy all at once, just like love songs? So expect everything and you will get it."

You can even look forward to Huey Lewis and the News' "It's All Right," courtesy of an a cappella ensemble with Julian Ackerley, Phil Espinosa, Burney Starks and Dave Sitton. Ackerley, director of the Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus, and Espinosa, a judge with the Arizona Court of Appeals, said they were compelled to participate in the event when they learned that the proceeds enable UA performing groups to visit more than 2,500 local middle school students. With the proceeds from last year's benefit concert, students in four area schools were able to view the Chamber Orchestra, an electronic music ensemble, two vocal jazz ensembles or a woodwind quintet.

"I think it is a tremendous benefit to our kids," said Espinosa, who holds a UA bachelor's degree in music and toured the Midwest with the band Oracle during the 1970s. "There are many benefits from their exposure to the broader range of music - everything from contemporary to classical - which many of them might otherwise never hear."

Ackerley agreed that music education is essential for young people and complimented the Glassman Foundation for augmenting music programs in schools.

"Music is the basis of humanism, and that is what we teach the boys in the Tucson Boys Chorus," Ackerley

If you go

What: "An Evening of Love Songs"

When: 6:30 p.m. reception, 8 p.m. concert Feb. 13

Where: University of Arizona Crowder Hall, UA Fine Arts Complex, southeast corner of North Park Avenue and East Speedway.

Cost: \$150 per person (\$125 tax-deductible). Tickets include preconcert reception and a gift for each member of the audience. All proceeds benefit the Glassman Foundation's Concerts in the Schools series, a partnership with the University of Arizona School of Music and Dance.

Information: For tickets or more details, call 271-5715.

said. "When it can be included and incorporated as core subject matter, it benefits society as a whole."

Glassman, the owner of the Gateway Ice Center, said his appreciation for music stems from his childhood. His parents also taught him the importance of committing to children's causes in the community.

"I was blessed to be born into family that provided me with lots of opportunities - opportunities to participate in music and the opportunity to be a Boy Scout - and I would like to share those opportunities with thousands of kids in Tucson," Glassman said.

He emphasized that all the participants in "An Evening of Love Songs" are volunteers sharing their commitment to music and children. All the participants have displayed much creativity, professionalism and talent, he said.

"We want people to come together and have a good time and are confident that, out of this collaboration and attending this event, new ideas and new events for kids will result," Glassman said.

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