

Wilmington News Journal Wednesday, October 22, 2008

Wilco-autographed guitar up for grabs!



IF YOU GO

What: A fundraiser with Club Phred and the horn section from "The Late Show with David Letterman" band

When: 5 p.m. Sunday

Where: The baby grand, 818 N. Market St., Wilmington

Cost: \$35, includes light fare, beer and wine

Information: www.grandopera.org

When you hear "fundraiser" and "The Grand" in the same sentence, images of the annual black-tie affair known as The Grand Gala might run through your head. Tickets for the posh event, which will be held on Dec. 13, run from \$750 to \$1500 per person.

But Sunday's fundraiser, A Signature Event, at the baby grand will be nothing like that. It promises to be "less stuffy" and "freewheeling," says Stephen Bailey, executive director of The Grand.

The centerpiece of the night will be the auctioning of items autographed by recent Grand performers, like a guitar signed by Wilco and posters signed by Lewis Black, Queen Latifah, Third Eye Blind, k.d. lang and Bright Eyes.

Vacations, Phillies tickets and parties will also be auctioned at the first of what will be an annual event.

Since The Grand has never held an event like this before, Bailey has no estimate on how much A Signature Event could raise for the arts hall. "The ticket fee is basically defraying the cost of the event, and I don't know what some of these things are going to go for," Bailey says. "If the right person hears about the Wilco guitar ... that's an item some would consider an amazing piece of memorabilia."

Only half of the Grand's operating budget comes from ticket sales, concessions and rentals.

The other half is from contributions. "This event, The Grand Gala, and any other fundraising we can do, is critical to the bottom line of The Grand," Bailey says.

The night's entertainment will be headed by Club Phred, the Newark-based cover band that plays the classic rock songs of the '60s and '70s.

The band will be expanded to include the horn section of the CBS Orchestra from "The Late Show with David Letterman," including trombonist Tom "Bones" Malone, saxophonist Bruce Kapler and trumpeter Alan Chez.

Fred Dawson, a Grand board member who plays the Hammond B3 organ with Club Phred, is paying the fee for the famous horn section.

"We want as little expense and as much profit for The Grand," says Dawson, a financial adviser with Wilmington-based Bassett, Brosius & Dawson, Inc.

Club Phred, which has raised more than \$1.2 million for local and national charities since 2004, is excited to play with the horn section, headed by Malone, who also co-starred in "Blues Brothers."

"I had to dole out Depends to all the band members when I told them I had secured the deal," Dawson jokes.

SELECT AUCTION ITEMS

- Guitar signed by Wilco
 - Guitar signed by Indigo Girls, Gov't Mule, Dweezil Zappa and Daby Toure
 - Ticket package to The Grand Gala
 - Drum heads signed by Mark Farner (Grand Funk Railroad), Micky Dolenz (The Monkees) and Spencer Davis (The Spencer Davis Group)
 - Vacations in Florida and Montana
 - Private tour of the Philadelphia Museum of Art
 - A party for you and 75 of your friends with a live performance by The Cameltones
 - Chauffeur service in a 1985 Rolls-Royce
 - Gala program book signed by Bill Cosby
 - An exclusive 'Roadie Day' working backstage as a roadie for a Grand show
 - Cal Ripken Jr.-signed baseball gear
 - Four tickets to a 2009 Philadelphia Phillies game
 - Overnight stay and dinner at Dover Downs Hotel and Casino
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