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Published January 5th, 2022

Orinda Theatre hosts a celebration for those who contributed

By Sora O'Doherty



The Orinda Theatre celebrated its 80th birthday on Dec. 27, with a free screening of the film, "Cinema Paradiso" for all who contributed to the theatre's GoFundMe effort to keep it in business during the pandemic. During the last two days of 2021, a generous donor matched all donations made to the theatre's fundraising effort.

Theatre owner Derek Zemrak extended an enthusiasic thank you to all who came to the 80th birthday celebration. Zemrak said it was a perfect film to celebrate the theatre's history and that it looked amazing on the theatre's new, state-of-the-art screen, recently installed in the theatre's historic 750-seat auditorium.

Photo provided

Zemrak thanked Greg King for restoring the marquee and tower's neon lights to their glory days. Other upcoming improvements include a new screen and

curtains in both the 174-seat auditorium and the 47-seat screening room. The new screen in the 174-seat theater will be larger than the current screen, which was installed in 1989. The 174-seat auditorium now has a larger stage to improve Live at Orinda Cabaret concerts. The floor in the 174-seat auditorium was recently painted and looks amazing, Zemrak said, and he is currently working with the premiere sound company in the world on getting a new sound system in the main theatre.

Upcoming live concerts include two-time Tony nominee Christine Andreas on Jan. 30, jazz & pop star Freda Payne on Feb. 20, 5-time Golden Globe nominee Marilu Henner on March 6, 12-time MAC award winning cabaret star Natalie Douglas on April 3 and Tony Award winner Debbie Gravitte on May 1. The Orinda Theatre is observing all pandemic protocols, including checking vaccination cards and IDs for entrance.

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