

Nov. 28, 2002

■ **Who:** Pianist Marvin Goldstein with singer Karen Larsen, presented by Titel Entertainment.

Where: Irvine Barclay Theatre, on the UC Irvine campus off of Campus and West Peltason drives.

When: Thursday, Dec. 5, at 8 p.m.

Cost: \$19-\$27.

Information: (949) 854-4646.

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Pianist with hopes of peace through music brings holiday concert to the Barclay Dec. 5

By Michael Rydzynski
For Irvine World News

Marvin Goldstein is a man with a self-imposed mission: no less than to bring peace to the Middle East through music.



Marvine Goldstein

"I have proposed to President Bush a peace concert at the White House," said Goldstein, a pianist and arranger, during a recent phone interview from Phoenix, where he was performing at the time.

"All the Middle Eastern leaders - kings, queens, presidents, ambassadors, magistrates, you name it - along with their Washington, D.C., counterparts, will be invited to this White House concert, which I will produce and perform, to experience music by an Israeli singer, Gali Atari, and a yet-to-be-named Palestinian singer, in a one-hour concert, which the president will be asked to introduce.

"This won't be entertainment but actually a medicinal, pointed effort for music to make them feel better while they sit together in the aisles, Israeli and Palestinians alike. We will be trying for a musical-cultural effort toward peace, where not much will be said and music will be dominant.

"This is to show how we can all participate together (to) avoid war (and) make peace, in the spirit of music."

While Goldstein's Irvine debut at the Barclay on Thursday, Dec. 5, won't have so lofty an aim, it nonetheless will also contain feel-good music the audience will enjoy.

"People will have a good experience with the music," Goldstein, 52, said about his holiday concert, which contains, in addition to Christmas and Hanukkah songs, patriotic melodies, show tunes, love songs and early 20th century pop music.

"There'll also be audience participation, audience requests, a little bit of humor. Yes, I'm really happy to be coming to Irvine."

Helping him celebrate the holidays at the Barclay will be singer Karen Larsen, a former Miss Utah with "a gorgeous voice," according to Goldstein.

"She'll be on with me for 15 to 18 minutes," he said. "She'll probably sing holiday and inspirational music from her latest CD, 'Once Again It's Christmastime,' which was released two or three months ago."

Facetiously calling himself an "overnight success in 52 years," Goldstein will sing selections from his latest recording, "Love Songs of the 20th Century, Volume 2," a two-CD set of 35 songs from the '70s and '80s, which will be released by the end of the year. This will bring his overall CD output to about 30, with potentially no end in sight for ideas and repertoire.

"I know 4,000 to 5,000 songs, so I don't plan a concert, I just go on experience, to see what the audience came to hear," he said.

Goldstein said he was "pretty sure" he would perform excerpts from "Fiddler on the Roof" and "The Sound of Music," a '20s medley of ragtime and Tin Pan Alley tunes, and medleys of Israeli and Palestinian songs, as well as traditional holiday fare.

Only three days after his Irvine concert, Goldstein will be in the Washington, D.C., area, not only to give a pair of concerts in Kensington, Md., but for a meeting with secretaries of an adviser to the president and two senators.

"I'm partially good friends with (Florida) Gov. Jeb Bush, the president's brother," Goldstein, who lives in Tallahassee with his wife, Lenae, and son Nicholas, said in recalling how the proposed peace concert came about. "It's an idea I've had for some time and I asked the governor, 'Can you help me look into this?'"

Gov. Bush contacted a couple of senators and ultimately his brother, who in January said that Goldstein's idea "sounds interesting" and, according to Goldstein, "fully expected to hold the concert in October or November, except for something called Iraq."

Being in regular communication with the White House, Goldstein expects the concert to happen - unless America declares war on Iraq.

"But that's the whole purpose of having this peace concert - to avoid war," Goldstein asserted. "I understand the power of music."

With a classical background in music - training at 9 on the accordion, attending Tel Aviv University School of Music on a scholarship at 18, studying at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, receiving his bachelor's and master's degrees in French horn at Florida State University in Tallahassee, and having performed with the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra - Goldstein has amassed a host of stories throughout his 43-year performing career (the last 36 as a professional) proving the power of music.

"Once, after I performed at a Latter-Day Saints church in Arkansas," he said, "a Jewish woman sitting in the front row - now that's a rarity, a Jewish woman in a Mormon church - came up to me with tears in her eyes - I had just finished playing Jewish and patriotic music - and said, 'Thank you for what you're trying to do with music of the Middle East.'"

"An elderly lady at a recent concert I gave at another church said to me that when her husband died a few years ago, there was no closure for her - 'until tonight,' she said. 'When you played, something made it come together for me, something told me that he's OK.' Also, I would see children with tears in their eyes, the music having moved them so much.

"On March 20 of last year, I performed at the YMCA in Jerusalem with Gali (Atari), and there were Christians, Arabs, Jews and Americans in the audience, and everyone was moved.

"And I gave a concert in July of 2001 in New York City before Chinese and Spanish groups, each with an interpreter. But once I played the music, they didn't need any.

"So I have personal knowledge that music is powerful and can do these things and it's all true, but I can't convince anyone of this unless they hear it for themselves," he said.

"I tell people, 'You have to listen to more than just the notes. Lean forward and listen more intently and more intimately.'"

The same goes for the White House peace concert.

"This is not just showing up and doing a jazz night for people after dinner to fall asleep, but done for a good cause," Goldstein said. "And I know I'm putting music to the test right now by going to a humanitarian way.

"But this is definitely a cut above the junk and rhetoric of current and past negotiations between Israel and the Middle East, all the while a commonplace culture of hatred is taught in their schools to hate the other side.

"At its best, world peace can finally be achieved through a series of these concerts all over the world. But even at its worst, there isn't going to be a single thing negative about it. So why not give this a chance? Nothing else has worked for the last 5,000 years.

"There's an old Yiddish saying, translated: It couldn't hoit!"

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