



Rhythmix Celebrates 7

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Rachel Rolleri, daughter of Alameda's police chief, performed as part of Rhythmix Cultural Works' Wine Women and Song event last Saturday. Rolleri was part of a star-studded line up of female performers for the center's seventh anniversary. Photo by Maurice Ramirez

Cultural center marks birthday with Wine, Women, Song concert

Under vibrant stage lights, Vietnamese songs played on a West African kora and an accordion roared to a beat-boxer's tempo. Bubbly show tunes followed soon after while the night culminated with the soulful sound of the Blues. This crossroads of global cultures, art and music marked Rhythmix Cultural Works' (RCW) "Wine, Women and Song," a celebration of RCW's seventh anniversary, a showcase for women visual and performing artists and a fundraiser for youth arts education programs.

Wine, Women and Song celebrated RCW's seven years of bringing cultural awareness, arts participation and arts education into the community. One of the ways this mission has spread its wings in the community is through the Performance Art & Learning Program (PAL), an arts education curriculum offered by Rhythmix in Alameda and Oakland schools.

This vision is made possible by a multitude of dedicated leaders like Janet Koike, RCW founder and artistic director, and Tina "Bean" Blaine, executive director. They shared their performance talents at the concert, performing alongside Kathryn Cabunoc and Jeannie

McKenzie in the Rhythmix Ensemble, a dynamic mix of the taiko drum, marimba, djembe and violin.

Wine Women and Song also introduced the annual Rhythmix Golden Gear Awards, honoring East

Bay artists who keep the arts alive for the community. Presented by Mayor Marie Gilmore, this year's award recipients were Lorrie Murray for Best Arts Educator, Terrie Odabi for Best Performing Artist and Mi'Chelle Fredrick for Best Visual Artist.

The headline performance of the night was Terrie Odabi, who graced the stage with the Blues and the Rhythmix House Band.

Other performers included: Unity Nguyen, singer and West African kora player, and Velina Brown, singer-songwriter, among many other talents. Rachel Roller, the 18-year-old daughter of Alameda's very own police chief, sang original songs and strummed her guitar for the audience.

The visual artists showcase included Ginny Parsons, painter, Deborah Sullivan, sculptor and Mariah Carle, photographer.

Wine, Women and Song showcased the many ways RCW extends its vision of arts and multiculturalism further into the community.

Prior to the show, guests and VIPs were treated to a special reception outside the building that featured a number of performers including Blaine's drumming class ensemble, The Bean Counters, singer-songwriter Tracy Blackman and Ebb and Flow Belly Dance.

Local caterers and wineries were on hand to offer tasty treats, all under the whirring energy of moving gears that are the creation of Rick Tabor, a local dentist and contributor to RCW. Tabor call his gears his "performance art" and appeared recently on the side of the Rhythmix float in the Fourth of July Parade. Who knows where they'll show up next.

The gears reflect the RCW logo and significant donors to the arts programs at Rhythmix receive permanent recognition of their generosity in the form of an engraved metal gear near the entrance to the main RCW theater. Nine new donors were recognized with a brand new gear on the wall at Wine Women and Song, including the recently deceased former Vice Mayor Hadi Monsef (see Local Deaths, page 1.) Monsef was a contributor to RCW in many ways, perhaps the most significant being an essential force in establishing the Rhythmix Community Advisory Board, of which he was a member.

The crowd at the festive event took a moment to remember Monsef as a significant member of the community at large.

To find out what's coming up next at Rhythmix, visit www.rhythmix.org, or call 865-5060.

Fernanda Castro is an Alameda Sun intern. She can be reached at editor@alamedasun.com. Eric J. Kos contributed to this story.



Singer-songwriter Tracy Blackman performs in front of Rhythmix Cultural Works (RCW) during the Wine Women & Song reception held outside the facility. Colorful spinning gears adorned the roofline of RCW for the first time, the brainchild of Alameda dentist Rick Tabor. Tabor calls the gears his "performance art." Photo by Maurice Ramirez

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