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Miami-Dade XML

Posted on Fri, Sep. 09, 2005

BENEFIT

Sandoval will headline benefit concert

Miami-Dade County will host a celebrity concert to raise funds for victims of Hurricane Katrina -- with Arturo Sandoval, Michael Bolton and Willy Chirino among the performers.

BY TERE FIGUERAS NEGRETE
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Arturo Sandoval was watching the images of a flood-ravaged New Orleans when he was seized with a sudden inspiration.

'I stood up and said to my wife, 'We just can't sit here and do nothing,' " said the Grammy-award winning musician. He grabbed a piece of paper. And the words -- inspired by his many visits to the legendary jazz haunts of the Big Easy -- poured out in fully formed verses.

Sandoval's big-band homage to New Orleans served as the musical rallying point Thursday for county officials, who announced plans for a charity concert Sept. 25 at the AmericanAirlines Arena.

In addition to Sandoval, a slew of other performers have signed on, including Michael Bolton, Willy Chirino, the Bee Gees' Barry Gibb, Jon Secada and Natalie Cole.

Tickets go on sale Saturday and start at \$25 -- with special VIP seats going for \$1,000 -- and will be sold through Ticketmaster or the AmericanAirlines Arena box office.

All proceeds will go to the American Red Cross' efforts to aid victims of Hurricane Katrina victims in the Gulf States, with a portion earmarked for local victims of the storm who lost their homes.

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COMING SEPT. 25: Jazz great Arturo Sandoval announces plans for a concert here to benefit victims of Hurricane Katrina. He wrote and recorded a song just for the event.

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EVERYONE'S EVENT

"This is everyone's event. The people of Miami-Dade, the 30,000 employees, everyone," said Miami-Dade Commission Chairman Joe Martinez, surrounded by a phalanx of elected leaders, including Mayor Carlos Alvarez and representatives from the local Red Cross and Kiwanis Club of Little Havana -- whose logistical skills in organizing the massive Calle Ocho street festival will be pressed into service for the event.

Recordings of Sandoval's *Motherland of Jazz* will also be on sale in the coming days, although distribution details had yet to be hammered out.

That the recording was even made, said Sandoval, was surprising.

Shortly after he sketched out a first draft, he turned to music professors at Miami Dade College to help him arrange the piece, including longtime friend and co-collaborator Ed Calle, a Latin Grammy-nominated musician who teaches at the school.

Sandoval, who lives in Miami-Dade, said he called around to local studios asking for free time to record the song -- to no avail. The college donated facilities at its Kendall campus.

"It wasn't the best facilities, but that it came out so good, and with that quality," he said, "was a miracle."

Sandoval was able to wrangle talent -- including Secada and Chirino -- to provide the vocals and music. The hastily assembled crew worked through the night Monday to get the recording done.

It was a labor of love, said Sandoval, who as a child in Cuba was inspired by the works of jazz legend Dizzy Gillespie. After his defection from the Communist-ruled island in 1990, Sandoval said one of his first stops was New Orleans' famed Bourbon Street. "I just took out my trumpet from under my arm and stood on the corner playing," he said. "People thought I was crazy."

BROUGHT FRIENDS HERE

Sandoval was able to track down a few musician friends who escaped the flooded city to a shelter in Houston. He flew them to Miami, where he says they'll stay at his home "until they get back on their feet."

His rescued friends will be on stage with him at the Miami-Dade relief concert.

Actor Andy Garcia, who played the celebrated trumpet player in the biopic *For Love or Country: The Arturo Sandoval Story*, is scheduled to serve as co-host along with dancer and actress Debbie Allen.

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