

Live in the Lobby returns

Patchogue Theatre to host popular local music series

The Patchogue Theatre for the Performing Arts (PTPA) has announced the third season of its Live in the Lobby Concert series starting Sept. 20 with an expanded format and an improved venue.

The Live in the Lobby Concert Series is a once a month, Thursday night event that showcases some of the area's hardest working and most deserving artists playing a variety of original music such as rock, folk, funk, jazz, bluegrass and R&B. PTPA presents Live in the Lobby as a means of audience development and to provide a venue for Long Island-based original artists to perform their own compositions.

Concerts in the first two seasons have usually been one performer playing two, one-hour sets, but the format and the starting time for the 2007-08 season will change to accommodate the large number of deserving musicians who want to play. The shows will start at 7 p.m. with a 30-minute "Songwriter Spotlight"—two or three songwriters playing acoustic versions of two or three songs, followed by two feature performers who will play until 10 p.m.

The 2007-08 lineup includes lesser known "up and coming" groups such as *My Last Band* and *The Westons*, two original rock bands from Long Island's south shore who will start the season on Sept. 20, and *The Sun Gets Down*, an acoustic duo from Manorville who will perform Oct. 11

with Chris Van Cott opening. Several more well-known performers will also be in the Lobby in the coming season, such as singer-songwriter Caroline Doctorow on Nov. 1, *The Home Grown String Band* in February and Cathy Kreger and *What it IZ* in April.

Concerts in the lobby were started by Patchogue Village Trustee Jack Krieger, liaison to the PTPA Board of Directors, who organized a handful of successful shows in the winter of 2005. "The idea was to find new ways to bring people to the theater on off nights," Krieger said. "And those three or four concerts evolved into Live in the Lobby, which has become a major player on the Long Island music scene thanks to a hardworking group of volunteers who believe in having a place for original music and give up a lot of time to make it happen."

One hundred tickets are sold, and seating is limited to about 50 people. Krieger explained, "We usually get more who are happy just to stand at the bar and enjoy the music."

After being elected to the PTPA Board of Directors in August 2005, Christopher Capobianco asked the board to start the series up again as a monthly or twice monthly series featuring original music from the Long Island area. In 26 concerts over two seasons, it has grown to become one of Long Island's premier small venues for independent singers and songwriters.

"There are very few places on Long Island where original songwriters can



Krista March of Miles to Dayton performing at the Patchogue Theatre for the Performing Arts. Photo by Walter Petrule

showcase their material," Capobianco said. "I am very proud of how successful Live in the Lobby has become, and how much great music we have heard being written, recorded and performed here on Long Island."

Capobianco leads a group of volunteers who books the performers, collects tickets, tends bar and sets up the chairs to convert the beautiful art deco lobby into a small concert hall, creating an intimate setting with excellent acoustics. "Musicians really enjoy playing here, and although it is not a 'money' gig, it's a comfortable concert hall setting to play in," Capobianco said. "Our local audience continues to grow and we often see the performers' own fan base of all ages, from young children to teens and parents and even grandparents who would not or prefer not to see a group in a crowded late night bar atmosphere, but love this comfortable setting for good music that is not over too late."

For the performers, the exposure is substantial and future opportunities to play on the main stage are always a pos-

sibility. Live in the Lobby groups have gone on to play the twice yearly "Patchogue Jam" on the main stage (Patchogue Jam 2 is scheduled Sept. 15) and in the case of Centereach's *Miles to Dayton*, did their own highly successful Main Stage performance on June 21.

The July 5 "Concert for the Lobby" benefit concert drew over 100 music fans to hear 18 different performers over the course of five hours. "The funds raised on July 5," Capobianco explained, "combined with the funds from Patchogue Jam One in January are allowing us to create a separate concert hall within PTPA, with its own sound, lights and chairs. It is becoming a venue within a venue—a small, intimate concert hall that is a perfect compliment to the 1,200 seat main auditorium."

The Patchogue Theatre is located at 71 East Main Street in Patchogue. Live in the Lobby tickets, priced at \$5 or \$10, depending on the performance, are available at the box office or by phone. For more information, or to join the mailing list, call 207-1313 or visit www.patchoguetheatre.com/lobby.htm. ■



MTV star in Patchogue

Donnie J, a performer on MTV's *Making the Band 4*, stopped by the Patchogue Theatre for the Performing Arts last Wednesday night to perform with several others and receive an award from the Long Island Music Hall of Fame. Donnie J is a 2003 graduate of Levittown High School. For more information about the Patchogue Theatre for the Performing Arts, call 207-1313 or visit www.patchoguetheatre.com.

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