

FOLSOM'S EMERGING ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT SCENE

by Lynn Machon



Artist Rendering of the
Visual and Performing Arts Center
Opening late 2010

As a community, Folsom portrays a commitment to the arts and quality entertainment. Passionate leadership and widespread public support helps keep an appreciation of the arts at center stage.

What's more, in 2010, the City welcomes a spectacular regional performing arts venue – the Visual and Performing Arts Center located on the campus of Folsom Lake College. This state-of-the-art facility will serve not only the local community, but the larger Sacramento region, and will significantly raise the caliber of live performances and exhibitions, establishing Folsom as a true hub for the region's emerging arts and entertainment scene.



PUTTING ARTISTIC TALENT ON DISPLAY

Folsom boasts several locally and nationally recognized artists who visually dazzle admirers with everything from paintings and sculptures, to photography and pottery. More than 40 galleries and art studios are dedicated to showcasing our diverse art community.

One of the newest venues is **The Gallery at 48 Natoma**, which opened in June 2007, adjacent to City Hall.



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Michael A. Greenberg, M.D.

The Gallery offers ongoing exhibits by regional and national artists, area museum collections and stunning travelling exhibitions, such as those offered by the Smithsonian Institute.

CELEBRATING MUSIC AND THE ARTS

What started as the **Taste of Folsom** 15 years ago to promote area restaurants, has today expanded into **Folsom LIVE!**, a wildly popular annual celebration of music on historic Sutter Street.

Originally started by the Folsom Chamber of Commerce, the City's popular **Concert in the Park** summer series averages 500 people each week surrounding the gazebo at Lions Park.

Switching from music to art, the **Folsom Arts and Cultural Commission** promotes National Arts & Human-



ities Month each October, highlighting local events such as the **Folsom Renaissance Faire** at Lions Park. The fun weekend features over 900 costumed entertainers, more than 100 street artisans, and of course, jousting.

Another popular festivity is the **Folsom Gourd & Fine Arts Festival**, held each September to celebrate the work of 150 regional artists. Sponsored by the **Folsom Patrons of the Arts**, the festival welcomes thousands of art and music lovers each year.

AN ENCORE OF MUSICAL AND THEATRICAL PERFORMANCES

Certain pleasures cannot be fully appreciated without being experienced. That's certainly the case with **The Folsom Lake Symphony Orchestra**. Under the direction of Maestro Michael Neumann, the Symphony provides incredible concertos and soloist performances to sold-out audiences from around the greater Sacramento and foothill region.

Another acoustic gem is the **Folsom Lake Community Concert Association**, started in 1994 by a small

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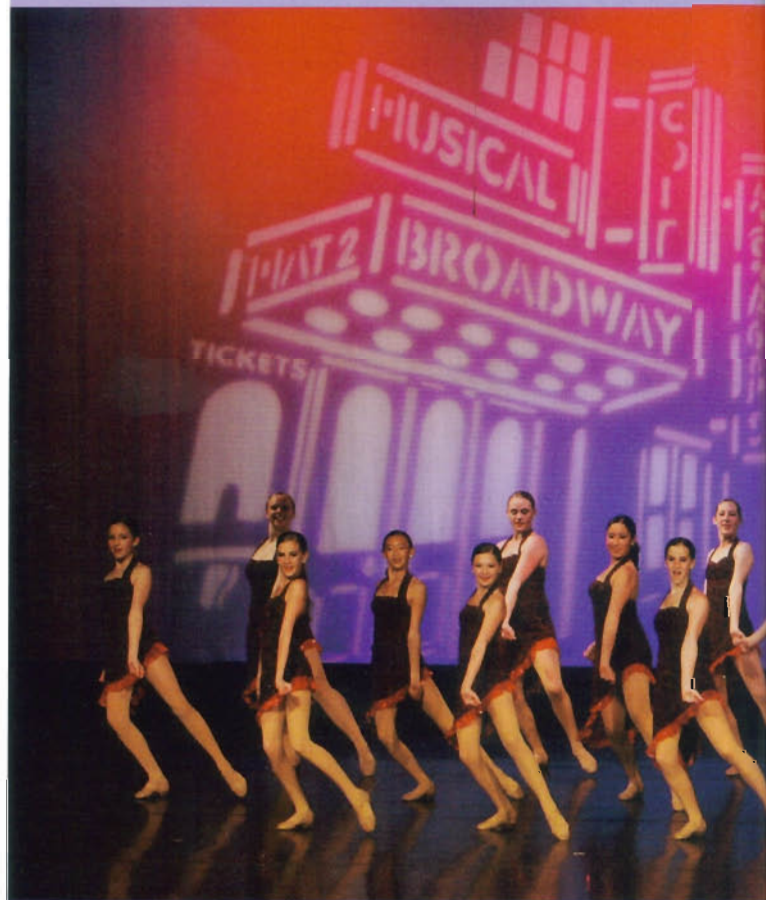
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band and color guard routinely takes honors at regional band reviews, was invited to entertain crowds at Disneyland three years in a row, and hosts the successful annual Fall Festival for regional band competition.

Additionally, Gaesser's jazz choir, orchestra and concert bands and combos, often compete in regional and sometimes international jazz festivals and his students win spots in state honor bands. In fact, the program has won 15 *DownBeat* Magazine National "DeeBee" awards since 1993. Folsom High's Jazz Choir, consistently ranked best in the nation, regularly performs at the Monterey Jazz Festival. In 2003, the Jazz Band and Choir performed throughout Europe and took part in the



Montreux, Switzerland, Jazz Festival.

Gaesser humbly attributes much of his program's success to his students. "My philosophy is that kids can achieve anything that they sincerely believe they can, and my job is to make them believe this," he says. "I push them within reason, and my expectations are never met until they are at their best. It involves commitment, practice and dedication to achieve."

Gaesser feels a good music program is good for the entire community. "Kids with art, music or drama have a creative outlet each day to explore the beauty of this world. It expands their horizons and opens doors that

Photo courtesy of Stages - Northern

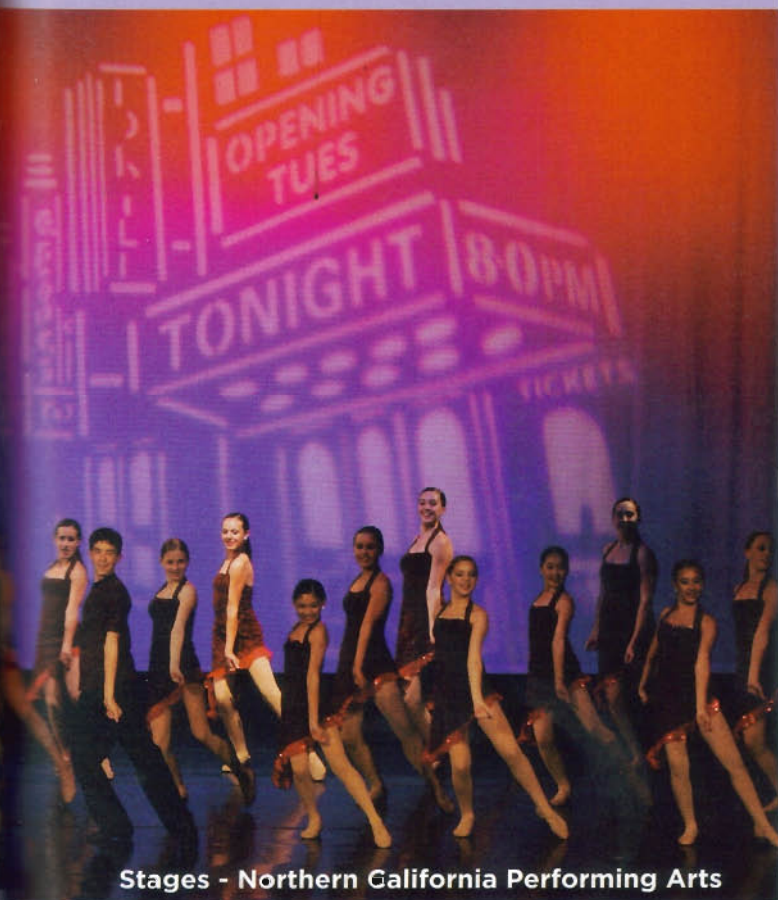
AUDIENCE APPEAL

otherwise they would never find.”

Each year, the school's dedicated Music Boosters organize the **Folsom Jazz Festival**, featuring more than 130 bands and vocal groups from all over California and Nevada. In 2010 the successful event was expanded to Friday night and featured a performance by the Grammy-nominated University of North Texas “One O’Clock Lab Band.”

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

While for the last decade our region has flourished with a booming music, dance and performing arts presentations, the lack of venue space to adequately showcase



Stages - Northern California Performing Arts

performances has been a challenge.

For many local organizations, the beautiful **Jill Solberg Performing Arts Theater** at Folsom High School has been a wonderful setting for high quality performances. The 750-seat theater, named in honor of the beloved Folsom High principal and supporter of the arts who lost her battle with cancer in March 2005, is booked throughout the year. Fortunately, an additional venue is on the horizon.

Scheduled to open at the end of 2010 on the Folsom Lake College campus, the much-anticipated **Visual and Performing Arts Center** is certain to be a jewel for the

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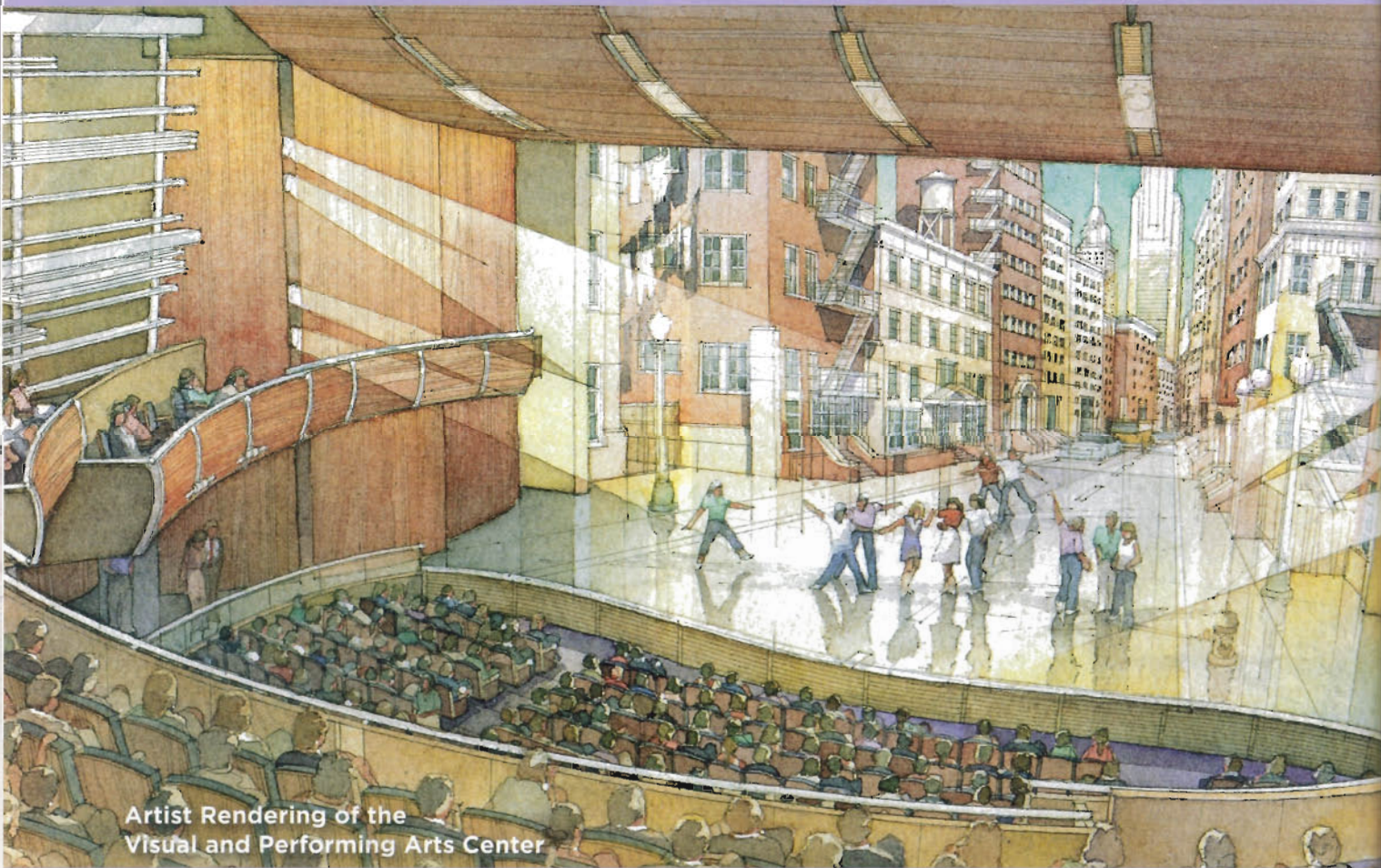
AUDIENCE APPEAL

performing arts community.

Once completed, the \$50 million facility, conveniently located off East Bidwell Street, near Highway 50, will become a true cornerstone of the region's arts and entertainment scene.

"Most community colleges build a theater for instructional purposes with about 400 seats," says Lori Rianda, executive director of the Folsom Lake College Foundation. "We queried the surrounding community and saw

According to Rianda, a number of potential playbill partners have already expressed interest in the new facility. "We've heard from several local groups, as well as some of the larger organizations like the Sacramento Ballet and the Sacramento Philharmonic," she says. "We are also hearing from major promoters from throughout the West Coast, such as Live Nation, who are interested in bringing large live shows in, an important part of our region's entertainment focus."



Artist Rendering of the Visual and Performing Arts Center

there was a greater need for a larger, multi-use facility."

The sophisticated 80,000-square-foot structure will be the largest of its kind in the local area offering the space necessary for professional performing arts touring companies and nationally-known artists, musicians and bands to perform in Folsom. The facility boasts three separate performing centers: the main 850-seat theater, a smaller director's studio with 200 seats and a recital hall with seating for 100.

Additionally, the space will house an art gallery, studio classrooms for both student and community use, practice space, a costume and scenery shop and a large, state-of-the-art recording studio that enables broadcast-quality audio and video productions.

Alongside high caliber family-appropriate music, dance and drama performances, Rianda says theatergoers can expect to experience different disciplines of the arts, including comedy and spoken word series. "We're not just going to be focused on traditional arts. We're looking to bring something for everyone into this building."

The Visual and Performing Arts Center helps to ensure that Folsom residents, as well as patrons in surrounding communities, will be able to enjoy world-class entertainment and exhibits right here in our local area, and that Folsom's emerging arts and entertainment scene continues to grow and thrive. That's certainly news worthy of a standing ovation.