



Bay Area Cabaret

For Immediate Release

**BAY AREA CABARET ANNOUNCES SEASON OF EXCEPTIONAL
BROADWAY, CABARET & JAZZ ARTISTS FOR 2023-24**

**OPENING NIGHT WITH 3-TIME TONY NOMINATED BROADWAY STAR
JOSHUA HENRY, OCTOBER 29;**

~~~~~

**BRIA SKONBERG, TRUMPET VIRTUOSO & SINGER  
*JINGLE BELL SWING*, DECEMBER 10**

~~~~~

**MAX VON ESSEN WITH BILLY STRITCH, FEBRUARY 4
*CALL ME OLD FASHIONED: THE BROADWAY STANDARD***

~~~~~

***VENETIAN EVENINGS: A CELEBRATION OF THE VENETIAN ROOM*  
BRAND NEW MUSICAL TRIBUTE, MARCH 24**

~~~~~

**BROADWAY'S *FUNNY GIRL* JULIE BENKO RETURNS!
JULIE SINGS JULE (STYNE) WITH JASON YEAGER, APRIL 14;**

**FIVE SUNDAYS OF INTIMATE MUSIC AT THE ELEGANT
VENETIAN ROOM, FAIRMONT SAN FRANCISCO**

Tickets Now on Sale; bayareacabaret.org

SAN FRANCISCO (September 18, 2023) — **Bay Area Cabaret** today announced the 2023-24 season starring five exceptional and critically acclaimed cabaret, jazz and Broadway artists, all to be presented at the famed **Venetian Room**, Fairmont San Francisco, beginning Sunday, October 29 through Sunday, April 14.

Opening night of Bay Area Cabaret's 13th Season will launch in grand style with three-time Tony-nominee and star of *Hamilton*'s national tour, **Joshua Henry**; just in time for the holidays, the Bay Area Cabaret debut of Canadian virtuoso trumpeter and jazz singer, **Bria Skonberg** with *Jingle Bell Swing*; the Venetian Room premier of Broadway's critically acclaimed leading man, the dashing **Max von Essen**, with his music director

extraordinaire, **Billy Stritch**, for an elegant pre-Valentine's Day cabaret; the debut of a new musical show, *Venetian Evenings: In Celebration of the legendary Venetian Room* with guest artists to be announced; and a season finale featuring the triumphant return of *Funny Girl's* **Julie Benko** with music director **Jason Yeager**, in a new, nationally praised cabaret show, *Julie Sings Jule* (Styne).

Bay Area Cabaret Founder and Executive Producer **Marilyn Levinson** said:

"Bay Area Cabaret was thrilled last season to experience a resurgence of excitement around our cabaret evenings in The Venetian Room. From the gracious Fairmont doormen to the artists themselves first witnessing the magnificent ballroom, the hotel felt full of possibilities. Subscribers and their friends flew in for the shows from all over the country. Pandemic-weary patrons seemed happy to reunite. And, to my amazement, a younger breed of concert-goers seemed thrilled to discover a new form of entertainment and connection with one another. We expect they'll return to The Venetian Room for our Opening Night to witness *Hamilton's* Joshua Henry and his trio in an electrifying program of Broadway and soul, fresh from his turn as Gaston in *Beauty and the Beast*, two recordings...and from having opened for megastar Diana Ross at the Hollywood Bowl. To close out a successful 2023, beautiful Bria Skonberg will bring her top caliber jazz musicians to celebrate the holidays (and the Fairmont's life-sized Gingerbread House!), with more shows on the way including a not-to-be-missed time capsule tribute to our venue itself. I look forward to sharing this year's varied lineup of amazing artists - their singing, their stories and their talent -as they create new memories for all of us who cherish this artform."

JOSHUA HENRY, October 29 at 7 p.m.

Three-time Tony Award-nominee **Joshua Henry** (*Scottsboro Boys*, *Violet*, *Carousel*), recently won a Grammy Award for his portrayal of Rapunzel's Prince alongside Gavin Creel and the rest of an all-star ensemble cast for the revival of Sondheim's *Into the Woods*, which played San Francisco's Curran Theatre this past summer. Bay Area audiences, and theater fans throughout the nation, know Canadian-native Joshua Henry for his electrifying portrayal of Aaron Burr in the cultural phenomenon *Hamilton*. Recently, he played the role of Gaston in Disney's *30th Anniversary of Beauty and the Beast* on ABC, recorded two original albums and opened for Diana Ross at the Hollywood Bowl.

To celebrate the opening of Bay Area Cabaret's 2023-24 season, Joshua Henry will perform such musical numbers as "Dear Theodisia", "If I Loved You" and also bring his band of New York-based musicians to perform "A soulful bop through the songs that have moved and grooved us through the decades...songs like "A Change is Gonna Come", "Wait for It", "Let's get it on." Joshua Henry's voice has been described as "... the voice of an actor-singer that, while warm and mellow, can also soar with joy and tremble in despair." (*Variety*)

BRIA SKONBERG, December 10 at 7.30 p.m.

Jingle Bell Swing

Canadian artist **Bria Skonberg** "... has become the shining hope of hot jazz, on the strength of a clarion trumpet style indebted to Louis Armstrong, a smooth purr of a singing voice inspired by Anita O'Day and the wholesome glow of youth (*New York Times*). Having made it to the top 5 of *Billboard* charts, Bria Skonberg has been nominated for three prestigious Juno Awards, and won one, for "Outstanding Vocal Jazz Album." Bria Skonberg is "a millennial shaking up the jazz world." (*Vanity Fair*). For her first show in the Venetian Room, Skonberg will bring her trio to debut *Jingle Bell Swing*, music in the spirit of the holidays, that she and her band will record in the coming year. BAC patrons are encouraged to arrive early and visit the Fairmont's annual holiday décor including the life-sized Gingerbread House.

MAX VON ESSEN with BILLY STRITCH, February 4 at 5 p.m.

Call Me Old Fashioned: The Broadway Standard

Making his auspicious Bay Area cabaret debut, **Max von Essen** (Tony, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Award nominee for *American in Paris*, Lincoln Center Theatre's *Falsettos*, *Evita*, *Les Misérables*), will take to the Venetian Room stage to perform his classic album of Broadway standards. A hit at New York's Birdland, the Art House in Provincetown, Manhattan's Paradise Lounge, and Palm Springs' Annenberg Art Museum, the album features cherished songs from von Essen's life and career, including Gershwin songs he's known since childhood, Broadway classics such as "They Say it's Wonderful," and the resplendent "On This Night of a Thousand Stars", which he sang many times while sharing the role of Che with Ricky Martin in *Evita*.

At the piano will be von Essen's exuberant collaborator and music director (formerly Liza Minnelli's "confidante" and music director) **Billy Stritch**, who has previously appeared on the Venetian Room stage with Lillias White, Christine Ebersole, Alan and Marilyn Bergman, Karen Mason and others. In addition to his many engagements around the country, Stritch often serves as music director on Mondays at Birdland for Jim Caruso's popular *Cast Party*.

VENETIAN EVENINGS: A Musical Celebration of our city's most glamorous showroom, March 24 at 5 p.m.

What do Tina Turner, Judy Collins, Marlene Dietrich, The Supremes, the Smothers Brothers, Ella Fitzgerald, Sammy Davis, Jr., and Tony Bennett have in common? For decades, the Venetian Room of the Fairmont San Francisco "high atop Nob Hill" was a musical home for each of them. Step inside a time capsule, celebrate our "City by the Bay" and its iconic showroom, and listen to the music and the stories one might hear "if these walls could talk". Musical artists and special guests to be announced. Festive attire encouraged!

JULIE SINGS JULE (STYNE) with Jason Yeager, April 14 at 5 p.m.

Broadway's acclaimed *Funny Girl* breakout star **Julie Benko**, along with her multi-talented husband **Jason Yeager**, wowed Bay Area Cabaret's audience in their Venetian Room debut last season. Back by popular demand, Benko and Yeager will return with their new and critically acclaimed cabaret show, *JULIE SINGS JULE* (Styne), a musical valentine to Broadway's famed Academy Award-winning English-American composer and songwriter, **Julie Styne**. Musical highlights of Benko's cabaret show include Broadway favorites "Make Someone Happy," "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend," and "People," along with untold stories from Styne's legendary Broadway canon (*Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, *Gypsy*, *Bells Are Ringing*, *Subways Are for Sleeping*).

In his glowing review of *Julie Sings Jule* at Birdland, *Broadway World's* **Stephen Mosher** wrote: "*Julie Sings Jule* is filled with trivia, facts, histories about Julie Styne - but not the boring old things you can find on Wikipedia. For every factoid dispensed about Styne there is an intimate story about his personal life, his marriage, his demons, his desires, and there is always (and this is the secret weapon) a tie-in to something that Julie Benko has felt, thought, experienced, or welcomed into her life with Julie Styne. The audience gets to learn about Julie, they get to learn about Julie, they get to learn about Julie and Jason, and they go home feeling like they just spent an evening with friends, dear friends that are funny (oh, so funny), and talented (really, super-talented)..."

This fall, Julie Benko will return to Broadway in the debut of Barry Manilow's musical, *Harmony!*

SEASON TICKETS

A five-show subscription package with discounted prices set at \$325 for Early Birds purchasing by 10/18 (\$385 after), including reserved seating, is currently available at <http://www.bayareacabaret.org> or by calling the Bay Area Cabaret Subscriptions office (415) 927-4636. Individual tickets for all five Bay Area Cabaret shows are now on sale and available via <http://www.bayareacabaret.org>.

The Venetian Room, Fairmont San Francisco is located at 950 Mason Street atop Nob Hill. For more information about the Bay Area Cabaret 2023-24 season, visit www.bayareacabaret.org

#

Press Contact: Jon Finck, Encore Communications2.0; jonfincksf@gmail.com / +1 415 577 1323
Please connect for interviews, photographs/video and press credentials.