

Bay Area Cabaret

For Immediate Release

## **VENETIAN EVENINGS**

**A MUSICAL CELEBRATION OF THE WORLD-FAMOUS VENETIAN ROOM  
STARRING BROADWAY'S 6-TIME TONY WINNER LACHANZE,  
MAC AWARD-WINNER CAROLE J. BUFFORD & 2024 GRAMMY WINNER JAMIE DAVIS  
PLUS, THE 7-PIECE NIEL LEVONIUS ORCHESTRA, SUNDAY MARCH 24 AT 5 PM**

**Celebrating the Music of Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, Peggy Lee, Lou Rawls,  
Nat King Cole, The Supremes, Tina Turner, Lena Horne and More!**

**Tickets Now on Sale: [www.bayareacabaret.org](http://www.bayareacabaret.org)**



**LaChanze**



**Carole J. Bufford**



**Jamie Davis**

SAN FRANCISCO (February 25, 2024) — **Bay Area Cabaret** proudly presents ***Venetian Evenings***, a spectacular musical celebration paying homage to the world-famous Venetian Room of the Fairmont San Francisco. Set to take place on Sunday, March 24 at 5 p.m., this enchanting musical evening promises an unforgettable journey through the iconic sounds and stories that graced one of the nation's most glamorous showrooms.

Featuring an all-star lineup, *Venetian Evenings* will showcase performances by Broadway's illustrious 6-time Tony Award-winner actress, singer and producer **LaChanze**, along with captivating MAC Award-winner singer **Carole J. Bufford**, and the soulful sounds of 2024 Grammy-winner and concert singer, **Jamie Davis**. Backed by the dynamic 7-piece **Niel Levonius Orchestra**, audiences will be transported to a bygone era of musical splendor and sophistication. Commemorating the timeless music of Venetian Room regulars **Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, Peggy Lee, Lou Rawls, Nat King Cole, The Supremes, Tina Turner, Lena Horne**, and more, *Venetian Evenings* promises to delight fans of classic jazz, soul, and timeless melodies.

"For decades, the elegant Venetian Room of the Fairmont San Francisco - 'high atop Nob Hill' - was a musical destination for the nation's leading singers and song stylists," said **Marilyn Levinson**, Founder and Executive Producer of Bay Area Cabaret. "With *Venetian Evenings*, we invite audiences to step inside this iconic venue, celebrate the rich musical heritage of our City by the Bay, and revel in an evening of live performance and stories one might hear, 'if these walls could talk.'"

Doors to the Venetian Room will open at 4 p.m., and live cocktail music with the Niel Levonius Orchestra will commence at 4.30 p.m.; the official program will start at 5 p.m. The Laurel Court Restaurant and Bar will be open for bar service before and during the show, and for supper after the show. Supper reservations at [opentable.com](https://opentable.com) are recommended. Festive vintage attire is encouraged.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

With a career that has spanned thirty-eight Broadway seasons, **LaChanze** consistently brings women of complexity and triumph into the cultural lexicon. Last season, LaChanze made her debut as producer on two shows, the 20th anniversary revival of Suzan-Lori Parks' acclaimed Pulitzer-Prize-winning play, *Topdog/Underdog*, as well as *Kimberly Akimbo*, a new musical by Tony Award Winning Composer Jeanine Tesori and Pulitzer-Prize-Winning Playwright David Lindsay-Abaire, earning a combined 11 Tony Award nominations and 6 Tony Award wins, including Best Revival of a Play and Best Musical, respectively.

This season, she produced *Kimberly Akimbo*, *Here Lies Love* by David Byrne and Fatboy Slim and *Jaja's African Hair Braiding* written by Jocelyn Bioh and directed by Whitney White. In Spring 2024, she will join the producing team of *The Outsiders*, a new musical based on S.E. Hinton's beloved novel. In Fall 2024, she will make her New York directorial debut with Alice Childress' *Wine in the Wilderness* at Classic Stage Company.

LaChanze won a Tony Award for her performance as Celie in *The Color Purple*, originated the role of Ti Moune in *Once on This Island* (Tony Award nomination), and upheld her commitment to artistic excellence this past season as Wilettia in Alice Childress' historic play, *Trouble In Mind* (Tony Award nomination). Other notable stage performances include roles in *Summer: The Donna Summer Musical* (Tony Award nomination), *A Christmas Carol*, *The Secret Life of Bees*, *If/Then*, *The Wiz*, *Ragtime*, *Uptown... It's Hot!* and *Dreamgirls*.

On screen, she has delivered memorable roles in both TV and film: "East New York," "The Blacklist," "Handel's Messiah Rocks: A Joyful Noise" (Emmy Award), "Melinda," "The Help," HBO's "The Night Of," "Law & Order: SVU," "The Good Fight," "Sex and The City," and the Disney animated film "Hercules." LaChanze is President of Black Theatre United, a community of creatives dedicated to awareness, accountability, and advocacy.

**Carole J. Bufford** has become one of the most sought-after performers on the American vintage pop and cabaret scene. Her shows, including "speak easy," (featuring the Grammy Award-winning Vince Giordano & The Nighthawks), "Come Together," and "You Don't Own Me," earned her rave reviews from *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Times* (UK). She currently tours with her solo shows internationally including appearances at New York's famed club Birdland, as well as performances with symphony orchestras coast to coast. Carole is the recipient of Broadway World's "Vocalist of the Year" and the recent Gold Medal winner of the prestigious American Traditions Vocal Competition. [www.carolejbufford.com](http://www.carolejbufford.com)

"The real thing: you know it when you see it...The way her voice, with its blues inflections, cut a swath, leaving nothing standing, tempts me to describe her with groveling hyperbole as an earthier, more acerbic 21st-century Barbra Streisand." —Stephen Holden (*The New York Times*)

**Jamie Davis** is the winner of the 2024 Grammy Award and previously a two-time Grammy-nominated vocalist with the Count Basie Orchestra's albums, 'All About Basie' and 'Live at Birdland.' Jamie has performed at

venues around the world including those in Rome, Dubai, Moscow, Tokyo, Milan, Zagreb Croatia, Baku, Kuala Lumpur, Finland, Serbia, St. Petersburg, Spain, Paris, and London's venerated Royal Albert Hall. In the United States, he's performed at a variety of important clubs and festivals including Dizzy's, Birdland, Blue Note in New York, SFJAZZ, Monterey Jazz Festival, Stanford Jazz Festival, San Jose Jazz Festival, Bach Dancing and Dynamite, Yoshi's and many more.

After studying under the renowned New York vocal coach Edward Boatner, Jamie Davis moved to San Francisco securing opportunities to perform with Milt Jackson, Eddie Henderson, Melba More and Pharoah Saunders. The year 2000 brought exhilarating performances with the Count Basie Orchestra. On that experience Davis reflects, *"Having all that sound behind you is just amazing. You've got to ride that current."*

With a repertoire from Cole Porter and Stevie Wonder to the classical music of Bach, Schumann, Mahler and Rameau's French compositions, it confirms Davis possesses the flexibility and sexy sophistication by his effortless delivery to stand with any of the great vocalists. He has been described as a fine wine which has stood the test of time, constantly innovating jazz classics, 'rolling out' the blues and performing with one foot in the past and the other in 'today.'

Vocalist Jamie Davis holds a position amongst the pantheon of great male vocalists with a compelling full baritone voice and a passion for his craft that leaves his audiences uplifted and feelin' good...really good. Jamie's musical education began in the choir of his father's Pentecostal Church in Mansfield, Ohio. His unique bass-baritone voice brought life to liturgical music sung in Latin. During his time in the U.S. Army, he sang not only memorable show tunes, but also a wide range of swing, jazz and blues for the Special Services elite group.

Tickets for *Venetian Evenings* are available online at [www.bayareacabaret.org](http://www.bayareacabaret.org), and are \$75 pp and \$30 for adults age 30 and under. The Venetian Room, Fairmont San Francisco is located at 950 Mason Street.

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**Press Contact: Jon Finck, publicist [jonfincksf@gmail.com](mailto:jonfincksf@gmail.com) / +1 415 577 1323 mobile**  
**Please connect for feature stories, artwork and press credentials.**

**Please Note:** Bay Area Cabaret will present Broadway (*Funny Girl* and *Harmony*) star **Julie Benko's** acclaimed cabaret show, *Standby, Me* with pianist **Jason Yeager** on Sunday, April 14 at 5 p.m.