Sacramento Performing Arts

proudly presents the 2nd Annual

Sacramento Performing Arts Recognition Gala



Saturday, November 7, 2026

Mandarins Event Center

"Honoring Excellence. Celebrating Creativity. Inspiring the Future"

Mandarins Performing Arts Mission Statement: Mandarins Performing Arts mission is to enrich lives through music and the performing arts by providing transformative experiences that foster teamwork, discipline, leadership, character, and self-confidence. Through artistic excellence and collaboration, we unite people in creating memorable performances that inspire our community.

Welcome from Dr. Dan Fong
Chief Executive Officer
Mandarins Performing Arts



Welcome to the Sacramento Performing Arts Recognition Gala! This evening was created to our community's amazing individuals and organizations whose vision, dedication, leadership, and service have strengthened the performing arts throughout our region.

Oftentimes, the educators, mentors, volunteers, and advocates that inspire us all are found working quietly and tirelessly behind the scenes. Tonight, we pause to recognize their contributions and the lasting impact they have made on countless lives. Performing Arts build character, confidence, discipline, and community. This gala honors those who have helped make that mission possible and ensures their achievements are remembered and celebrated. Thank you for joining us as we recognize excellence in the performing arts and the people who have made and continue to make our Sacramento community stronger through their passion and commitment.

Tonight's Schedule of Events

4:30 PM | Doors Open & Reception Begins
Guests are invited to enjoy an evening of celebration and community before the formal program begins.

Reception Activities

- Guest Check-In & Welcome
- Photo Booth Opens
- Silent Auction Preview
- Sponsor Recognition Exhibit & Program Showcase
- Wine Pull Opens
- Card Sales Begin
- Hosted Bar & Light Hors d'oeuvres

5:30 PM | Welcome & Opening Remarks

Call to Seating: Please take your seats as we begin the evening's program

- Emcee Welcome *Dan Fong/ CEO*
- Recognition of Dignitaries, Sponsors, and Board Members *Dan Fong/CEO*
- Mandarins Mission & Community Impact *Kathleen Davies/Chair of Board*

NorCal Arts Performance



Arts education, youth development, and creative pathways that help people become empathetic, independent thinkers.

For more information visit:

www.norcalsota.org

Mandarins Hall of Fame Inductees

Introduction of the Mandarins Hall of Fame *Mike Yee/Treasurer*
Presentation to Inductees *Kathleen Davies*

MILT GEE



Milt Gee is a dedicated leader and valued member of the Sacramento Mandarins Board of Directors, where he serves as Board Secretary and Chair of the Governance Committee. In these roles, he helps ensure strong organizational leadership, effective board practices, and adherence to the highest standards of governance. Milt also serves on numerous board committees, contributing his expertise from nearly 34 years with AT&T, thoughtful perspective, and collaborative approach to advancing the Mandarins' mission. Known for his commitment to service and organizational excellence, he plays a key role in supporting strategic initiatives, strengthening board effectiveness, and helping guide the continued growth and success of the Mandarins organization. Through his leadership and volunteer service, Milt demonstrates a deep dedication to the corps, its members, and the broader community it serves.

Cindy Kazee



Cindy is a respected business leader, dedicated volunteer, and longtime supporter of the Mandarins organization. As president and principal owner of Universal Network Development Corporation (UNDC), she has successfully led a telecommunications engineering and support services company since 1988, overseeing operations, finance, marketing, human resources, and contract administration. She currently serves as Vice Chair of the Board of Directors and chairs the Finance Committee, where she helps guide the organization's financial stewardship and strategic planning. A tireless volunteer and generous donor, Cindy has co-authored grant applications, contributed countless hours to fundraising efforts, coordinated equipment purchases and repairs, supported event operations, managed souvenir sales, assisted in kitchen operations, and helped organize travel logistics for the corps. She and her husband, Dennis, joined the organization as parents of Kaylee Kazee, a corps member, in 2016. Her commitment to service, leadership, and the success of the Mandarins reflects a deep passion for youth development, arts education, and community engagement.

6:10 PM – 6:40 PM | Dinner Service

Guests enjoy a plated dinner while music is provided throughout the room.

SPARG II Awards Presentation Ceremony

6:40 PM Video Presentation featuring Dr. Steven Winlock

Sacramento Ballet Performance



Since 1954, Sacramento Ballet has been a beacon of artistic excellence in the California Capital Region, delivering world-class dance performances, education, and community outreach programs. A cornerstone of Sacramento's cultural community, its mission is to enhance the human condition through dance and to make it accessible to everyone.

For more Information visit: www/sacballet.org

6:55 PM – 7:20 PM | Awards Presentations, Part I

Alyssa Paoletti

Introduction by *Dennis Mangers*



Alyssa was born and raised in Sacramento. She began studying ballet at the age of seven under Founding Artistic Director Barbara Crockett before joining the Sacramento Ballet Company where she performed under Crockett and Artistic Director Ron Cunningham. After leaving Sacramento for school and a career, Alyssa returned to raise her family. Her lifelong passion for the arts naturally led her back to Sacramento Ballet. She joined the Board of Directors in 2017 and served as Co-President and then President from 2018 through 2026. Her commitment and leadership helped the company thrive through periods of unprecedented challenges. She continues to serve on the Board as Immediate Past President. For more than four decades, Alyssa and her family have generously supported Sacramento Ballet as devoted patrons and donors. She remains dedicated to ensuring that future generations can experience the joy and inspiration of dance.

The Honorable Darrell Steinberg

Introduction by *Dennis Mangers*



As Mayor of Sacramento, Darrel Steinberg committed himself to the support of the arts and culture sector in Sacramento. He launched a study of the status of the sector and retained a firm to guide the city in the development of "The Creative Edge," a five-year plan for arts education and support for the arts. He championed the complete renovation of the City's Community Center Theatre (SAFE CU Center for the Performing Arts) and exerted forceful leadership to see that it opened in time for the inaugural tour of "Hamilton." Perhaps most importantly, he provided attention and resources to arts and culture

organizations throughout the COVID shutdown, and when the pandemic passed, he devoted more of the federal relief funds received by the City to the arts than any other mayor in the country.

Celebration Arts Performance



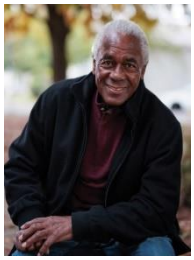
An inspiring performance by Sacramento's acclaimed Celebration Arts organization. "Celebration Arts is not just a theater. Our purpose is to provide training and performance opportunities in theater, dance and music."

For more Information www.celebrationarts.net

7:30 PM – 8:00 PM| Awards Presentations, Part II

James Wheatley

Introduction by *Dennis Mangers*



James founded the Celebration Dance Company in 1976 and brought it under the umbrella of Celebration Arts in1986. For many years, he directed the majority of the productions during our annual theater season. He is also a playwright and has notable achievements as an actor, singer and dancer, winning six Elly acting awards and an Elly for his original play, Petra. Mr. Wheatley received a Lifetime Achievement award from the Sacramento Area Regional Theatre Alliance and the Sacramento Chapter of the Links, Inc.

Michele Hillen-Noufer

Introduction by *Kathleen Davies*



Michele is the Executive Director of NorCal Arts, a nonprofit arts education organization which provides school outreach, expanded learning, camps, and performing and visual arts programming for youth. While creating paid internship opportunities for future arts educators, Michele has authored cross-sector arts curricula and provides professional development for educators throughout California. Initiating NorCal Arts community partnership with Sacramento State University, she has fostered a pipeline of future arts educators. Her commitment to arts advocacy is evident as a founding board member of the Sacramento Alliance for Regional Arts (SARA). She is also a Turnaround Arts CA (TAACA) Coach and a member of Actors' Equity Association and SAG-AFTRA.

8:00 PM – 8:30 PM | Dessert Reception & Intermission

Sacramento Gay Men's Chorus Performance



The Sacramento Gay Men’s Chorus was founded in 1984 to provide a sense of community and support to gay men in Sacramento during the AIDS epidemic. Over the years, the Sacramento Gay Men’s Chorus has grown to become an integral part of Sacramento’s LGBTQ+ and artistic communities through our musical performances and outreach programs**.** For more information: www.sacgaymenschorus.com

8:40 PM – 9:20 PM | Awards Presentations, Part III

Santiago Sabado

Introduction by *Dan Fong*



Santi is an alum of Sacramento State, Assistant Corps Director of the Mandarins, and has left his 'mark' of excellence on a number of schools and organizations. He previously held the position of Director of Bands at California State University, Sacramento, Camerado Springs Middle School, Director of Instrumental Music at Ponderosa where he served as the Visual and Performing Arts Department Chair, and Director of Music for Pioneer Union School District in Somerset, CA where he taught and coordinated all music curriculum for grades K-8. He also taught the Sacramento Mandarins Drum and Bugle Corps from 2010 to 2015 where he operated as the Brass Caption head. During the summer, Santiago has taught at the Sugarloaf Fine Arts Camp in Pollock Pines, CA. He is also founder and host of the Gold Country Jazz Festival, a non-competitive festival meant to encourage the growth of jazz programs in the community and in the region. He currently serves as the Bella Vista HS Band Director; their marching band is the 2025 Western Band Association Class 2A NorCal Regional Champion. He is a recent recipient of the CMEA Outstanding Music Educator Award (Capitol Section).

Paul Zimny

Introduction by Dan Fong



Paul is a respected educator, conductor, and drum corps leader whose influence has been felt throughout the Sacramento community for several decades. A former drum major of the Sacramento Freelancers Drum & Bugle Corps, he later became a key member of the organization's instructional leadership team. Alongside his brother, John Zimny, Paul helped guide the Freelancers' brass and visual programs throughout the 1980s and 1990s, contributing to the corps' reputation for musical excellence and competitive success. His leadership helped develop generations of young performers, many of whom went on to become educators, performers, and leaders in the marching arts. Paul has been recognized for his lasting contributions to the broader Sacramento youth music community. His impact extends beyond competitive success, reflecting a lifelong commitment to mentoring young people through music, performance, discipline, teamwork, and personal growth. Even today, Paul remains active in preserving the legacy of Sacramento drum corps through the Sacramento Freelancers Alumni Drum & Bugle Corps, where he has served as conductor for alumni performances featuring music arranged by his brother.

Mandarins Entertainment Performance



A dynamic showcase highlighting the excellence and artistry of Mandarins programs.

For more information: www.mandarins.org

9:35 PM – 10:00 PM | Fundraising Celebration

Supporting the future of youth arts education throughout our community.

Highlights

- Silent Auction Closing Announcements
- Card Pull Winners
- Live Fundraising Appeal
- Recognition of Volunteers, Staff, and Advisory Board
- Closing Remarks & Final Thanks

10:00 PM – 10:30 PM | Post-Program Reception

Continue the celebration with fellow guests and honorees.

- Music & Cocktails
- Informal Networking
- Photos with Award Recipients
- Farewell Celebration

Special thanks to our amazing support from our sponsors!

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Baldwin and Pat Wong

Garry and Marilyn Chin

Mandarins Performing Arts

TRANFORMING LIVES THROUGH PERFORMING ARTS!

Founded in **1963**, **Mandarins performing Arts** is one of Sacramento's premier youth performing arts organizations, dedicated to enriching lives through music, movement, and performance. What began as a small community-based youth group has grown into a nationally recognized organization serving thousands of young people each year through a diverse range of educational and performance programs.

Programs

Mandarins Drum & Bugle Corps – A World Class Drum Corps International ensemble providing young adults with an elite performance, leadership, and educational experience through national competition and touring.

Mandarins Music Academy – Offers music, percussion, color guard, and marching arts instruction that helps students of all ages develop artistic excellence and confidence.

Mandarins Dragon Cadet Parade Corps – Introduces elementary and middle school youth to the marching arts through music, movement, and community parade performances in a fun and supportive environment.

Mandarins Pathways – Provides percussion lessons to high school youth incarcerated

Mandarins Performing Arts Center – Serves as the organization's home for rehearsals, educational programs, performances, community events, and arts enrichment opportunities.

Scholarships and Leadership Development Programs – Provides financial assistance, mentorship, and leadership training to help young performers reach their full potential both on and off the performance field.

For more than 60 years, **Mandarins Performing Arts** have transformed young lives through performing arts, serving thousands of youth annually while fostering excellence, leadership, teamwork, and community engagement.

For More Information visit: **www.Mandarins.org**