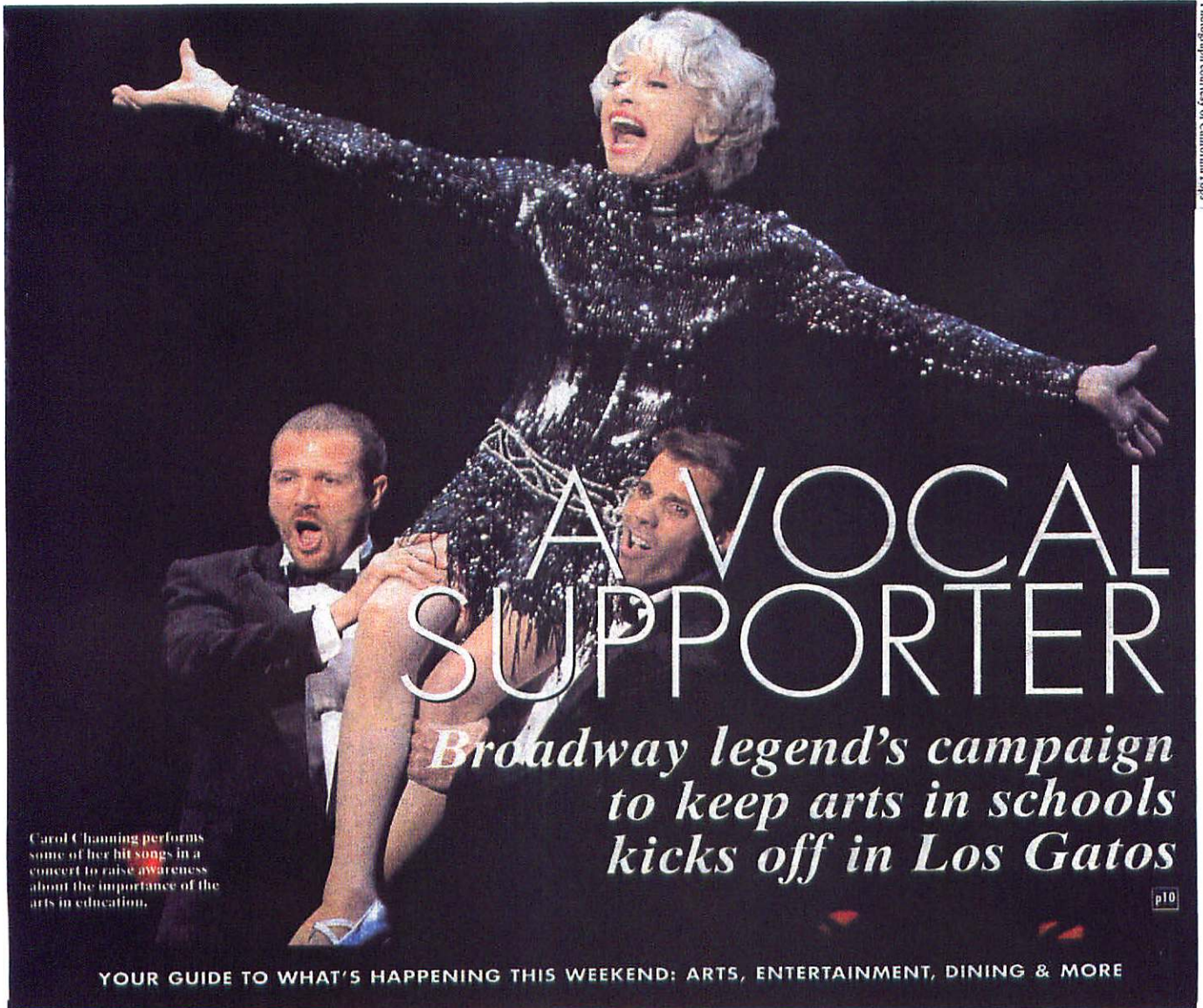


# LOS GATOS Weekender



ALSO SERVING MONTE SERENO AND SARATOGA | MARCH 13, 2009 | VOL. 2 NO. 10



Photograph courtesy of California Apps

## AVOCAL SUPPORTER

*Broadway legend's campaign  
to keep arts in schools  
kicks off in Los Gatos*

Carol Channing performs some of her hit songs in a concert to raise awareness about the importance of the arts in education.

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YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS WEEKEND: ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, DINING & MORE

# stages of life

*Carol Channing is back where she belongs  
for California Pops concert*

By HEATHER ZIMMERMAN



Photograph courtesy of California Pops Orchestra  
Carol Channing of 'Hello Dolly' fame will perform with the California Pops Orchestra on March 15 in Los Gatos.

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very great musician, actor or artist began as a student, and many of the nation's best and brightest in the arts once came from our public schools.

Stage and screen legend Carol Channing, herself an alumna of San Francisco public schools, is launching a campaign that focuses on the importance of the arts in public education.

In this economy, budget cuts may be rampant, but the message of Channing's campaign is that the arts in our schools are something we can't afford to lose.

"Oh, what it does for you—your mind just takes flight, in every subject," Channing says of the arts.

The star is teaming up with the 60-piece California Pops Orchestra to help spread the word. The campaign kicks off in Northern California with Channing and the orchestra in concert March 15, 3 p.m. at the New Venture Christian Church Theater, 16845 Hicks Road, Los Gatos.

Kim Venaas, conductor and music director of the California Pops Orchestra, says the concert will feature Channing's hits. "It's going to be all

of the tunes that Carol has been known for, so it's 'Hello, Dolly,' 'Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend,' 'Razzle Dazzle,' 'Before the Parade Passes By'—all those great tunes, and then she does such great impressions of other actors, and she'll be telling stories.

"It's a boatload of fun, it really is," Venaas says.

The concert will also feature a soft-shoe number by Channing and her husband, Harry Kullijian, who is also an alumnus of California's public school system. Channing and Kullijian were junior high school sweethearts who, after a separation of more than 70 years, were reunited and married just a few years ago. The couple has started the Dr. Carol Channing & Harry Kullijian Foundation for the Arts, which aims to raise public awareness of the importance of arts in education.

As part of the foundation's work, Channing has been starting \$10,000 scholarships at selected universities. In the fall of 2007, she established a scholarship at San Jose State University and performed a concert to benefit the scholarship fund.

Channing also gives lectures to college students. "I tell them how important the arts are, tell them how important it's been to me and tell them how achievement is the greatest thrill there is on Earth," she says.

Channing was introduced to the arts when she took dance lessons as a child. "I just loved it, and I did it in school and I taught my fellow students. I was thrilled with it, and then it opened me up to all the other arts," she says.

Growing up in San Francisco, Channing recalls, she would use her allowance to buy student-rate seats at shows that came to the city from throughout the nation and the world. And she demonstrates that she can still sing a song in Russian that she learned when she was 9 years old. In fact, Channing credits her exposure to the arts with enabling her to skip a grade in school.

"Music, everything—it makes your mind so facile in things that have no relation to the arts at all. It oils your brain as you're growing up," she says.

Accordingly, the aim of the



Photograph courtesy of California Pops Orchestra

**The 60-piece California Pops Orchestra will join forces with Carol Channing to help bring music and the arts back to California's public schools with a benefit concert in Los Gatos on March 15.**

Channing and Kullijian foundation's campaign is not necessarily to produce the next generation of artists and performers, so much as it is to ensure that the benefits that the arts bring to education are available to all public school students. Channing and Venaas point to research suggesting that an education that includes the arts results in higher grades and test scores and lower dropout rates.

"We're not trying to save music and the arts; we're trying to allow music and the arts to save our kids," Venaas says.

The March 15 concert will launch a series of similar performances throughout the state, and eventually, the foundation plans to take the awareness campaign nationwide.

Venaas says the foundation is putting together TV public service announcements featuring celebrities who will talk about the importance of the arts in education. The PSAs will begin airing statewide in May.

Channing and Kullijian have already spoken with Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and have gotten the support of the California State PTA, for which Channing will serve as the official spokesperson.

U. S. Rep. Jackie Speier is taking a letter about the foundation's awareness campaign to First Lady Michelle Obama in the hopes of encouraging support on a national level.

"The whole world has a culture, and they have art to support their culture. This is what binds society together," Kullijian says. "To allow our children to be deprived of a major part of education, which is the arts—it's the connecting link to all knowledge. If they take that away from our children, then they have deprived our children and the country."

*Tickets are \$45 general/\$100 for reserved seats and a VIP reception with Carol Channing. For more information, call 650.856.8432 or visit [www.californiapops.org](http://www.californiapops.org).*



Photograph courtesy of California Pops Orchestra

**Carol Channing and the California Pops Orchestra will offer a concert of Broadway tunes, memories and humorous stories in their upcoming show at Venture Christian Church in Los Gatos.**

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