



National Kidney Foundation Benefit Concert in Jacoby's East Room April 7

March 22 2012 8:45 AM

ALTON, IL — Green-Perkins Productions, in partnership with LIVE at Jacoby: Saturday Nights, presents a National Kidney Foundation fundraiser benefit concert featuring Retro Boogie STL Band with special guests Howard Neal and his horn section, along with Howard's daughter Olivia Neal.

Jacoby's doors open at 6 p.m., and the music begins at 7. Admission is \$10 each; a beverage cash bar and on-site food and merchandise vendors will also be available. Tickets may be purchased at Jacoby Arts Center or by contacting Ron "Poncho" Green at 618-580-4138 or Eva Perkins at 618-604-2141.

Retro Boogie is a dynamic six-piece group of entertainers. Richard Holden (bass, vocals), Pete Henderson (guitar, vocals), and Ross Blakley (keyboards, vocals) are the original members of the famed James Family and have traveled extensively throughout Europe and the United States. Derrick Byrd (drums, vocals) is one of the original members of the Infra-Red Rockers, performing Africa, Europe, and in the U.S. Rosalind Moore (vocals) and Beverly Boyd (vocals) have performed throughout the local area and have toured the United States with various groups including Mae Wheeler and Babz Robnette. They have a 20-year history of rocking the stage with their former group, PowerPlay.

Howard Neal has been involved in music for 60 years. At the age of 10 under the direction of Mr. Brewer, Neal began playing the saxophone and then moved to the instrument he was born to play – the drums. He continued to play throughout high school in Alton's Marching 100, and beyond high school into college. Neal was a member of the United States Army Band as well. His love for music deepened as he was exposed to more musicians. He later learned how to compose musical arrangements

from his mentor, Jimmy “Crack” Vaughn. That experience inspired him to create, and lead, a band of his own.

Neal has played with local and national recording artists such as Gladys Knight, Willie Akins, Freddie Washington, Gene Lynn, Buddy Miles, and Ptah Williams. In 1978, he opened his own recording studio, Shoestring Records, and his own publishing company Nikeda. From this record company, he has produced such greats as K.K. Clanton, Carletta Sue, Rod Tate, The James Family, and Phil Perry. He’s had success in Europe, Australia, England, Italy, and Germany.

Neal also enjoys playing for his church, the Greater St. James Baptist Church. He has played in Alton’s Miles Davis Jazz Festival for five years and has done several other concerts throughout the years. “Music is my life,” says Neal.

Neal’s daughter Olivia will also take the stage during the evening, of where she is no stranger. She holds a theater performance degree from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and has performed in leading roles in such plays as Uprooted, Issues of Love, Colored Museum, Intimate Apparel, Seussical, Real Life, Raisin in the Sun, Amen Corner, Meeting at the Elder Circle, The Goddess Zaoulli, and The Gospel at Colonus. She was nominated for an Irene Ryan award for her role as Esther in Intimate Apparel and was nominated as Best Comedic Actress by Arts For Life for her role in And the World Goes Round. She is a former member of the touring SIUE Jazz Ensemble, where she studied under international recording artist Reggie Thomas. She has also been in concert with national jazz recording artist Vanessa Rubin. “I am so grateful to have the opportunity to perform with my father once more at this benefit concert,” said Olivia.

Located at 627 East Broadway in Alton, Illinois, Jacoby’s hours are Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sundays from noon to 4 p.m., closed on Mondays. Jacoby Arts Center is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to foster the artistic development and economic success of artists, and to expand accessibility to the arts through programs that promote education, participation and exploration.

For more information about Jacoby Arts Center and any of its programs and services, visit our website at www.jacobyartscenter.org, email us at info@jacobyartscenter.org, call 618.462.5222, or stop in at the Center.