



ABOUT LAST NIGHT...

Last night's *Music at the Movies* lived up to Arcadia Project's mission statement: Building community through culture and creativity. We, the audience gathered, enjoyed a cultural experience together, and then learned in a deep way about the artist before us. Many left the theater a little bit changed, a little bit wiser. With a bit more wonder, and greater empathy for the journey one creator has undertaken.

(If you missed it, click the Instagram or Facebook links at the bottom of this letter for a video snippet.)

Local performer MoJo Parker picked out a film – *Crossroads* -- that was seminal to his development as a musician and as a human. Many in the audience watched it for the first time. In the discussion afterward, Mojo shared how much he identified with Ralph Macchio's character who was an "outsider" to the blues world he was trying to enter. Mojo grew up in Phoenix and as a mixed-race 12-year-old boy he felt neither part of the white world nor part of the Hispanic community in Arizona. Later, when he joined the military, *Crossroads* was the first DVD he purchased at the PX. Watching it repeatedly soothed his homesick heart -- not yet dreaming he too would one day wind up a bluesman.

When Mojo moved to Staunton nine years ago he experienced a different kind of otherness. But he chose to settle here, partly to remain close to his daughter after a divorce, and in so doing, put himself on his current musical path. After an illness that left him unable to sing for over a year, Mojo gained a "second voice." A friend heard something in that "new" voice that cried out for a blues repertoire. They began playing, jamming, and writing blues together. And like Ralph Macchio's character, Mojo's sadness and disappointments found their way into his music. To quote *Crossroads'* bluesman Willie Brown, (played by the marvelous Joe Seneca), Mojo acquired some mileage.

We created Arcadia Project in part to bridge the gap between performer and audience. To demystify the creative process. To present diverse cultural experiences not readily available in the valley. And in so doing, to bring people together in the belief that sharing our stories builds empathy and ultimately helps us improve the world we live in. When we focus on what we have in common, when we open up about our vulnerabilities, we stand a better chance of pulling together during times of adversity.

We launched *Music at the Movies* to give the community a taste of the type of programs we can offer once the Arcadia Project opens its own doors. We are eternally grateful to Adam Greenbaum at the Visulite for letting us test-run our series at his cinema. And thank you, audience, for showing us with your enthusiastic participation, that we're on the right track.

LET'S CELEBRATE OUR WINS

Arcadia Project experienced some tremendous wins this year. With your continued help, we can laugh, sing, dance, and share meaningful experiences in this uniquely local space. Our \$1.5M grant from the Industrial Revitalization Fund means we can renovate the 1936 theater. Help us furnish, light, and equip what will become a permanent home where we can welcome everyone to bring who they are. Where we can build community through culture and creativity daily -- instead of once a month. If you believe in that goal, and the vision of a Queen City where everyone can find a cultural landscape relevant to their lives, then please think of us on **Giving Thursday, November 28th.**

If you want to join our merry band of volunteers or if you have a good idea that could take place inside the space, please reply to this email.

And thank you again if you were in the audience last night. I know it's a night I'll remember for a long time.

Sincerely,

Pamela Mason Wagner
Executive Director

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT!

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