

MORRISON CENTER

RAISES THE CURTAIN ON 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

When the curtain went up on “My Fair Lady” at the Velma V. Morrison Center in 1984, it inaugurated one of Idaho’s most impressive fine arts halls. Now in its third decade, the Morrison Center is getting ready to raise the curtain on another big production — its 25th anniversary celebration.

An event on Sept. 19 will launch a series of special performances that will last through next spring. The September event will include the presentation of a lifetime achievement medallion to former Boise State President John Keiser, who was instrumental in getting the Morrison Center placed on campus.

In addition, the Center will unveil a new plaza facing the Boise River that will become the building’s front entrance. Morrison Center Executive Director Jan Zarr says the project has been more than two years in the making.

“It really will be an extension of our lobby and will open it up to the riverside,” Zarr says. Patrons will be able to have a seat before performances and during intermissions, and Zarr says that a coffee and dessert bar is part of the long-term plan. The new design even subtly incorporates the Morrison Center’s recognizable “M” logo in its railing.

Further events include performances by some of Idaho’s resident performing art companies, including the debut of one of Boise’s newest, the Trey McIntyre Project, which made its home in the Treasure Valley earlier this year. McIntyre is a celebrated choreographer who has created works for the American Ballet Theatre, the New York City Ballet, the Stuttgart Ballet and many others.

Zarr says that McIntyre’s move to Boise is part of a larger trend that has the potential to revitalize the arts in Boise. Ballet Idaho and the Boise Philharmonic, two Boise-based arts organizations that regularly perform at the Morrison Center, are under new leadership.

“It’s an interesting time,” Zarr says. “It’s a huge turnover in the arts in Boise. I’m honored that all those resident companies call us their performing arts home.”

On April 4, the Morrison Center will mark its official anniversary with a performance by jazz vocalist Sophie Milman — whom Zarr calls “the next Diana Krall” — and the Boise Philharmonic. It will be Milman’s U.S. debut with an orchestra. Other events include the Golden Dragon Acrobats on Nov. 14, “The Spencers: Theatre of Illusion” on April 17 and “Idols in Concert” on April 24.

Harry Morrison, one of the founders of the construction powerhouse Morrison-Knudsen, first thought of a world-class Boise performing arts center more than 50 years ago. After his death in 1971, his wife, Velma, called upon her friends, family and associates to realize his dream.

Boise State agreed to have the Morrison Center built on campus. The structure — which resembles the state of Idaho from the air — includes a 2,000-seat performance hall and smaller performing venues and classrooms used by Boise State, as well as various organizations from throughout the Treasure Valley.

“The community has been a huge supporter of the center for many years, and I hope it continues for many more years to come,” Zarr says.

To learn more about the Morrison Center’s 25th anniversary events, visit mc.boisestate.edu.



Dignitaries, including Velma Morrison, center, break ground for the new Morrison Center more than 25 years ago.



The center’s inaugural performance was “My Fair Lady” in April 1974.



Boise artist and alumnus Ward Hooper designed the 25th anniversary poster available for purchase through the Morrison Center.