

MUSIC TRANSFORMS

JUST ASK MEL SWEENEY & JESÚS 'CHUY' BALLOTE

By George Nevin

**M**el Sweeney and Jesús 'Chuy' Ballote don't know each other, but if they were to meet, there's one point on which they would see eye to eye.

Both of them respect and honor the transformative nature of live music, and both appreciate how live music weaves a magic far more powerful than the sounds that come out of a CD player or an iPod.

Mel was born in 1919 and grew up in San Francisco. At Mission High School, he took up the saxophone and clarinet, and he played in various bands. This is how he met his wife-to-be, **Wilma Sams**, a singer in the ROTC band.

After World War II, he supported his family (wife Wilma and five children) by working in the laundry room at the Fairmont Hotel. Later came retirement, the deaths of his wife and daughters, and his move (about seven years ago) to the Fifth Avenue Health Care Center in San Rafael.

Mel has been an avid fan of Bread & Roses ever since. "There was a young girl,

16 or 17, who sang with the most fabulous voice," he says. "It was one of the best I had heard in years."

"Live music," Mel continues, "has a completely different sound from recorded music. It opens up the heart. When a Bread & Roses performer shows up, I never miss the show."

The joy that Bread & Roses brings is profound, he says. "When these performers come, they are giving their hearts to us."

*Jesús 'Chuy' Ballote responds with enthusiasm when Bread & Roses comes to the Life Learning Academy on Treasure Island, San Francisco.*

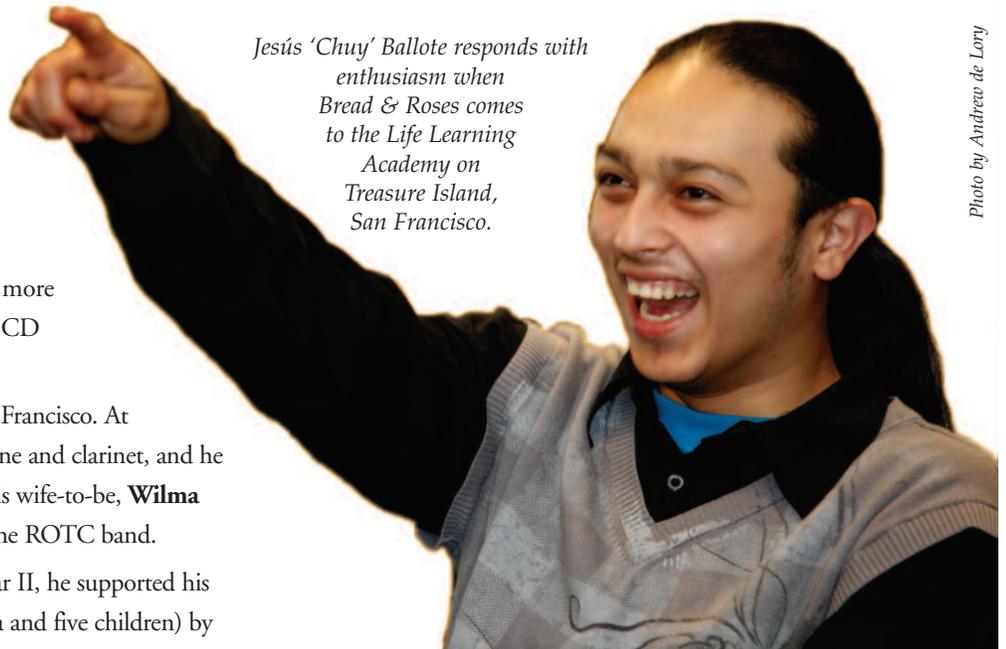


Photo by Andrew de Lory

A few miles and half a world away, Chuy, 18, sits in a small conference room at his high school, the Life Learning Academy on Treasure Island, San Francisco, to talk about the magic of music.

"Music is my motivation," he says. "I play the guitar and I like to listen to music when I'm working."

Chuy was born in Yucatan Province, Mexico, and came to the United States when he was young. Soon he found himself on a destructive path – running with gangs. "These guys were the only people I met who spoke Spanish," he says. "I was going in a direction that was not positive, and I went to jail."

There he heard about Life Learning Academy. Three years ago he enrolled and the school has changed his life.

Photo by Marian Hubler



*Mel Sweeney, Bread & Roses audience member, at Fifth Avenue Health Care Center, San Rafael.*



## A Note from Cassandra Flipper Executive Director, Bread & Roses

**W**e often talk about how satisfying it is to bring live music to seniors, especially those who are no longer able to go out to concerts or attend other live performances. Seniors make up about one-third of our audience members each year, and we take great pride in being able to bring them joy and fond memories of yesteryear. We know that song lyrics, for instance, can activate the part of the brain that controls memory and can evoke a powerful response.

At the same time, we want to recognize the incredible talent and generosity of our senior performers, many of whom have volunteered for 10, 20 or even 30 years. I'm talking about people over 70 years old like **Lucille Steele**, who sang with **Frank Sinatra**; boogie-woogie piano player **Si Perkoff**; blues queen **Barbara Dane**; Scottish songstress **Wendy Worsley**; inspirational band leader **Mal Sharpe**; **The**

**Swing Society** with **John Chase Lewis** (bass), **Chuck Lavaroni** (saxophone) and **Berni Lussier** (piano); **Everett Farey & the Artful Codgers**; and violinist **James Jenkins**, who will turn 92 in May.

We know that playing music helps one stay vital through one's later years and connect in a positive way with others. Studies have shown that learning to play a musical instrument helps to maintain mental health and slow the aging process.

We also know that the seniors who perform for us, as well as those who attend our shows, are energized and uplifted by the experience. We encourage our musician friends to keep on playing and performing for others, regardless of age.

We appreciated the Bread & Roses performance of 90-year-old **Pete Seeger** last fall at **The Redwoods**, a senior communi-



*With bow and violin in hand, James Jenkins entertains at Bread & Roses' annual volunteer recognition celebration.*

ty in Mill Valley. We also applaud the start-up **Rock the Ages Chorus** at The Redwoods, which was inspired by the **Young@Heart Chorus** of Northhampton, Mass. We hope to schedule Rock the Ages for a Bread & Roses show in the very near future.

*Cassandra*

Photo by Ken Friedman



Photo by Andrew de Lory

### *MUSIC TRANSFORMS* – continued from Page 1

"I was a really shy person when I came here," he says. "But soon I began to do good work in school. By the third semester, I was counseling new students. I told them, 'I was like you. I used to do bad things, but not any more. You need to do something to change that around.'"

A defining moment in his life came when Bread & Roses performer **Charles Moselle** stopped by last December to entertain the Life Learning students.

"His being here was like shining things in my mind. Seeing that he has so much talent, I find that I have talent, and we can network."

Moselle inspired Chuy to move forward with the music for several of his projects, including a documentary the student is doing about himself. "I've even asked Charles to help us record a song."

"Bread & Roses was a new idea for me," he says. "It has inspired my life."

"Live music was a central part of my life when I was a child," he continues. "My Mayan grandmother taught me how important music is and it really is a part of who I am."

Chuy, who plans to attend university and study business, uses music to inspire him when he is working on the business plan for his enterprise, Mayan Mind, or M Squared.

Says Life Learning teacher **Adam Yas**, "Chuy is very motivated and passionate. It makes me understand why he enjoys music so much."

Chuy adds: "I've used my love for music to turn my life around. If you hang out with friends, it's a lot of doors to jail. But stay on the plus side and there will be opportunities. Just stay motivated."

Although Mel and Chuy lead very different lives, their stories remind us that the powerful healing effects of music can sustain us for a lifetime. In the words of neurologist **Oliver Sacks**, "Music is much more than a beautiful luxury: It is a fundamental way of expressing our humanity – and it is often our best medicine."

# It's Our Nature – Happy to Say, 'Thank You'

By Elizabeth Share

At Bread & Roses we have a culture of gratitude. We are grateful for so many things: the wonderful individuals we serve and the devoted agency staff who care for them year-round; the performers who share their time and talent so generously; and having jobs that allow us to do such meaningful work. And we are incredibly grateful to you, our supporters, because none of what we accomplish would be possible without you.

It is our privilege to offer our thanks to all of you whose gifts made possible our work from **July 1, 2009, through December 31, 2009.**

## Listen to the Music

In October 2009, Bread & Roses had the great honor of being one of four beneficiaries of the **B.R. Cohn Charity Music Festival** at the beautiful **B.R. Cohn Winery** in Sonoma Valley. The concert series, headlined this year by our good friends **The Doobie Brothers**, and **Journey**, is a truly gorgeous example of the healing power of live music.

With this honor, **Bruce Cohn**, founder of the winery and the concert series, and



Photo Courtesy B.R. Cohn

*Bruce Cohn, founder of the B.R. Cohn Charity Music Festival, which benefited Bread & Roses.*

longtime Bread & Roses friend, gave us an opportunity to raise money, connect with old and new friends, and sustain our program's momentum in spite of this very challenging economy.

Bruce's invitation for us to participate in his event could not have come at a more meaningful time and we offer our deepest thanks to him, his dedicated concert production team led by **Jonnie McCormick**, and all the musicians who donated their talent to set the stage for another year of fabulous Bread & Roses performances.

## Gifts of the Heart

This year **Sudha Pennathur**, our former Board member and very dear friend, produced the Sixth Annual Sudha Sale on behalf of Bread & Roses and The Redwoods in November 2009.

Sudha's generosity is legendary. She works tirelessly year-round to cull items from her exclusive designs for the sale, to stage and graciously host the sale, and she donates the net event proceeds. With all our hearts, we offer Sudha our thanks.

We would also like to thank **Stan Hoffman** and his team for providing beautiful retail space to us at the fabulous Corte Madera Town Center.

## Fall Appeal

Our thanks to our Board Chair **Susan Gilardi** and her husband, **Dennis**, for kicking our Fall Appeal into high gear with a



Photo by Peter Merits

*Designer and Bread & Roses donor Sudha Pennathur displays her finely crafted necklaces at the Sixth Annual Sudha Sale.*

challenge grant of \$50,000.

Susan leads Bread & Roses in a most personal way – poring over our financials to ensure we remain as accountable as we are effective, meeting with staff so that she truly understands our day-to-day challenges and triumphs, attending institutional shows regularly so that the joy of our audience members is never far from her heart, and taking every action she can to demonstrate her profound commitment to our success.

The Gilardis' challenge grant inspired many of you to give this year and we are profoundly grateful to you for meeting their challenge.

To view the complete list of donors to our Fall Appeal, please visit us at [www.breadandroses.org/fallappeal](http://www.breadandroses.org/fallappeal)

## May the Circle Be Unbroken ...

Last fall, we sent a special appeal to facilities we serve asking for their support. As you know, we do not charge for our services, but the following partners in our work generously stepped forward to show their appreciation for the love and joy we

*continued on next page*

## 'A Whole Lotta Love' at Teatro ZinZanni

**O**n March 16, 2010, Bread & Roses presented "A Whole Lotta Love" – A Bread & Roses Benefit Concert to help us fulfill our mission of sharing hope and healing through live music.

Huge thanks to our dear friend **Tom (Doobie Brothers) Johnston** and daughter **Lara** for presenting a "twice blessed" performance that made all of us forget our troubles and remember our blessings.

Heartfelt thanks also to **Mark**

**Hummel and the Blues Survivors** for chasing our blues away with an energy-packed, heart-opening, get-your-mojo-working set with special guests **Elvin Bishop, Nick Gravenites, Charlie Musselwhite** and **Boz Scaggs**.

Board members **Tucky Pogue** and **Katie Smith** were not only Event Co-Chairs but also stepped up as the event's first sponsors. We are grateful that they were joined by Lead Sponsors: **Susan and Dennis Gilardi** and **Bank of The**

**West**; Show Stopper: **Mary Alice Kirincic (Impact Corner Life Coaching)**; and Patrons: **Jacqui and Christian Erdman** and **Nion McEvoy**.

Hugs and a standing ovation to our dear friend, volunteer and donor **Ken Harrison** for being the first to purchase tickets to the event! Way to kick it off, Ken!

For more about "A Whole Lotta Love," visit us at [www.breadandroses.org](http://www.breadandroses.org).

*continued from previous page*

Photo by Andrew de Lory



*The audience at The Redwoods in Mill Valley for the recent Pete Seeger concert (see page 5).*

bring to their clients:

**Center for Elders' Independence (CEI), Henry Ohloff House, Lifelong Medical Care, Marin**

**Convalescent and Rehabilitation Center, Mission YMCA Senior Center, Nazareth House of San Rafael, The Rafael, The Redwoods, St. Anne's Home, St. Anthony's Foundation/Madonna Senior Center.** Our thanks to all of them for their generosity and collaboration.

### You Can Count on Me

In the fall of 2005, Bread & Roses hosted a special luncheon at the **St. Francis Yacht Club**. During the past six months, the following people fulfilled their five-year pledges of support made to us on that day – **Ginny Fifield, Lorry and Jack Luikart,** and **J. Gregory Swendsen**. Thank you for your generosity so long ago and in every year since!

### Donor-Advised Funds/Family, Community & Corporate Foundations

Please join us in offering thanks to the following foundations for their very generous investments in our work during this period: **Baele Family Trust, Jennifer Peak Barker Family Fund, Cow Hollow Foundation, Lawrence M. Gelb Foundation,**

**Nancy G. and Robert C. Harris Fund, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Katz Family Foundation** and **Louis R. Lurie Foundation.**

Also, **Macy's Foundation, Marin Community Foundation, Moss Foundation, Schwab Charitable Fund** (on behalf of **Laura and David Percy**), **Silva Watson Moonwalk Fund, Thomas J. Long Foundation, Irene S. Scully Family Foundation** and **The Swig Foundation.**

### Board of Directors

Our Board members attend meetings, participate in committees, make calls, write letters and make generous gifts to support our work. We wish to thank them all for their enthusiasm, generosity and remarkable commitment.



*Board member, volunteer performer, host and donor Sandy Popovich (at piano) entertains at her home where she hosted the annual volunteer host dinner, with Bread & Roses staff Kurt Huget and Carolyn Gauthier.*

Photo by Peter Merts

**Board & Staff Changes**

Many thanks to **Merl Saunders, Jr.**, who served Bread & Roses for six years as a Board member and who has been a volunteer for more than 30 years. During his Board tenure, Merl was a member of the Retail-Etail and Program Committees, and the Talent Task Force, on which he also served as chair. We are grateful for his sharing of his music industry expertise and his support for our mission. We wish him well with future endeavors.

A fond farewell to East Bay Program Associate **Carmen Marie Coleman**, who has decided to relocate back to her hometown of Denver, Colo., to be closer to her family. A valued member of the program staff for more than two years, Carmen was instrumental in helping Bread & Roses grow its base of volunteer performers and hosts in the East Bay. She will be missed for her bright smile and beautiful voice, which graced many Bread & Roses institutional shows, as well as our 2009 benefit event.

**Thank You, Volunteers!**

It is with gratitude that we share the list of all whose volunteer contributions made our work possible during the period of January 1, 2009, through December 31, 2009. To see the list, visit: [www.breadandroses.org/volunteers](http://www.breadandroses.org/volunteers)

**90-Year-Old Folk Icon Pete Seeger Still Bringing Down the House**

Photo by Andrew de Lory



*Pete Seeger with grandson Tao Rodriguez-Seeger in a concert for Bread & Roses and The Seniors for Peace at The Redwoods.*

Iconic folk singer **Pete Seeger** and his grandson, **Tao Rodriguez-Seeger**, thrilled the house at **The Redwoods** senior community in Mill Valley in September in a show sponsored by Bread & Roses and **Mill Valley Seniors for Peace**.

The hour-long set by the 90-year-old legend and his 37-year-old grandson featured several sing-alongs that captivated the enthusiastic audience of 250.

The concert was one of more than 600 programs Bread & Roses produces for isolated individuals throughout the Bay Area each year.



Photo by Peter Merts

*Norton Buffalo gives it his all at a harmonica workshop for Bread & Roses at San Quentin.*

**In Memoriam**

Our good friend **Norton Buffalo** succumbed to lung cancer on October 30, 2009. He was a one-of-a-kind performer, a brilliant musician and a funny guy. Norton was blessed with boundless energy, good humor and inspiration, which he readily shared with everyone he met.

His support for Bread & Roses goes back to the days of the legendary Greek Theatre benefit concerts. Throughout the years, he was always willing to lend a hand to help us out with a benefit show or institutional performance. Norton generously found time for Bread & Roses in his busy schedule, which included touring and recording with the **Steve Miller Band**, the **Doobie Brothers** and **Bonnie Raitt**, among others.

**BREAD & ROSES**

**Board of Directors**

- Susan Gilardi, Chair*
- Tucky Pogue, Vice Chair*
- Toby Nady, Secretary*
- Kathy Grogan, Treasurer*
- Jim Callahan*
- Patricia Dedekian*
- Jocelyn Kane*
- Paul E. Kirincic*
- James R. Kennedy*
- Katy McGovern*
- David Phillips*
- Sandy Popovich*
- Katie Smith*
- Barbara Solomon*

**Staff**

- Cassandra Flipper, Executive Director*
- Elissa Burke, Administrative Coordinator*
- Carolyn Gauthier, Program Director*
- Dan Gronwald, Development Associate*
- Marian Hubler, Producer/Public Relations Manager*
- Kurt Huget, Producer*
- Janet Lewis, Accountant*
- Elizabeth Share, Development Director*
- Lisa Starbird, Program Assistant*
- Mimi Fariña, Founder*

- Editor/Writer – George Nevin*
- Staff Editor/Writer – Marian Hubler*
- Contributing Writers –*
- Cassandra Flipper, Elizabeth Share*

- Bread & Roses Newsletter
- Issue 66 • Spring 2010
- Published Semi-Annually
- Printed by WIGT Online on recycled paper

Issue 66 Spring 2010

233 Tamalpais Drive, Suite 100  
Corte Madera, CA 94925  
(415) 945-7120  
[www.breadandroses.org](http://www.breadandroses.org)



Sign up for E-news  
& spare your mailbox.  
Visit [www.breadandroses.org](http://www.breadandroses.org).

## Join the Conversation and Help Us Grow Online

**B**read & Roses invites you to join our dialogue and grow our community online.

We want more people to learn about our work – hope and healing through live music.

### Through social media we can:

- Explain our mission in words, photos and videos.
- Recruit volunteers.
- Raise money to support our mission.
- Raise awareness about the people and institutions we serve.

### Here are some ways you can help:

- Follow Bread & Roses on *Twitter*.
- Join our Cause on *Facebook*.
- Invite your *Facebook* friends to become fans of Bread & Roses online.
- Write online reviews on **GreatNonprofits.org**.

Last, but not least, we encourage you to send us your favorite



*The Bread & Roses Home Page on Facebook.*

Bread & Roses story – as a volunteer, donor or audience member. Submit it to [info@breadandroses.org](mailto:info@breadandroses.org). We will be posting some of these stories on the blog on our website so visit often at [www.breadandroses.org](http://www.breadandroses.org).

Thanks for helping us make more people aware of our mission and the people we serve. It means a lot to us!