

Raue invites Tufano to 10th birthday party

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September 17, 2010 **Section:** Sidetracks

CRYSTAL LAKE –The **Raue** Center for the Arts once again will kick off a new season in a big way. The center – which has become a draw for the city’s downtown – opens its 10th season Saturday with Dennis **Tufano** singing the music of ’60s great Bobby Darin in his show, “As Long As I’m Singing.” In Chicago just for the **Raue** opening, the 64-year-old **Tufano** credits Darin for his career. “As a teenager I was inspired by Bobby Darin on the radio,” said **Tufano**, of Los Angeles.

“I saw him on ‘The Dick Clark Show’ and he was doing ‘Splish Splash’ in a cardboard cutout bathtub.”

With a 13-piece orchestra, **Tufano**’s hour-and-a-half show traces Darin’s career, singing his songs in the order they were released, and ending the show with a Las Vegas nightclub act.

“The story behind this man is so intriguing,” said **Tufano**, former lead singer of The Buckingham. Darin, who crooned “Mack the Knife” and “Dream Lover,” died at age 37 of heart problems.

“People of all ages come up to me after my shows,” said **Tufano**, who said 70 percent of his show is classic ’60s rock and 30 percent Darin’s music. “I find even the young people are very into it.”

Michael Acosta will provide musical supervision for the show, while Ernie Lane directs. Comedian Tim Walkoe, grand prize-winner on “America’s Funniest People,” will open for **Tufano**.

The big-name show continues the tradition of opening with a bang, said Amy Malpica, director of marketing for the **Raue**. The center’s first opening show, with comedian Bill Cosby, was postponed because of the events of 9/11, she recalled.

“In some ways, we’re still the same,” she said of the performances

the center draws each year, adding the 10th season already is booked through May. "We have a lot of performers who want to come to Crystal Lake to perform at the **Raue**."

Among this year's events are Arlo Guthrie on Oct. 23 and a Night of the Living Dead Royalty Edition Oct. 29-30, featuring Michael Jackson and Elvis Presley impersonators. A pre-show Halloween costume contest also is planned. The New Shanghai and The 39 Steps also are scheduled this season.

With local schools facing financial crisis, the **Raue**'s Mission Imagination Program, where students are bused to the center for performances at a cut rate, and its Residency program, where performers travel to the schools, are more important than ever, Malpica said.

New this year is the in-house Williams Street Repertory Company, which will help produce shows and eventually put on theatrical performances of its own. "It's where we can build shows around actors and designers in our community," Malpica said.

The WSR will assist in production of the one-man theatrical performance out of Moscow, "I Am the Machine Gunner," which will have its Chicago premier Oct. 9-10 at the **Raue**.

The play is about a Russian gang member, Malpica said. "It's poetic, it's dark – it's definitely 18 or older."

Despite the recession, she said, the **Raue** still draws a packed crowd. "This year we're expecting to do even better because we have such a big season planned," she said.

Opening Night of the **Raue** Center for the Arts 10th Season

When: Saturday, 6:30 p.m., pre-show opening night party; 7:30 p.m., Dennis **Tufano** in "As Long As I'm Singing," featuring the music of Bobby Darin

Where: 26 N. Williams St., Crystal Lake

Tickets: \$50, \$47, \$44 at 815 356-9212 or www.rauecenter.org

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