

FALL ARTS POP MUSIC



“Music has dramatically increased my sense of community.”

HOWARD LIPIN U-T

Guitarist Serena Geroe, 16, says her favorite part of playing jazz is the connections she makes with other musicians and the audience.

Serena Geroe

BY GEORGE VARGA

Serena Geroe is a 16-year-old Carlsbad jazz and funk guitarist. She is a student at San Diego’s Young Lions Jazz Academy and a junior at Canyon Crest Academy. In addition to her frequent Wednesday night appearances at Panama 66 in Balboa Park, she will perform Oct. 1 at noon at the Adams Avenue Street Fair with the Ambassadors of Soul, a band led by Slightly Stoopid trombonist Andy Geib.

What do you love most about your craft?
My favorite part of playing jazz is the connections I make with other people. Whether part of the band or the audience, this music thrives off of creativity, spontaneity and dialogue. That’s also part of why I enjoy being part of the rhythm section — I get to participate in this dialogue both from

the standpoint of an accompanist and a soloist.
Music has dramatically increased my sense of community. Through jazz, I have met people from around my city, the state, the nation, and even the world. I have had the pleasure of doing this through participating in various camps such as the UCSD Jazz Camp, Francis Parker Sum-

mer Jazz Workshop, Sacramento Traditional Jazz Camp and Berklee College of Music Guitar Sessions, as well as being part of the California All-State Junior High Jazz Band in 2015.
In addition, I have interned with the Museum of Making Music, where I have been able to play music with people from around the world who I cannot even speak with due to a language barrier. Despite that barrier, however, music serves as a second language that has allowed me to communicate with other people in ways that perhaps even spoken language does not allow.
Besides music, name an artistic or cultural endeavor that inspires you here in San Diego.
Visual art is really inspiring. I think that I find it so interesting, in part, because I have grown up surrounded by it: my mother is an impressionist and my house is adorned with her wonderful paintings of California’s landscapes. Thus, from a young age

she would take me to art museums and exhibits around San Diego. We periodically visit the San Diego Museum of Art, and I am always amazed by the diversity of art in terms of color, movement, feeling and shape. It is fascinating how a two-dimensional painting can render so much movement and emotion.
I am also very interested and inspired by how different art forms interact with, and influence, each other. For example, every week at Gilbert Castellanos’ jam session at Panama 66, there are really amazing artists that come out and paint or draw the band. When I see their art, I am always entranced by how they capture the liveliness and upbeat atmosphere in one image.
Is there an artistic or cultural event that you’re looking forward to this season?
Yes! Every year, Gilbert Castellanos brings some of the world’s best musicians to San Diego for his Jazz @ The Jacobs concert series, and I am thrilled that Chick Corea and the Jazz at

Lincoln Center Orchestra will be part of the series. I really admire Chick Corea’s work because of his incredible ability to blend various genres of music. He has been so influential across such a wide range of music, and has found a way to merge what he has played with other musicians, from Stan Getz to Keith Jarrett, with whom he performed Mozart’s Concerto for Two Pianos & Orchestra in E-flat Major, K. 365.
I am inspired by Chick Corea because I am also interested in ways to blend different genres of music — especially jazz, funk and blues. These three genres have influenced me very much, and I enjoy incorporating aspects of each into whatever I play. The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra is a fantastic ensemble, and I enjoy listening to their concerts online whenever I can. While listening to the orchestra online is amazing, I am very excited to hear it live with Chick Corea. The concert should be unforgettable!

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Ambassadors of Soul, featuring Serena Geroe

Noon Oct. 1. Adams Avenue Street Fair, DeMille’s Groove Stage, 3492 Adams Ave, Normal Heights. adamsavenuebusiness.com/event-info/adams-avenue-street-fair