

EAST BAY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
HOME FRONT FESTIVAL FEATURED ARTISTS 2019

George Cole



Singer and breakneck acoustic guitarist **George Cole** lives in a musical world all his own.... a world in which Django Reinhardt, The Ramones, Nat King Cole and Doc Watson get equal billing with Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, Willie Nelson and the Great American Songbook. Cole currently occupies the guitar chair for the David Grisman Quintet and has 2 releases on Grisman's highly regarded Acoustic Disc Label. George was guitar teacher and mentor to Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Inductees Billie Joe Armstrong and Mike Dirnt of Green Day for 10 years in the East Bay. Cole, a San Francisco native and BAMMIE award winner brings an expertise to his guitar playing and singing that is filtered through Rock and Roll, Gypsy Jazz and All things American. The music he makes brings to mind the old adage "Everything Old Is New Again". David Grisman tapped Cole to play on his most recent Sextet record and Cole in turn featured Grisman on his release "George Cole Live". Jazz legend Keely Smith handpicked Cole to play guitar and sing duets with her on her last tour. Chris Isaak also had Cole lay down guitar tracks on his platinum selling Forever Blue release. Cole is currently performing at festivals, performing arts centers, top nightclubs, and vintage theaters. Watch and listen for yourself!

TIFFANY AUSTIN



With the June 1st release of her new CD, "Unbroken," Tiffany Austin further solidifies her standing as one of the leading vocalists on the current international jazz scene. Austin was propelled onto the national stage in 2016 when her debut recording, "Nothing But Soul," received rave reviews from media outlets such as DownBeat and NPR's Fresh Air, as well as airplay on jazz radio stations across the U.S. With her sophomore CD "Unbroken," Austin has raised her artistry to a higher level both conceptually and musically. Her silky smooth voice has gained an earthy smokiness and a gravitas ideally suited to expressing her broadening, deepening artistic vision. (*Music News Desk*)

HOWARD WILEY



When it's time to get a party started, Howard Wiley gets the call. The Oakland saxophonist has been a mainstay on the Bay Area music scene since he was a teenager in Richmond, and at 39 he's taken up the mantle of his mentors, playing soul-steeped jazz palpably connected to its roots as social music. Impossible to pigeonhole, Wiley can generate blowtorch heat in just about any context. Wiley hasn't released an album under his own name since 2010's acclaimed "12 Gates to the City," a project that delved deeply into spirituals gleaned from Angola, the notorious Louisiana State Penitentiary. More recently, East Bay Center commissioned Wiley to compose "Richmond Second Line," which was premiered at the Center on July 21, 2018. (*The Mercury News*)

JOE ORRACH



“Tap is the most important dance in America. It’s like jazz; it says things deeply,” says multi-faceted artist and teacher Joe Orrach, creator of a new brand of tap dance-theater that he performs locally and internationally in Paris and Shanghai. Originally trained as a boxer, Orrach’s trainer suggested he take ballet to improve his footwork. While performing as a street dancer on a wooden board on Columbus and 72nd Street in New York City, he was discovered by Gregory Hines. Orrach soon took his act from the street to the stage, performing at Home for Contemporary Theatre and Arts in Tribeca, on Star Search, and with Liza Minnelli and Savion Glover. (*Theatre Bay Area*)

ARTEMIO POSADAS



Artemio Posadas was one of eight 2016 National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellows, as well as recipient of the 2016 Bess Lomax Hawes Fellowship "in recognition of an individual who has made a significant contribution to the preservation and awareness of cultural heritage." He was born in San Luis Potosí, Mexico, where he discovered son huasteco, regional music punctuated with poetic, instrumental and dance improvisation and falsetto breaks. A tremendous influence for generations, Posadas has taught musicians and dancers in the US and Mexico for over 40 years. In May 2018, he received an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from San Jose State University.