



GIA MAIONE PRIMA FOUNDATION STUDIO THEATRE OPENS

A DAY-LONG CELEBRATION OF DANCE, featuring the music of Louis and Gia Maione Prima, marked the dedication of the Gia Maione Prima Foundation Studio Theatre at the Jay and Linda Grunin Center for the Arts on Saturday, March 19.

Gia Maione Prima (1941-2013), a New Jersey native, was a singer and devotee of the fine arts, and the widow of famous jazz musician, singer and composer Louis Prima. In 2011, with assistance from her long-time friend and counsel, Anthony J. Sylvester of Sherman Wells Sylvester & Stamelman, LLP, she established the Gia Maione Prima Foundation to support and encourage appreciation for American jazz, popular music and jazz performance, as well as the fine arts.

Events celebrating the dedication of the black box theatre began with a performance from Carolyn Dorfman Dance in the world premiere of *PRIMA!*, with music highlighting the five-decade career of Louis Prima and his band. The afternoon also featured a performance by the Ocean County College

Dance Club, highlighting dance students of Ocean County College, and *Clairvoyant*, performed by the Grunin Performing Arts Academy Dance students and choreographed by Jessica Totaro.

An evening cocktail reception in the Grunin Performing Arts Academy lobby was followed by a performance from Louis Prima, Jr. and the Witnesses right next door on the Main Stage at the Grunin Center. Louis Prima, Jr., the son of Louis Prima and Gia Maione Prima, expressed his delight at performing in Toms River, his mother's hometown. Prima himself spent many childhood summers at the Jersey Shore, he told the crowd. He and his band performed several of his parents' most popular and memorable songs during the show, including "Sing, Sing, Sing," "I Wanna Be Like You," and "Jump, Jive and Wail."

The outstanding event was made possible through the support of the Gia Maione Prima Foundation in partnership with the Ocean County College Foundation, Ocean County College, and Ocean County Vocational Technical School Performing Arts Academy.



photo: Louis Prima Jr. & The Witnesses



photo: Carolyn Dorfman Dance



photo: Marco Palos, Anthony Sylvester, A.D. Adams



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