

BENISE BRINGS 'SPANISH NIGHTS' TO SOUTH FLORIDA

In a flurry of flamenco and a flourish of fire, Emmy-award winning guitar virtuoso Benise returns to South Florida for two shows – at 2 p.m. Feb. 26 at the Mizner Park Amphitheater, 590 Plaza Real, in Boca Raton, and at 8 p.m. Feb. 25 at the Miami Dade County Auditorium, with a new show called “Spanish Nights.”

The All-American Midwestern farm boy transformed himself into “The Prince of Spanish Guitar,” and got his start playing on the streets of Santa Barbara 15 years ago.

“Thanks to our fans who bought our albums and CDs, we found our niche,” said Benise from his home in California. “The band has grown to become a 26-piece band, we’ve add-

ed dancers and this year there will be more flamenco music.”

“We were so well received last year in Boca, I can’t wait to come back in February,” he said. “This year it’s a kid-friendly show, so I hope parents will come with their kids. We’ll inspire them.”

His show takes the audience on a musical adventure through Spanish Flamenco, Cuban Salsa, Brazilian Samba, Argentine Tango, Indian Bollywood, Parisian Waltz and African drumming. The show is a blend of Benise’s passion for Spanish guitar and rock ‘n’ roll.

In Spanish Nights, classic songs from Led Zeppelin, The Rolling Stones, AC/DC and The Eagles are combined with Spanish guitar and

dance. His fifth PBS special will air later this year.

He personally hand-picked the gitanas, the dancers in “Spanish Nights.”

Naraya Nunoz is one of those dancers. Originally from Cuba, she studied dance at the National School of Art in Havana, and after emigrating to California, was selected on her second audition.

“I love dancing in Benise’s shows,” she said. “It’s a great opportunity for me to express myself using Latin dance. I’ve traveled all over the world with Benise and we’ve all become a big family.”

Much of the theatrics of the show can be credited in part to choreographer Alexandre Magno, who taught

Benise his stage moves.

“We work together as a collaboration, but I helped Benise transition from a band to a theatrical experience and stage presence,” he said. “I helped him with staging and how to connect with the Latin rhythms and to make a dramatic entrance.”

Tickets range from \$25 to \$95 per person and are available at tinyurl.com/gtnbsnp. A special VIP Experience package is offered at \$95 per person to include premiere seating in the first three rows; a private sound check experience; meet and greet with Benise; photo opportunities with Benise; and personally autographed “Strings of Passion” CD set.

Visit benise.com.

continued from 20

.com
Mandel JCC Book Festival: Bagels & Books Series

Book: Irene’s Children by Tilar J. Mazzeo. From the New York Times best-selling author of *The Widow Clicquot* comes an extraordinary and gripping account of Irena Sendler – the “female Oskar Schindler” – who took staggering risks to save 2,500 children from death and deportation in Nazi-occupied Poland during World War II. Series Tickets for 4 Bagels & Books: \$45 Literary Society Reader Level; \$55 Guest Individual Tickets: \$12 Literary Society Reader Level; \$15 Guest. 10 a.m. The Mandel JCC Palm Beach Gardens, 5221 Hood Road. JCCOnline.com/bookfestival

XANADU

The show follows the journey of a magical and beautiful Greek muse, Kira, who descends from the heavens of Mt. Olympus to Venice Beach, California in 1980. She is on a quest to inspire a struggling artist, Sonny, to achieve the greatest artistic creation of all time - the first Roller Disco. 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday; 2 p.m. Saturday-Sunday. Crest Theatre, Old School Square, 51 N. Swinton Ave., Delray Beach. \$22 and \$52. oldschoolsquare.org.

Macular Disease Association of Boynton Beach

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