



David Hegarty touts extraordinary new Castro Theatre organ

By Leslie Katz
S.F. Examiner Staff Writer

Organist David Hegarty is well on his way to playing a new, massive one-of-kind instrument being built just for San Francisco's historic Castro Theatre.

"The console, the control panel, everything that you see, is done," says the veteran musician, who performs almost daily at the Castro (on a loaner organ) and is hosting an event at the theater on Sunday to provide an update on the years-in-the-making project.

So far, about \$400,000 toward a \$1 million goal has been collected for the Castro Symphonic Theatre Organ, which is under construction by West Virginia master organ designer and builder Allen Harrah.

With 400 pipes, seven manuals (keyboards), more than 800 stop tabs, 120 speakers installed in the



COURTESY PHOTO

**IF YOU GO:
An Organ-ic Experience**

Where: Castro Theatre, 429 Castro St., S.F.
When: 5 to 6:30 p.m. June 10
Admission: Free, donations requested
Contact: www.castroorgan.org

For years, David Hegarty has been planning for the Castro's huge new organ.

theater and a digital system that replicates sounds of a full orchestra, the instrument, when completed, will be the world's largest hybrid organ,

capable of producing popular, theatrical and classical music.

Calling it his friend Harrah's "magnum opus," and acknowledging hundreds of hours he has donated to the project, Hegarty adds, "I can say, unequivocally, it will be the most versatile organ in the world."

With a goal of installing the instrument in April 2019, Hegarty and members of the nonprofit Castro Organ Devotees Association (which was established upon anticipating the loss of the aging 30-year old "Mighty" Wurlitzer, which was taken out of the Castro in 2015) are feeling a "sense of urgency" about fundraising efforts.

They note that the CODA project is completely independent of the Nasser family, which has owned the beloved 1,400-seat Castro Theatre — but not the organ — since the days of silent film.

"After five years of construction work on the project, I look forward to actually playing the entire repertoire on the instrument. It's going to be a sonic experience beyond anything people have experienced, from quiet romantic music, to thunderous dynamics — it will fill the room like no one can imagine," says Hegarty, an organist since age 15 who came to The City in the 1970s (and moved from Noe Valley to Vallejo less than a year ago).

On Sunday, he'll show a video on the status of the organ campaign, as well as play a "detailed" concert of standard theatrical repertory, no doubt including his signature — the theme to the 1936 movie "San Francisco" — a tune he's played thousands of times at the Castro.

Entertaining, educational flicks at 17th DocFest

By Anita Katz
Special to S.F. Examiner

It's not too late to check out the 2018 DocFest, SF IndieFest's coolly eclectic showcase for nonfiction cinema.

Running through June 14 at the Roxie, Brava and New People theaters in The City, the 17th edition of DocFest, officially called the San Francisco Documentary Film Festival, features more than 80 films from around the Bay Area and the world — some serious and some more entertaining than most Hollywood comedies.

Here's a brief look at select highlights; film screen at the Roxie unless noted otherwise.

SPECIAL ATTRACTIONS

Agave-The Spirit of a Nation: The festival's closing feature, directed by Nick Kovacic, examines the history of tequila and mezcal along with the popularity of these drinks made from the agave plant. (9:15 p.m. June 10 at New People; 7:15 p.m. June 14 at Roxie)

Rodents of Unusual Size: The festival's centerpiece feature looks at the beaver-sized, orange-toothed swamp rats called nutria that have become environmentally hazardous in the Louisiana swamplands; Bay Area filmmakers Quinn Costello, Chris Metzler and Jeff Springer introduce nutria hunters, nutria cuisine, a pet nutria on its owner's lap — and more. (5 p.m. June 9)

LOCAL FILMMAKERS

Adios Amor-The Search for Maria Moreno: Filmmaker Laurie Coyle profiles Moreno — the migrant mother and farmworker who became the first woman in the nation to be hired as a union organizer — and investigates why she suddenly disappeared from the scene. (7:15 p.m. June 8 and 12:30 p.m. June 9)

Atomic City: Part Errol Morris, part 1950s sci-fi and part cinematic poem, David McMurry's 27-minute film (screening with the longer doc "The Quiet Zone") transports viewers to Arco, Idaho — the first city ever lit with atomic power. (5 p.m. June 9, 7:15 p.m. June 12)

Freaks and Geeks-The Documentary: Filmmaker Brent Hodge explores the making of the short-lived but highly regarded TV series about what high school is truly like. Seth Rogen, Jason Segel, Busy Philipps and Judd Apatow are among those reminiscing.



COURTESY PHOTO

The beautifully photographed "Point of No Return" tells the dramatic story of the first solar-powered flight across the world.

IF YOU GO: DocFest

Where: Roxie, 3117 16th St., Brava, 2781 24th St., New People, 746 Post St., S.F.
When: Daily, through June 14
Tickets: \$13 to \$15
Contact: www.sfindie.com

(9:30 p.m. June 8)

Point of No Return: Directors Quinn Kanaly and Noel Dockstader take viewers behind the scenes of a risky and spectacular human achievement: the first solar-powered flight around the world; impressive cinematography includes overhead views of the Egyptian pyramids and the Golden Gate. (7:15 p.m. June 9 and June 13)

ALSO NOTABLE

Elephant Path — Njaja Njoku: This world-premiere doc spotlights the work of four individuals from different backgrounds who are devoted to stopping the poaching of elephants in the Central African Republic. (12:30 p.m. June 10, 9:30 p.m. June 12)

Instant Dreams: Award-winning Dutch documentarian Willem Baptist explores the history of the Polaroid photo, and the continued love users feel for the analog-era brand of photography, in a visual essay. (9:30 p.m. June 10 and June 14)

Owned-A Tale of Two Americas: This social journey traces housing-related inequality back to the postwar years, when racial bias was institutionalized in the U.S. housing market. (2:45 p.m. June 9 and 9:30 p.m. June 13)

Roller Dreams: This film revisits the 1984 scene in Venice Beach, Calif., where young people of color created roller dancing, a trend that attracted large crowds and influenced white entertainment but fell victim to politics and gentrification. (7:15 p.m. June 8, 9:30 p.m. June 13)



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