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**The Guitar Center Music Foundation holds successful fundraiser gala event to benefit music education and therapy programs**

— *One-night-only exclusive event at The Canyon in Agoura Hills, CA, honored the legendary Pete “Pops” Escovedo and local music teachers and featured The E Family, performances from Macy Gray, Robby Krieger of The Doors, Judith Hill, Brian O’Neal of The BusBoys and John “JR” Robinson as music director* —

**WESTLAKE VILLAGE, Calif., April 27, 2023 —** The [Guitar Center Music Foundation](http://guitarcenterfoundation.org/) (GCMF), a non-profit charity organization focused on granting instruments to music education and music therapy programs, recently held a successful fundraiser gala. Taking place March 30, 2023, at The Canyon in Agoura Hills, CA, the event honored the career of legendary percussionist Pete “Pops” Escovedo as well as the invaluable efforts of local music teachers. A capacity crowd was in attendance, enjoying the evening’s festivities and helping the Foundation raise thousands of dollars in new funds. GCMF Executive Director Myka Miller and GCMF Chairman of the Board David Helfant served as co-hosts for the event.

GCMF presented a Lifetime Achievement Award to the GRAMMY® Award-winning percussionist Pete Escovedo, as he is retiring from touring this year. Pete and other members of the Escovedo family performed at the event, along with several other special guests including Macy Gray, Robby Krieger of The Doors, Judith Hill and Brian O’Neal of The BusBoys. John “JR” Robinson, one of the most recorded drummers in the world and the musical director for David Foster, served as musical director for the evening, leading an ensemble of world-class musicians. And before the event officially kicked off, guests enjoyed additional performances from student musicians from the Teen Music Workshop in San Bernardino, a GCMF grantee. Aside from amazing live music, the evening included a gourmet dinner (for VIP Guests), a 360 photo booth, and live and silent auctions.

The event began with opening remarks from Miller and Helfant, welcoming and thanking the attendees and special guests, as well as sponsors DW Foundation, ASCAP, Blackwing Foundation, Get Together Foundation, Donor360, Eastman, Sony Music Publishing and Guitar Center. Guitar Center President/CEO Ron Japinga, GCMF Board members, and several GCMF grantees also received special acknowledgement. Later, Jeffrey Dante Byrd, an educator at Los Angeles-based CHAMPS Charter High School of the Arts, was presented with the first GCMF Excellence in Music Education Award. Amazing live music happened throughout the night, with each artist joining the house band for 3-4 numbers. The grand finale featured a performance by Pete Escovedo himself, leading the E Family band through a roaring set of Latin music.

Throughout the evening, those in attendance were able to bid on several exciting silent auction items, including a “Light My Fire” painting by Robby Krieger, a Fender Precision Bass with original artwork by Jerry Garcia, a trip to St. John (Virgin Islands), a pair of Los Angeles Dodgers Box Seats, A Fender 60th Anniversary Classic Player ‘50s Stratocaster signed by Maná, a day-long studio session with GRAMMY® Award-winning producer/engineer Val Garay, a painting by Pete Escovedo and more.

Pete Escovedo’s daughter Sheila E., herself a legendary percussionist, could not be in attendance, but she sent a personalized video message that was played at the event. She said, “Hi Pops, I just want to say congratulations to you for your lifetime achievement award from the Guitar Center Music Foundation. We are so proud of you and all the things you’ve done for us, for the community, for musicians and artists. Everything that you’ve done. You deserve this, and we’re really extremely proud of you.”

Myka Miller remarks, “This was a very exciting night, filled with world-class live music, great vibes, and a sense of charity and giving back. Pops is a consummate artist and a selfless individual, and I cannot think of a better honoree of our Lifetime Achievement Award. I personally offer my gratitude to all in attendance, and all who help The Guitar Center Music Foundation carry out its mission year-round.”

Pete Escovedo notes, “I have been very blessed with success and opportunities throughout my career, and my heart is full of thanks for all the good fortune that has come my way. To be recognized by The Guitar Center Music Foundation is a huge honor, as they are an organization focused on serving the underserved and giving them the opportunity to make music a positive part of their lives. I can think of no greater gift to our communities.”

Looking forward, plans are underway to make this fundraiser concert a yearly event in 2024 and beyond, giving GCMF an opportunity to foster strengthened connections with both legendary musicians and the wider public.

To learn more, visit <http://www.GuitarCenterFoundation.org>, or follow [@GiveMusicLife](https://twitter.com/GiveMusicLife) on Twitter for more news or to discover ways to support The Guitar Center Music Foundation. Also, follow GCMF on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/guitarcenterfoundation/) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/guitarcenterfoundation/?hl=en).

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Photo file 1: GCMF\_PE.JPG

Photo caption 1: Pete “Pops” Escovedo performs with the E Family band at The Guitar Center Music Foundation’s fundraiser event, March 30, 2023, at The Canyon in Agoura Hills, CA. Photo by Maria McCarthy Photography. © 2023.

Photo file 2: GCMF\_EFamily.JPG

Photo caption 2: Pictured L-R: Juan Escovedo, Zina Escovedo, Pete “Pops” Escovedo and Peter Michael Escovedo, pictured at The Guitar Center Music Foundation’s fundraiser event, March 30, 2023, at The Canyon in Agoura Hills, CA. Photo by Maria McCarthy Photography. © 2023.

Photo file 3: GCMF\_DH\_MM.JPG

Photo caption 3: Pictured L-R: GCMF Chairman of the Board David Helfant and GCMF Executive Director Myka Miller, pictured at The Guitar Center Music Foundation’s fundraiser event, March 30, 2023, at The Canyon in Agoura Hills, CA. Photo by Maria McCarthy Photography. © 2023.

Photo file 4: GCMF\_DH\_JDB\_MM.JPG

Photo caption 4: Pictured L-R: GCMF Chairman of the Board David Helfant, Jeffrey Dante Byrd (educator at Los Angeles-based CHAMPS Charter High School of the Arts and recipient of the first GCMF Excellence in Music Education Award) and GCMF Executive Director Myka Miller, pictured at The Guitar Center Music Foundation’s fundraiser event, March 30, 2023, at The Canyon in Agoura Hills, CA. Photo by Maria McCarthy Photography. © 2023.

Photo file 5: GCMF\_MG.JPG

Photo caption 5: Macy Gray performs at The Guitar Center Music Foundation’s fundraiser event, March 30, 2023, at The Canyon in Agoura Hills, CA. Photo by Maria McCarthy Photography. © 2023.

Photo file 6: GCMF\_RK.JPG

Photo caption 6: Robby Krieger performs at The Guitar Center Music Foundation’s fundraiser event, March 30, 2023, at The Canyon in Agoura Hills, CA. Photo by Maria McCarthy Photography. © 2023.

ABOUT THE GUITAR CENTER MUSIC FOUNDATION

The Guitar Center Music Foundation was founded as a 501(c)(3) in 2005. Since its inception, the foundation has placed instruments in the hands of over 300,000 people nationwide through grants to qualifying music education and music therapy programs. The foundation’s mission is to support music education programs nationally by providing those in need with instruments and by advocating for the benefits of music education and music therapy. For more information about The Guitar Center Music Foundation, please visit <http://guitarcenterfoundation.org/>.

ABOUT GUITAR CENTER INC

Guitar Center is a leading retailer of musical instruments, lessons, repairs and rentals in the United States. With 300 stores across the country and as one of the top direct sales websites in the industry, Guitar Center has helped people make music for more than 50 years. Guitar Center also provides customers with musician-based services, including lessons where musicians of all ages and skill levels can learn to play instruments in many musical genres. Guitar Center also offers an on-site maintenance and repairs service called GC Repairs and GC Rentals, a program offering easy rentals of instruments and other sound reinforcement gear. Guitar Center’s sister brands include Music & Arts, which operates more than 200 stores specializing in band and orchestral instruments for sale and rental, serving teachers, band directors, college professors and students. Another sister company, Musician’s Friend, is a leading direct marketer of musical instruments in the United States. For more information about Guitar Center, please visit [www.guitarcenter.com](http://www.guitarcenter.com).

CONTACT

Clyne Media | pr@clynemedia.com

The Guitar Center Music Foundation | info@GuitarCenterFoundation.org