

'80s Night for Arts Education

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Terri Nunn and Rick Springfield

Rick Springfield and Terri Nunn headline the Greg Coote Concert for the Arts

By Bliss Bowen

The guys in Venice are ubiquitous, but there's one concert they flog on social media with particular enthusiasm: the Greg Coote Concert for the Arts, an annual event benefitting arts programs at Santa Monica-Malibu public schools that returns Saturday, March 10.

Aside from bringing their trademark harmonies, Venice functions as house band for the headliners — this year, that's 1980s survivors Rick Springfield and Berlin frontwoman Terri Nunn.

For audience members who recall Members Only jackets, lip-syncing to MTV music videos and teasing their hair with buckets of mousse, the concert is a nostalgia bonanza. Native Aussie and sometime "General Hospital" actor Springfield has maintained his heartthrob status since his Grammy win for 1981's "Jesse's Girl," while the L.A.-born Nunn is still working the club circuit and performing Berlin's 1986 megahit "Take My Breath Away."

Brothers Mark and Mike Lennon and their cousins, Kipp and Pat Lennon (younger sibs to '50s singing quartet the Lennon Sisters), have been recording, touring and harmonizing as Venice for over three decades, perfecting a smooth, sunny blend that instantly evokes their namesake town. Jackson Browne, one of numerous marquee acts they've accompanied, aptly described them as "quintessentially Californian."

The Lennons will be lifting their voices Saturday but more importantly, the local legends will place the evening's theme into action by bringing its intended beneficiaries — students — onstage. Student orchestra, choir and horn section members will perform in the backing band alongside Venice and also get to solo.

The concert, which raises funds for the Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation to support the creation and maintenance of arts programs at Santa Monica-Malibu public schools next year, is an opportunity for the musical community to come together and give back.

The Greg Coote Concert for the Arts starts at 7 p.m. Saturday (March 10) at Santa Monica High School's Barnum Hall, 600 Olympic Blvd., Santa Monica. "Entertainment Tonight" alum Mark Steines and veteran classic rock radio DJ Cynthia Fox will co-host. Tickets are \$50 to \$200 at smmef.org.