

Las Cruces rocks 'n' rolls to mark Rio Grande Theatre anniversary

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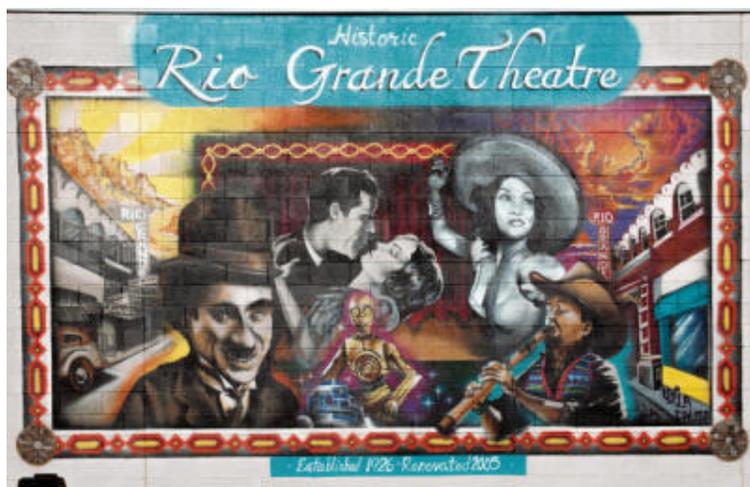
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- [Las Cruces' Rio Grande Theatre marks another milestone](#)

LAS CRUCES >> "Rock'n and Roll'n for 10 Years!" is the theme for a three-day celebration that marks the 10th anniversary of the grand opening of the renovated Rio Grande Theatre, and you're invited.

"The whole theme of this celebration is a big thank you to the community for supporting 10 years at the Rio Grande Theatre," said Kathleen Albers, the Doña Ana Arts Council's executive director.

The community fiesta kicks off at 6 p.m. Thursday with a free celebration that features cake and music on Main Street outside the theater, followed by the screening of a new mini-documentary on the past 10 years by former RGT manager David Salcido, and PRC Productions.



The new Rio Grande Theatre mural created by after-school program Ignite celebrates the popular community gathering place's long history. It depicts a

"We did a documentary about the theater's first 70 years at the fifth anniversary of its renovations. This new documentary is about 25 minutes long and we'll have interviews with people about the last decade, talking to performers, audience members and public servants. I think it will be a great way to celebrate," Salcido said.

He has documented the theater's evolution with vignettes that include "the production of 'Frankenstein,' right after things were torn down for renovations and some of the acts and highlights of the past 10 decade." (State Sen.) Mary K. Papen and (former state legislator) J. Paul Taylor

have contributed some really good memories. I think for me, as someone who's been a volunteer, and then a theater manager and documentarian, the greatest thing has been watching as people discover or rediscover the Rio Grande. We still see people who loved the theater when they were kids. A lot of people didn't realize it had been renovated and is now a performance space. It great when they tell me their stories and see the happiness in their faces when they realize the theater has been restored," Salcido said.

You're also invited to experience the theater's recently installed new high-definition projector and sound system with free 6 and 8 p.m. Friday screenings of the classic 1953 film "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes,"

You'll also get the down-low on Mark Medoff's new original play about Marilyn Monroe.

"I'll be there to introduce the movie and say a few words about my new play, 'Marilee and Baby Lamb: The Assassination of an American Goddess' which we'll present Oct. 13 through 18 at the Rio Grande Theatre," said Medoff, a multi-award-winning playwright, director and filmmaker.

Rob Reiner's 1987 blockbuster "The Princess Bride" will be screened at 9 and 11 a.m. Saturday.



A historic shot shows the Rio Grande Theatre in its early days. The theater first opened in 1926 and has weathered earthquakes, a fire and hard economic

"Those attending are invited to bring Price's milk caps and cartons for free admission, just like the good old days," Albers said.

Highlight of the event will be a retro-rocker's delight: a \$60 per person Saturday benefit gala that begins with a 5:30 p.m. rock 'n' roll-themed dinner outside the theater on Main Street, "complete with a spill-proof commemorative cup so drinks can be taken inside the theater for the first time in almost two decades," Albers said.

The 7 p.m. Saturday dinner will be followed with performances by "Remember Then," of Las Cruces, and a Las Vegas show, "A Salute To The Platters with Elmer Armstrong," an award ceremony, dessert and music.



A Las Vegas tribute group, "Salute to the Platters with Elmer Armstrong" will appear at a benefit dinner and show that also features Las

The Platters tribute commemorates 1950 superstar quintet Tony Williams, David Lynch, Paul Robi, Herbert Reed and Zola Taylor. The "salute" group features Elmer Armstrong, who's been with the group since 1989 and took over lead tenor chores after Robi's death, plus Larry Tate, Kathy Celsy and Lavan Davis.

The original Platters sold more than 100 million records, including enduring classic hits like "Only You," "The Great Pretender," "Twilight Time," "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes" and "My Prayer."

For more information about the Rio Grande Theatre's anniversary celebration, or to purchase tickets for the Saturday evening dinner and performances, visit riograndetheatre.com or call 575-523-6403.

S. Derrickson Moore may be reached at 575-541-5450.

If you go

What: Rio Grande Theatre Renovation 10th Anniversary

When: Thursday through Saturday

Where: Rio Grande Theatre, 211 N. Main St.

Highlights: 6 p.m. Thursday cake, music mini-documentary, 6 and 8 p.m. Friday screenings of "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes," 9 and 11 a.m. Saturday screenings of "The Princess Bride"

How much: Screenings, opening celebration free

Plus:

Gala Dinner & Show Benefit

Starring: "A Salute To The Platters with Elmer Armstrong," "Remember Then"

When: 7 p.m. Saturday