Bobby McFerrin

Friday, February 12, 2016 Riverside Casino & Golf Resort® Event Center Hancher University of Iowa



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This performance is sponsored by Richard and Mary Jo Stanley in loving memory of their daughter Sarah Catherine Stanley.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

For decades Bobby McFerrin has broken all the rules. The ten-time Grammy winner has blurred the distinction between pop music and fine art, goofing around barefoot in the world's finest concert halls, exploring uncharted vocal territory, inspiring a whole new generation of a cappella singers and the beatbox movement.

His most recent album, spirityouall, is a bluesy, feel-good recording, an unexpected move from the music-industry rebel who singlehandedly redefined the role of the human voice with his a cappella hit "Don't Worry, Be Happy," his collaborations with Yo-Yo Ma, Chick Corea, and the Vienna Philharmonic, his improvising choir Voicestra, and his legendary solo vocal performances.

It's been the quietest and politest of revolutions. Bobby McFerrin was always an unlikely pop star. He created a lasting earworm of a #1 hit early in his career. Then he calmly went back to pursuing his own iconoclastic musical journey, improvising on national television, singing melodies without words, spontaneously inventing parts for 60,000 choral singers in a stadium in Germany, ignoring boundaries of genre, defying all expectations.

Most people don't know that Bobby came from a family of singers. Bobby's father, the Metropolitan Opera baritone Robert McFerrin, Sr., provided the singing voice for Sydney Poitier for the film version of *Porgy & Bess*, and his mother, Sara, was a fine soprano soloist and voice teacher.

Bobby grew up surrounded by music of all kinds. He remembers conducting Beethoven on the stereo at three, hiding under the piano while his father and mother coached young singers, dancing around the house to Louie Armstrong, Judy Garland, Etta Jones, and Fred Astaire. He played the clarinet seriously as a child, but he began his musical career as a pianist at the age of 14. He led his own jazz groups, studied composition, toured with the show band for the *Ice Follies*, played for dance classes. Then one day he was walking home and suddenly he understood that he had been a singer all along.

Bobby's history as an instrumentalist and bandleader is key to understanding his innovative approach to mapping harmony and rhythm (as well as melody) with his voice. "I can't sing everything at once," he says, "but I can hint at it so the audience hears even what I don't sing."

All that pioneer spirit and virtuosity has opened up a great big sky full of new options for singers; so have Bobby's experiments in multi-tracking his voice ("Don't Worry, Be Happy" has seven separate, over-dubbed vocal tracks; Bobby's choral album VOCAbuLarieS with Roger Treece has thousands). But virtuosity isn't the point.

"I try not to 'perform' onstage," says Bobby. "I try to sing the way I sing in my kitchen, because I just can't help myself. I want audiences to leave the theatre and sing in their own kitchens the next morning. I want to bring audiences into the incredible feeling of joy and freedom I get when I sing."

SUPPORTING ARTISTS

DAMANI PHILLIPS (saxophone) is a native of Pontiac, Michigan, where he began playing at the age of 10. He currently serves as assistant professor of jazz studies and African-American studies at the University of Iowa, where he teaches applied jazz saxophone, directs jazz combos, and teaches courses in African-American music, jazz history, jazz theory, and improvisation. He has earned bachelor and master of music degrees from DePaul University (Chicago) and the University of Kentucky in classical saxophone, and a second Master of Music degree in Jazz Studies from Wayne State University (Detroit). In 2009, Phillips completed the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Jazz Studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder, becoming one of the first African-Americans in the country to earn this degree.

RICHARD WAGOR (bass) earned his Bachelor of Arts in music from the University of Iowa and a Master of Music from Manhattan School of Music, and has worked with various teachers including Eldon Obrecht, Diana Gannett, Homer Mensch, and Robert Kassinger. Wagor has also performed in a wide variety of professional settings. Wagor has played as a member of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra, the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Symphony, and the Dubuque Symphony. Wagor has also played other genres of music with Pat Smith, Jennifer Lee, Tim Daugherty, Leni Stern, Stephanie Wright, the Yale Repertory Theater, NOWIS, the Bill Shepherd Big Band, the Rod Pierson Small Band, Peter Hart, and the band Joecephus and the George Jonestown Massacre. As a teacher, Wagor has formerly held positions with the University of Northern Iowa and the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp and currently teaches at Coe College in Cedar Rapids and Cornell College in Mount Vernon.

EDGAR EAST (percussion) is Panamanian. His upbringing in Panama City meant noise, hustle, bustle, and those chaotic smells and sights so characteristic of any Third World metropolis. It also meant a fierce need for individuality and lots of musical innovation and creativity, as expressed in the work of his compatriot, Rubén Blades. He moved to lowa on a student scholarship and stayed, building a life in a foreign but welcoming land, where his Latin heritage began to blend with his predominantly Anglo-Saxon surroundings. He lives in Waterloo, and he and his Colombian partner, Karin Stein, perform as Calle Sur.

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SARAH CATHERINE STANLEY

This evening's Bobby McFerrin concert honors Sarah Catherine Stanley. Sarah, the daughter of Richard and Mary Jo Stanley, died suddenly and unexpectedly at age 53 of aortic dissection. She is survived by her beloved husband, Louis Kidder, and their cherished children Hannah, Rebecca, and Samuel and his wife Sylvia. She is also survived by her brother, Joseph Stanley, her sister, Lynne Stanley, and their families.

Bobby McFerrin's "The 23rd Psalm" was sung at her Celebration of Life service on September 13, 2014, by the Union Congregational UCC Choir of which she had been a longtime member.

A REMEMBRANCE BY DICK AND MARY JO STANLEY

Sarah had a wonderful smile. She found the light in every situation and would help those around her see it, too. She shared her life with other people. She freely gave of herself to her family, friends, church, and community, both locally and beyond. She was treasured for her thoughtfulness, quirky sense of humor, and willingness to work to help make a better world. We relished her knack for remembering and singing old camp songs and show tunes. We counted on her to know obscure facts, poetry, and people. We are thankful for the depth and constancy of her friendship and love. Sarah made a positive difference in the lives of many.





Sarah gave much time, energy, wisdom, and love to her church. She was its moderator, the president of the congregation. She made things happen and never needed credit. She loved being a tenor in the choir. She was at the heart of its social justice ministries, and her pastor described her as the glue that held the church together in challenging times. Sarah was thrilled to paddle the Boundary Waters annually with her dear CLUCS (Church Ladies of Union Canoe Society). She loved the fellowship and adventures they shared.

Sarah was an effective leader because it was never about Sarah. It was about the church, or the Thanksgiving Day Free Store, or one of the other groups to which she freely gave her time and talent. She led by example; she led by listening; she led by letting people know she cared; she led by a patient, realistic optimism that accomplished much in her church and wider community.

Sarah devoted more than 25 years to advancing the work of the Stanley Foundation in her roles as Director, Vice Chair for Board Management, Chair of the Governance Committee, and other varied work toward achieving a secure peace with freedom and justice built on global citizenship and effective global governance.

We remember Sarah's wisdom about the importance of community. Beginning with her family, she was fully a part of the various circles of people that made up her life. May each of us follow her example, finding and offering in our communities the love and support that will carry us through the times ahead.

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