

Once the hunter of headline acts, Redfearn & Associates creates productions for philanthropic organizations

By Lee Schoenbart

They could be affectionately known as the Redfearn Three by their clientele of mostly nonprofit and philanthropic organizations.

A trio of do-gooders – Steve Redfearn, Ashley Constans and Jay Sheehan – lead production crews numbering more than 100 in creating just the right ambience for spectacular headline entertainment into the most private of settings and wealthiest enclaves, all to benefit abused and underprivileged children, support children's hospitals and fund research for a variety of diseases.

Virtually all of Redfearn's work since coming out of semi-retirement benefits a clientele far different than the county's amphitheatres, arenas and auditoriums he helped stock with the top rock, pop and R&B acts more than a decade ago for Bill Silva Presents, the Summer Pops concert series and Viejas Casino.

The clientele of Redfearn & Associates are still the high-rollers, alright, but this time around the private Rancho Santa Fe and La Jolla estates make the velvet rope set passé and the price of admission silently screams Trump, Pickens and

Perot because the causes are entirely nonprofit, charitable and philanthropic. And that's because Redfearn's present-day patrons reads like a Who's Who for the best of the noblest causes including the Alzheimer's Association Gala, Promise 2 Kids, Voices 4 Children, HDSA Annual Gala, Kawasaki's Disease Inaugural Gala and Rady Children's Hospital Gala.

"There's real good examples for me in town," said Redfearn about the abundance of philanthropy and volunteerism around the county. "Probably one of my best friends is Ben Haddad; he's the former president of the San Diego Chamber of Commerce. He and his wife Ann have worked with me for a long time on charity projects.

"There's a lot of people that have families and jobs and all kinds of stuff going on and they still spend a lot of time giving back and it's an interesting example for me," he said.

The next month promises to be a busy one for the folks at Redfearn with the MS Golf Invitational at La Jolla Country Club (May 3); Scripps' 19th Annual Spinoff: Auction for Life (May 6); the Rancho Santa Fe Community Center Annual Gala (May 8); the Alzheimer's Association

"Un-Gala" (May 14); and Palomar Pomerado's Health Annual Fundraiser Gala (May 15).

Earlier this year, Redfearn & Associates produced The Rancho Santa Fe Auxiliary Unit for Rady Children's Hospital annual gala featuring Bill Cosby at The Grand Del Mar.

"I worked with Cindy Leonard and her committee," he said. "Cindy was the chair of the Rancho Santa Fe Auxiliary Unit for Children's Hospital. They wanted somebody really big and I said, 'Let me approach Mr. Cosby' and that started in September or October of last year because their gig is in February. Mr. Cosby is actually a friend of mine; I've worked with him for years."

By November, Redfearn confirmed Cosby's appearance and his team began preparing on the sound, lighting and video budget and worked with the hotel, Leonard and her committee. They also produced a couple of videos used during the event as well as the auxiliary unit's PowerPoint presentation.

"They have a real good committee. That unit in Rancho Santa Fe is one of the best groups of people I've ever worked with," Redfearn said. "They're really organized and their volunteers are very good."



Jay Sheehan (left), Steve Redfearn, Anita Pointer, Ashley Constans at The Inaugural Kawasaki's Disease Gala on Nov. 7, 2009, at La Costa Resort & Spa. Redfearn & Associates, a full service special events, concert promoting and production company, gives back to community charities and philanthropists by way of providing the highest-quality talent and staging for their events.

He said the logistics of the Grand Del Mar's main ballroom didn't pose any difficulties after decades of experience building and striking productions for the bad boys and divas of rock and pop.

"We did a pre-hang the night before with lights and video," said Redfearn, referring to the equipment. "Most ballroom events can come in the day of."

"One of the differences with my crew is when you do U2 at the Sports Arena and they have 14 semis, they start at 8 in the morning to do the show and everything loads out that night. They don't have the luxury of a load-in and rehearsal for a day," he said, "So we're used to coming in quick and working hard and getting it done – kind of like gypsies leaving in the middle of the night."

Perhaps the more interesting challenge is transforming the acreage of vast private estates in the confines of affluent Rancho and La Jolla neighborhoods.

"And then there's some outdoor events like the 'Un-Gala' coming up May 14 for the Alzheimer's Association at the Black residence in Rancho Santa Fe with Shawn Colvin," Redfearn began. "That event will load-in a day early because we like to focus lighting the night before."

"My production manager, Jay Sheehan, is on the faculty at San Diego State in the theatre department, and he loves the ballroom events because he's a theatre guy and it's more controlled, and I love the outdoor events because I'm the guy that did Viejas Concerts in the Park and Summer Pops, so I like the grass field deal."

"We've done Voices 4 Children and Promises 2 Kids the last few years at Joan Waiit's house in La Jolla, which is a huge grass area," he said. "You bring in a stage, power, restrooms, valet parking and all the cables and chairs, etcetera. It's more work and more complicated, but you can also be more creative. Sometimes the ballroom is a little restrictive."

For such private residence events, Redfearn & Associates move in the day before with its production manager and half-dozen sound-and-lights guys, plus two or three people for video sound and lights, six stage hands and another 12 to 15 ancillary folk. When the big day is finally here,

Redfearn estimates the crew's total, including catering and staff, will swell to 120 people.

Redfearn said all of this would not be possible, or at least not as smooth and fulfilling, if not for Constans and Sheehan.

"I met Ashley through Tristan Prettyman, probably the best singer-songwriter to come out of San Diego," he said. "Ashley was doing some work with me at AEG because she's really bright and really sharp. Then I called Ashley one day and said, 'I don't have a job and neither do you because I'm not with AEG anymore' and when I started my little company working out of my house in Leucadia she said, 'In for a penny, in for a pound.' Ashley's been a great right hand."

"I met Jay about 20 years ago when he was working at San Diego Symphony and Bill Silva said, 'Listen, we're going to do shows at Summer Pops; it would be nice to have a symphony guy that doesn't know anything about rock and roll,'" Redfearn recalled with a hardy laugh. "And that started my relationship with Jay Sheehan who's my dearest friend. He was the first one who called when I left AEG."

The original incarnation of Redfearn & Associates happened in the late 1990s and early 2000s between the concert impresarios and the casinos and what's different this time around are the people involved in the volunteerism, the philanthropy and his life.

"The thing I really like the best is meeting new people who start as clients and become friends," Redfearn said.

"I've met some really good people such as Susan Taylor, the news anchor at KNSD, and her husband Ed Campbell who are the chairs of the Alzheimer's event for the second year in a row," he said. "Ed and I have breakfast once a week. We don't talk about the event at all. We just gossip and hang out. Cindy Leonard from the Children's Hospital event is a good friend of Ashley's and mine, the people from Voices 4 Children."

"It's nice to meet new people," Redfearn said, "and get reacquainted with others."

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