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ANASAZI Foundation holding benefit concert

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Firefly

Firefly (pictured) along with Due West and Katherine Nelson will perform on Saturday night during the Mesa-based ANASAZI Foundation benefit concert at the Mesa Arts Center.

Posted: Wednesday, November 13, 2013 7:45 am

By Cecily Markland, Special to Tribune

Their talent has taken them to Nashville and beyond, onto stages where they've opened for some of the biggest names in country music, including Wynonna Judd, Martina McBride, LeAnn Rimes, Little Big Town and Steve Wariner.

Now, Firefly — a sister trio comprised of longtime Gilbert residents Melanie, McKenzie and Madelyn Merchant — returns to Arizona for a one-night benefit show Saturday at Mesa Arts Center as part of the Silver Anniversary Celebration of the Mesa-based ANASAZI Foundation.

Proceeds will benefit at-risk teens who would otherwise be unable to participate in ANASAZI's wilderness behavioral health programs.

Concert producer R Legacy Entertainment says the show features a "power-packed, star-studded" lineup, with Firefly and singer/songwriter Katherine Nelson opening for the iTunes chart-topping group, Due West.

Traveling to Arizona is a homecoming trip for Due West vocalist Brad Hull as well. A Thatcher native, Hull attended Mesa Community College. His group toured this past summer with Trace Adkins, Billy Currington and the Doobie Brothers.

ANASAZI Foundation concert

What: Firefly, Due West and Katherine Nelson perform a benefit concert for Mesa-based ANASAZI Foundation.

When: 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 16

Where: Mesa Arts Center, 1 E. Main St.

Cost: \$15-\$25

Information: (480) 655-6500 or MesaArtsCenter.com

Nelson, too, is an award-winning singer/songwriter, with her CD, "Born Brave," reaching No. 14 on Amazon.com Top 50 charts.

"We are looking forward to being back in Arizona with family, friends, and the best fans on earth," said Madelyn, youngest of the Firefly sisters. "We are honored to support the work of ANASAZI Foundation and can't wait to perform with the amazing talents of Due West and Katherine

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Nelson.”

The three sisters, who now live near each other in the Provo, Utah, area, say they particularly like the idea of seeing their parents – and “biggest fans” – Mike and Gaylene Merchant, of Gilbert.

“We really couldn’t do it without them. I don’t think they get enough credit,” Madelyn says.

Firefly first hit the local music scene when they earned a unanimous vote from the judges at the 2010 KNIX Colgate Country Showdown. The band is recognized for its close harmonies, as well as acoustic licks on the guitar, cello, fiddle and mandolin.

The thing that unites the sisters the most, they say, is their focus on using their music for good.

“All in all, the best success is to really make a difference with our music,” Madelyn says.

“We think a lot about our purpose and why we have been given the talents we have,” Melanie says. “We know it was meant to be that way and there is a reason we are able to sing together. We think a lot about that and how we can use our talents to share good things.”

For VIP tickets (\$35), or information about other ANASAZI Silver Anniversary events, including a gala hosted by NBA all-star Mark Eaton, visit www.anasazi.org.

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