

**The Guitar Center Music Foundation hosts a who’s-who of L.A.’s music industry at third-annual benefit concert**

— *The fundraiser and concert event honoring Ernie Isley took place on April 4, 2024, at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel* —

**WESTLAKE VILLAGE, Calif., April 16, 2024 —** The [Guitar Center Music Foundation](http://guitarcenterfoundation.org/) (GCMF), a nonprofit organization that advances the healing, transformative power of music by granting instruments to music education and music therapy programs in need, held its Third Annual Benefit Gala and Concert on Thursday, April 4, 2024, from 7-11 p.m. at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel in Los Angeles, Calif. This year’s event honored Ernie Isley, a key member of The Isley Brothers, who have been inducted into both Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and Guitar Center’s Rock Walk. A who’s-who of the Los Angeles-based music community showed up to take part in this Event, pay tribute to music icon Ernie Isley, and support GCMF.

The Isley Brothers have been making musical hits for over 60 years, including “Twist and Shout,” “Shout,” “That Lady,” and “For The Love of You.” Ernie Isley’s distinctive lead guitar has been a key element of the group’s unique sound, and he continues to be one of the most respected living guitarists today. At this star-studded event, GCMF presented Ernie Isley with a Lifetime Achievement Award. Addressing the attendees, Isley regaled the crowd with the tale of how he arrived at the iconic tone for his solo on “That Lady” – by testing out gear (Electro-Harmonix Big Muff Fuzz and a Maestro Phase Shifter) in a Guitar Center store! All proceeds from the Event benefit the Guitar Center Music Foundation to aid in their mission to keep music alive and accessible for all through donations of musical instruments and grants for music education throughout the country.

Produced by Hammond Entertainment, the evening also featured red-carpet arrivals, cocktail hour, dinner, special live performance, and silent and live auctions. Before the award presentation, Isley was celebrated musically by a diverse lineup of artists, accompanied by a band led by the evening’s musical director, keyboardist, and arranger Greg Phillinganes. Living Colour guitarist Vernon Reid delivered a spirited rendition of The Isley Brothers’ 1975 funk anthem “Fight the Power, Part 1,” with Phillinganes taking on vocal duties.

Later, Ray Parker Jr. garnered enthusiastic applause as he joined the band for a soulful rendition of the Isleys’ 1978 hit “Groove With You.” Toto co-founder Steve Lukather also electrified the audience with his dynamic performance on the Isley Brothers’ 1974 cover of the Seals and Crofts classic “Summer Breeze.” Then, Melanie Faye impressed the crowd with her contemporary guitar skills on the group’s 1977 slow jam “Footsteps in the Dark,” a song written by Ernie Isley, who also contributed guitar and drums to the original recording. Upon taking the stage, Ernie’s daughter Alex Isley, herself a GRAMMY®-nominated singer-songwriter, affectionately referred to her father Ernie as “my favorite writer ever” before delivering a heartfelt rendition of another of his compositions, the timeless 1976 track “(At Your Best) You Are Love.”

The Event was further enriched by video tributes from a plethora of esteemed artists and musicians, including Chaka Khan, Sheryl Crow, Nile Rodgers, Narada Michael Walden, Carlos Santana, and H.E.R., who cited Ernie as a true trailblazer and inspiration. Percussionist Pete Escovedo, recipient of The Guitar Center Music Foundation’s lifetime achievement award in 2023, also extended his congratulations. The evening was rounded off with a silent and live auction, featuring prizes such as a guitar signed by Bruno Mars and a day-long studio session with GRAMMY-winning producer/engineer Val Garay.

David Helfant, Chairman of the Board at The Guitar Center Music Foundation, remarks, “This event was a huge success, in terms of paying tribute to the living legend Ernie Isley and raising funds and awareness for The Guitar Center Music Foundation. Ernie Isley and his brothers have left an immeasurable legacy in music history, and we were so proud to have honored him at this year’s Gala. This annual event has been building real momentum and visibility for the goals of the Foundation, and we plan on next year’s celebration being bigger than ever!”

Event producer Bill Hammond adds, “It is a true honor to be the producer for The Guitar Center Music Foundation tribute to honor Ernie Isley. To assemble all these talented performers to honor Ernie was a blessing and a vision, and it all came together. I am happy to have contributed to such a wonderful evening, which helped support The Guitar Center Music Foundation and its mission of advancing the cause of music education. Big thanks to my music director Greg Phillinganes, and a heartfelt thank you to Myka Miller, the Executive Director of the GCMF, and David Helfant, the Chairman of the Board, in sharing their vision.”

Ernie Isley stated, “Many thanks to everyone involved with the Guitar Center for creating such a memorable evening. My sincere hopes and best wishes are with the future generations of musicians.”

To learn more, visit <http://www.GuitarCenterFoundation.org>, or follow [@GiveMusicLife](https://twitter.com/GiveMusicLife) on Twitter for more news or to discover ways to support The Guitar Center Music Foundation. Also, follow GCMF on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/guitarcenterfoundation/) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/guitarcenterfoundation/?hl=en).

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Photo file 1: GCMF\_Isley\_Photo1.JPG

Photo caption 1: Pictured L-R: Alison Ball, Jae Deal, Myka Miller, Ernie Isley, Val Garay, David Helfant, Michael Sammis, pictured at The Guitar Center Music Foundation’s Third Annual Benefit Gala and Concert on Thursday, April 4, 2024, at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel in Los Angeles, Calif., in Los Angeles. Photo credit: Arnold Turner/Eclipse Content.

Photo file 2: GCMF\_Isley\_Photo2.JPG
Photo caption 2: Ernie Isley accepts a Lifetime Achievement Award at The Guitar Center Music Foundation’s Third Annual Benefit Gala and Concert on Thursday, April 4, 2024, at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel in Los Angeles, Calif., in Los Angeles. Photo credit: Arnold Turner/Eclipse Content.

Photo file 3: GCMF\_Isley\_Photo3.JPG

Photo caption 3: Pictured L-R: Eric Benét, Vernon Reid and Ernie Isley, performing at The Guitar Center Music Foundation’s Third Annual Benefit Gala and Concert on Thursday, April 4, 2024, at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel in Los Angeles, Calif., in Los Angeles. Photo credit: Arnold Turner/Eclipse Content.

Photo file 4: GCMF\_Isley\_Photo4.JPG

Photo caption 4: Pictured L-R: Cedric the Entertainer and Joe Torry, pictured at The Guitar Center Music Foundation’s Third Annual Benefit Gala and Concert on Thursday, April 4, 2024, at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel in Los Angeles, Calif., in Los Angeles. Photo credit: Arnold Turner/Eclipse Content.

ABOUT THE GUITAR CENTER MUSIC FOUNDATION

For some, music may be just a hobby. But for others, music serves as a crucial lifeline – a path to healing, an opportunity to nurture untapped talent, an escape from the grim realities of everyday life, a break from generational trauma, or the start of a social revolution. The Guitar Center Music Foundation (GCMF) is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to the healing, transformative power of music. Thousands of individuals nationwide benefit yearly from GCMF’s grants and other efforts aiding veterans, hospital patients, the unhoused, and those affected by natural disasters, as well as youth in both schools and after-school programs. By providing these programs with all types of instruments and advocating for the benefits of music education and music therapy, GCMF furthers its mission of giving people the chance to create and express themselves through music. For more information about The Guitar Center Music Foundation, please visit <http://guitarcenterfoundation.org/>.

ABOUT GUITAR CENTER INC

Guitar Center is the leading retailer of musical instruments, lessons, repairs and rentals in the U.S. With more than 300 stores across the U.S. and one of the top direct sales websites in the industry, Guitar Center has helped people make music for more than 50 years. Guitar Center also provides customers with various musician-based services, including Guitar Center Lessons, where musicians of all ages and skill levels can learn to play a variety of instruments in many music genres, GC Repairs, an on-site maintenance and repairs service, and GC Rentals, a program offering easy rentals of instruments and other sound reinforcement gear. Additionally, Guitar Center’s sister brands include Music & Arts, which operates more than 250 stores specializing in band & orchestral instruments for sale and rental, serving teachers, band directors, college professors, parents and students, and Musician’s Friend, a leading direct marketer of musical instruments in the United States. For more information about Guitar Center, please visit [guitarcenter.com](http://www.guitarcenter.com/).

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