



THE GRAND THEATER/TRACY

Nowadays, a town isn't considered grown-up until it gets its own art center. Tracy, California, got theirs. The Grand Theater is a marvel. It is, in fact, a \$20 million marvel. It is a perfectly restored 1920s era theater along with a gallery, nine art, dance and music studios, and an experimental theater. It is a striking example of civic pride. What started life as a movie palace 80 years ago is now a state-of-the-art performing arts complex.

Recently, I attended several performances there. I sampled intimate jazz as well as a boisterous musical, both presented in the main theater. There are no bad sight lines, and the acoustics are excellent. There isn't a finer place to view plays or listen to music than the Grand. These are my personal favorites among the films, exhibits, and events coming up at the Grand:

Franc D'Ambrosio's Broadway, February 23
 Berlin Piano Quartet, March 9
 SF Jazz Collective, March 19
 Alley Cats, March 22
 Paul Galbraith Classical Guitar, April 6
 An Evening with Groucho, April 13





THE GALLO ARTS CENTER MODESTO'S GEM OF A VENUE

A jewel needn't necessarily be a diamond or ruby or sapphire. Sometimes a jewel can be made of ordinary brick and mortar and be just as resplendent, faceted, and bright as any gemstone.

Within the confines of the Gallo Center for the Arts are the spacious main stage theater and a modest-sized chamber theater. A breath-taking atrium frames the whole affair with a wide, high elliptical façade facing out onto the street. It is a magnificent edifice. It is, in fact, a jewel.

The acoustics in the main stage auditorium are excellent. The lows are rich and mellow. The mid-range is clean, and the highs are clear and crisp. Sight lines are perfect from every angle. Audience members will experience the greatest rush by simply entering the cavernous lobby and then taking their seats and gazing at the sweeping ceiling and expansive stage, long before the first note is sounded or the first line is spoken.

Must see events at the Gallo this season are:

- Belly Dance All Stars, February 29
- Vienna Boys Choir, March 8
- Mexico State Symphony, March 14
- 100 Years of Broadway, April 18
- Sweet Honey in the Rock—Women's Vocal Ensemble, April 20

The next big dance show phenomenon to follow Riverdance, Bellydance Superstars is the world's premier touring bellydance troupe, taking this ancient art form into the mainstream. The company has set a new standard for this most feminine and sensual dance art form.





THE GALAXY THEATER/RIVERBANK

In case you hadn't noticed, movie ticket prices are approaching \$10. If you are going to spend a small fortune to see a movie, you might as well do it at a place with comfortable seating. I recently watched a movie at a large Cineplex in my hometown. The seating made me believe I was trapped in a Greyhound bus. I could not avoid my knees knocking against the back of the seat in front of me. After two hours of this cramped discomfort, I resolved never to return. My suggestion is that you avoid that as well. I encourage you to go to the Galaxy Theater in Riverbank. Its seating is wide and spacious. A two-and-a-half-hour movie will not tax your comfort and the sound and picture quality are first rate. Why suffer elsewhere? Go to the Galaxy and have it all.

Here are my picks for March and April: "Definitely Maybe" (PG-13), starring Ryan Reynolds

"Jumper" (PG-13), starring Hayden Christensen

"StepUp 2 the Streets" (PG-13), starring Briana Evigan

"Vantage Point" (PG-13), starring Dennis Quaid

"The Other Boleyn Girl" (PG-13), starring Natalie Portman

"The Accidental Husband" (PG-13), starring Uma Thurman



Lynn Sampson Recommends