

CONCERTS



Clint Datchuk/Contributor

Now retired but still a rock fan, legendary music promoter Jack Orbin relaxes at home last week. With two friends, he formed Stone City Attractions.

Orbin's greatest hits

Promoter recalls rocking S.A., bringing in the greats before they were stars

By Richard A. Marini
STAFF WRITER

One of the scariest phone calls Jack Orbin ever received came in 1982, when Sharon Arden, Ozzy Osbourne's manager and now-wife, called with distressing news. Black Sabbath's lead singer and the self-proclaimed "Prince of Darkness" had been arrested for public intoxication after being caught urinating on the Alamo Cenotaph.

"He was an alcoholic, and he just had to go to the bathroom," recalled Orbin, at the time president of the San Antonio-based concert promotion company Stone City Attractions. "Sharon said we needed to get him out of jail because he had to play a sold-out HemisFair Arena show that night."



Courtesy Jack Orbin

Orbin gets a lift from the Van Halen brothers in 1979 after the band sold out its first Texas arena.

While Orbin put up Osbourne's \$40 bail, he never got the satisfaction of yelling at the guy.

"When you deal with rock stars you have to put up with these sorts of things all the time," said Orbin, who, by booking acts from AC/DC to ZZ Top, helped make San Antonio, for a time, the heavy metal capital of the United States. "Ozzy thought the whole thing was hysterical. Sharon didn't because she's a businesswoman."

The desecration of the Alamo, combined with the near-riot that broke out during the evening's concert, resulted in Osbourne being barred from performing in San Antonio for 10 years, a prohibition lifted only after he wrote a \$10,000 check to the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, at the time the caretakers of the Alamo.

Promoter continues on E5

Jazz pianist's shape-shifting style to challenge competition finalists

By Deborah Martin
STAFF WRITER

Aaron Prado strives to balance his work as a composer and a jazz pianist, but that can be tricky.

"When I'm composing, it takes so much time, effort and concentration that it's hard to do the same kinds of things that I would do if I was just trying to make myself a better piano player, like sit and work on technique or do transcription or play Bach for two hours," said Prado, 44. "You don't have time to do the whole thing.

"So I came out of my composition period and I went to go play a gig, and I was like, 'My hands don't work anymore!' I had been playing a lot, but it's a different kind of thing."

Prado spent a lot of time last year focused on "El Colibri y la Cempasúchil," a new work commissioned by Musical Bridges Around the World for the Gurwitz International Piano Competition. The piece will be played by the finalists in the third round of the competition, which takes place today through Feb. 4.

"It's nice to be asked to write things for other people to play," Prado said. "It feels like a big deal."

Pianists from around the world vie to take part in the competition, which was founded in 1983. This year, 76 applied, a field that the jury winnowed down to 12. That lineup will be further trimmed over the course of four rounds, with three finalists ultimately competing for gold, silver and bronze medals.

The addition of a commis-
Prado continues on E5



Jessica Phelps/Staff photographer

Jazz musician and composer Aaron Prado was commissioned to compose a piece for the Gurwitz International Piano Competition.






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