

## FOUNDER'S NOTES

Healdsburg Jazz Festival Founder and Artistic Director Jessica Felix moved to Healdsburg in 1994, and it wasn't long before she started looking for a jazz scene. She didn't find one, so she started her own. She booked her first concert at a local coffeehouse, with pianist George Cables. It sold out. Jessica continued to book concerts while pursuing a career as a jewelry designer and gallery owner. In 1999, she was approached by a group of jazz lovers and asked to launch a jazz festival.

The Healdsburg Jazz Festival has grown from three nights at a local movie house to a ten-day event that takes over the town of Healdsburg, already a well-known visitor destination. The potent mixture of good weather, great wine, fabulous food and transcendent music has made the Healdsburg Jazz Festival a favorite of musicians and fans. Flute player James Newton calls Jessica a "keeper of the flame" for her devotion to authentic jazz, and bassist Charlie Haden calls her a "jazz angel" in reference to how well she treats musicians.

Jessica has been producing concerts since 1980, and booked Gallery 552 in Oakland from 1981-1990. She is a charter member of *Jazz in Flight*, the founder of the *Eddie Moore Festival*, and in 1993, created *Children in Flight*, a free workshop series for young children in Oakland led by African drum master and educator Tacuma King.

Her dedication to education continues, and the Jazz Education Program is a major component of the Healdsburg Jazz Festival. Thousands of local students have met and played with professional musicians over the last decade, thanks in large part to Jessica's devotion to jazz.

The Healdsburg Jazz Festival takes place over a ten-day period, this year from May 30 to June 8, but it's a year-round obsession for Jessica. She organizes educational programs at local schools, books off-season concerts, and is constantly raising funds to produce the next festival, which is always, she vows, "the best one yet!"