

Johnny, we owe you one

From a Sept. 22 Santa Fe New Mexican story on jazz pianist Johnny Gilbert:

Profoundly inspired by a 1979 visit to a natural amphitheater in a red-rock canyon in Sedona, Gilbert set about convincing town leaders the site was perfect for a jazz festival. He began clearing the land by himself, using only a shovel and rake, and gradually rallied citizens to help make his vision a reality.

Gilbert and his new friends opened the gates to the first Sedona Jazz Festival in October 1982 and the program grew into a successful venue hosting national jazz acts.

From October to May, Gilbert serves as musical director and pianist at Arizona Country Club in Phoenix and performs at Troon Country Club in Scottsdale. He is well-known in the area for his charity work with children.

Article by Diane Porter of the Arizona Republic 2000