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# Wilson plays to sold-out crowd

Raises \$400,000 for Manchester Craftsmen's Guild endowment

by Christian Morrow  
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When jazz legend Nancy Wilson sings, she brings the "house down," but the concert she gave at the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild was designed to help build up the North Side arts center—and did it ever!

Wilson played to a sold-out crowd of more than 300 of Pittsburgh's movers and shakers Nov. 10 during the guild's first black-tie fund-raiser titled "Just Add Inspiration."

The event helped raise more than \$400,000 for the guild's endowment. The funds will be used to match corporate and foundation grants, including one from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

Wilson's performance was the second early Christmas gift she gave the guild. Earlier this year, she donated royalties to the organization from her new release, "A Nancy Wilson Christmas," recorded at the MCG.

Before her performance, donors and corporate sponsors—a veritable who's who of Pittsburgh's business, political and cultural elite—were treated to a "strolling dinner" of champagne, caviar, oysters, lamb and beef tenderloin.

Local jazz giants Joe Negri, Roger Humphries, Dwayne Dolphin and Jay Ashby—who also acted as Wilson's conductor—provided the musical accompaniment as celebrants enjoyed the treats amid a lush setting of art and white orchids.

When Wilson took center stage, elegantly clad in a white evening dress, she thanked the audience for its generosity in



NANCY WILSON

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Guild is a place where your money goes a long, long way—from the mother to the child, to the community," she said.

She then dedicated her performance to her husband, Pittsburgh native Rev. Wiley Burton and her three grandsons before opening with a rousing rendition of "Strike up the Band."

Backed by Sherri Miracle and the Diva All Woman Big Band, Wilson displayed a vocal dexterity that belies her 64 years.

Clutching a white handkerchief reminiscent of the one

Louis Armstrong always had at hand, she occasionally added tremolo to her voice by waving the microphone in front of her mouth while holding a note.

Wilson swept the crowd along on a journey through her nearly 50-year career. When she wasn't dazzling the audience with Duke Ellington's "Satin Doll" or Bonnie Raitt's "Make You Love Me," she made people laugh with stories of her family. She described her two youngest grandsons as "walking and busy and just irritating as all get out."

After her first standing ova-

tion, she returned to the stage with MCG Jazz producer and guitarist Marty Ashby to perform Ashby's bossa nova arrangement of "White Christmas" from her latest release.

Then she dropped the other shoe—introducing legendary jazz flautist Herbie Mann, who also stayed for her finale, "Let it Snow."

"That gives you an idea of what people think of Nancy and this place," said Ashby. "That someone like Herbie would fly across the country to come on stage for two tunes—it's incredible."

supporting the guild.  
Manchester Craftsmen's

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