FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 3, 2020

Media Contacts:
Gabe Napoleon, Marketing Manager
gabe@mahaiwe.org; 860-944-5009
Janis Martinson, Executive Director
janis@mahaiwe.org; 413-841-1363

Mahaiwe Announces 15th Anniversary Virtual Party on October 11

Great Barrington, Mass.—The Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center will celebrate its 15th anniversary as a year-round, nonprofit organization on Sunday, October 11 at 7:30pm. The celebration, called “Moving People, Moving Mountains,” will be held online for free, honoring founder Lola Jaffe with performances by Brian Stokes Mitchell, Emanuel Ax, Rosanne Cash, Michael Feinstein, Paul Taylor Dance Company, John Pizzarelli and Jessica Molaskey, China Forbes of Pink Martini, Jason Danieley, the Fab Faux, and more.

The event will also feature special tributes and surprise guests. Registration details are available at mahaiwe.org/15. Held in lieu of the Mahaiwe’s annual fundraising gala, donations of all amounts will be gratefully accepted.

Tony Award-winning Broadway singer and actor Brian Stokes Mitchell has lent his talents to many causes, including recently serenading front-line workers every evening on New York City’s Upper West Side.

A beloved local figure who plays with symphonies around the world, Emanuel Ax is a Grammy Award-winning classical pianist, who was onstage with friend Yo-Yo Ma for an earlier Mahaiwe anniversary in 2010.

Grammy Award-winning country singer-songwriter Rosanne Cash, who has appeared on the Mahaiwe stage and produces chart-topping singles which cross musical genres, will sing from her kitchen for this event.

Mahaiwe veteran, multi-platinum-selling recording artist Michael Feinstein is a Great American Songbook revivalist, singer and pianist.

With a specially-staged solo offering, modern dance group Paul Taylor Dance Company has a unique place among the Mahaiwe's performers. Founded by the late Paul Taylor, a giant in the genre, the company has made regular pilgrimages to the Mahaiwe since its opening gala night.

Another audience favorite, jazz guitarist and vocalist John Pizzarelli and his wife, celebrated singer and songwriter Jessica Molaskey, co-hosts of NPR's syndicated "Radio Deluxe," will bring their signature jazzy intimacy.
Representing the wildly popular international group Pink Martini, China Forbes is a co-lead vocalist of the jazz and pop band.

Another regional favorite with award-winning Broadway credentials, Jason Danieley is a Broadway singer and actor who Ben Bradley of The New York Times has called "the most exquisite tenor on Broadway." He is a frequent guest vocalist with the country's leading symphonies and pops orchestras.

Beatles tribute band The Fab Faux will wind up the evening with a note-perfect new recording of "Rain," a reminder that "the weather's fine, I don't mind."

The variety of performance genres included in “Moving People, Moving Mountains” reflects the range of programming typically found on the Mahaiwe stage across a year.

Remarking on the program title, Executive Director Janis Martinson says it sprang from a desire to highlight “the alchemy of rich culture and natural beauty in the Berkshires, where performers move us, and the setting moves us, in tandem. It also aptly describes founder Lola Jaffe, who inspired so many people to join her in a grand and worthwhile enterprise.”

A tireless champion of the performing arts in the Berkshires and elsewhere, Lola Jaffe was the driving force behind the rebirth of the Mahaiwe – a 1905 former vaudeville house and movie theater – into a buzzing, multi-disciplinary hub of performing arts, film, HD broadcasts, and educational programs. She launched the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center in 2005 as a non-profit organization to share the joy of the stage with the community year-round, so that Berkshire residents and visitors of all ages could experience high-quality live music, dance, drama, opera, and more.

“This is an apt time to reflect on the Mahaiwe's founding, which reminds us that this is not the first moment of struggle,” adds Martinson. “The Mahaiwe was launched when there were holes in the roof and the economy was rocky. But Lola knew what this aging building, given life, could mean to the southern Berkshires. She put years into realizing that dream and building a movement that would sustain what she began. With this party, we celebrate our founder and her founding vision, and commit ourselves to her legacy, no matter the current obstacles."

“So many superlatives come to mind when I think of Lola, not least of which is her refusal to accept limitation or defeat,” says Mahaiwe Board Chair Margaret Deutsch. “What a privilege it is for me to support the Mahaiwe, always in pursuit of her standards, her expectations, and her commitment to excellence. She is a role model, teacher, colleague, and friend.”

The event is being produced and directed by Jeremy Handelman of Off The Leash Productions.

About the Mahaiwe

Located in downtown Great Barrington, Massachusetts, the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center is the year-round presenter of world-class music, dance, theater, classic films, Live in HD
broadcasts, and arts education programs for the southern Berkshires and neighboring regions. The intimate jewel box of a theater opened in 1905. Since 2005, the performing arts center has hosted over 1,500 events and welcomed over half a million people through its doors. More than 22,000 students from 73 different schools have benefited from the Mahaiwe’s school-time performances and residencies. For more information, see mahaiwe.org.