

Mallorca hosts gig for dying jazz musician

ON January 31 this year, Stephen Franckevich was given six to 12 months to live.

He is a world renowned jazz trumpeter with a passion for Majorca and next Sunday he will be back here and experiencing the concert of his life.

More than 40 famed musicians from around the globe are flying in to the island for a monster jam session at Pacha, Son Caliu as a tribute to the man they love, and as a mark of respect for his incredible musical talent.

In a career that has spanned four decades Stephen played with greats such as Lionel Hampton, Blood Sweat and Tears, The Temptations and The Four Tops, whilst on Mallorca in the 80s he performed nightly at the Villa Rio Jazz Cafe with this quartet The Peter Pan Band.

Now all that talent is destined to be cruelly truncated.

"On the evening of the concert it will have been four months of the 12 lived," he commented, "technically that leaves me with eight left, but only one source really knows and it is not me, or the doctors."

When the news seeped out that Stephen's fight for life, which had begun with colon cancer in 2007, was



Stephen Franckevich.

no longer winnable, the concert 'decided to do me' as he put it. Having shed tears when he left Mallorca in the early 90s, Stephen admits that the island is 'like an old friend,' and 'coming back is like coming home.'

"If the reason weren't as it is I wouldn't have mixed feelings," he confided, "but still, what a lucky man am I! Yes! Lucky to be loved by those whom I have spent my golden years of performance back in the 80s with, and more than 40 or 50 of those friends are coming to Majorca for this celebration of my life. I'm moved beyond words."

As Stephen was struggling to come to terms with the doctors' bleak prognosis, a friend said to him, "We're all gonna die, you just happen to know more or less when."

He had already been offered the chance to

participate in experimental trials, but as he told his doctors, "I was doing my damndest to learn how to die correctly and that the dichotomy of dying well and trying to stay alive, well, it would take a better man than I to be able to do those at the same time."

However, following his friend's stark observation he reflected that "there is a time frame within which preparation is possible."

Sunday's concert forms part of that preparation.

It will be a joyful, up-beat part of a long journey at which all the top class artistes are performing for free. Pacha are donating the venue from 7.30pm until all the musicians have finally laid down their instruments, and every cent of the €10 paid on the door by the public will go to ease Stephen's final months.

It will also provide care afterwards for his seriously disabled partner whom he describes as, "one of the truly blessed entities on this planet. May she be safe until her last breath." ... but that's another story.

If you have been affected by cancer or would like to know more about Majorca's Cancer Support Group please call Krista Hyer on 661 080 101 or for regular information on meetings and events email cancersupportinmallorca@hotmail.com.

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