

LOCAL

ENTERTAINMENT

Local musician to open for Michael McDonald



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Rick Zuccaro will be the opening act for Michael McDonald at 8 p.m. Friday at the Stanley Center for the Arts in Utica.

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Most people never get to meet their heroes.

Local musician Rick Zuccaro has not only met his musical hero, Michael McDonald, while he was a teen, but he will perform as the opening act for him Friday at the Stanley Center for the Arts.

"When Jerry Kraus, executive director from the Stanley theater called to tell me I was selected to be the opening act for Michael McDonald, I was extremely excited, honored and humbled," Zuccaro

wrote in an email. "I have been a huge Michael McDonald fan since I started playing the piano at 9 years old, and I have been fortunate to have met him several times on the East and West coasts.

"I was 17 when I first met Michael McDonald. He took time to have a very inspirational and encouraging conversation with me that helped reconfirm that I would be a professional musician after I graduated from Utica College."

The fundraiser will benefit the Stanley and Valley Health Services, and Zuccaro hopes that with McDonald's star

power as a former Doobie Brother, the concert will be a hit.

"To be the opening act for the multi-Grammy Award-winning Michael McDonald is humbling, to say the least," he said. "I will be performing a 30-minute opening set of some of my original music, which has been greatly inspired by Michael McDonald and many great pop, rock, and R&B artists that have paved the way for so many of us songwriters.

"When I say this will be very humbling, it is because Michael will follow with his iconic, one-of-a-kind soulful

voice, performing his long list of chart-topping hit songs," Zuccaro said. "I am truly looking forward to Michael McDonald's performance at our incredible Stanley theater, and I am grateful for this amazing opportunity to interact with one of my all-time hero's in the music business."

Tickets range from \$29 to \$65 and are available from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the box office Monday through Friday, call (315) 724-4000 visit www.thestanley.org.

Zuccaro appeared on the Stanley stage in July prior to the Boilermaker Road Race in a tribute to Billy Joel.