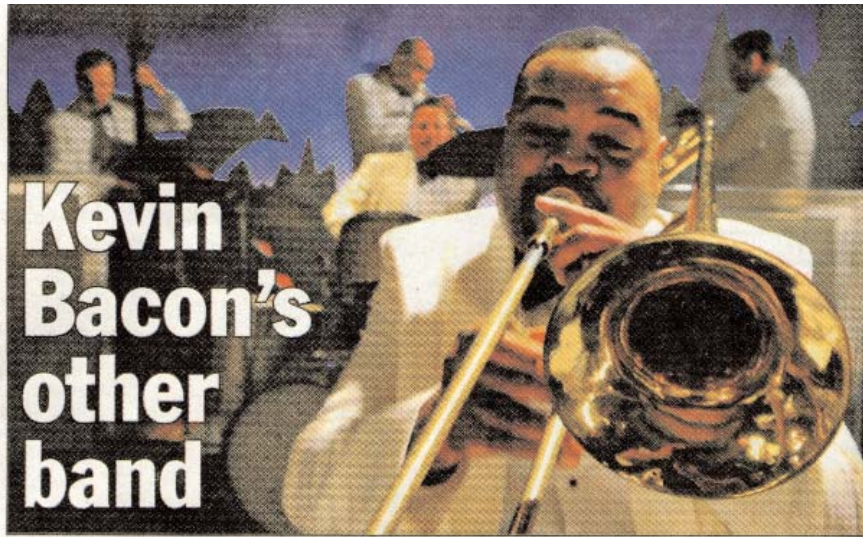


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Entertainment

Kevin Bacon's other band



Actor Cleo Reginald Plzana (formerly of HBO's "The Wire") sits in on trombone with members of the Blue Moon Big Band on the set of "My One and Only."

Blue Moon Big Band to appear in film, play Nissley Vineyards

BY JAMES BUESCHER
Sunday News Correspondent

Getting a little face time in a Hollywood movie might not be as hard as it seems.

Just ask Rob Leonard, who wields the baton for the Baltimore-based Blue Moon Big Band. When movie producers went searching for musicians to share the stage with Kevin Bacon, who plays a philandering bandleader in Herrick Entertainment's 1950s period comedy "My One and Only," Blue Moon rose to the occasion.

"One of our trombone players saw an ad on the Internet, and the movie company was putting out a casting call for musicians. So we contacted the company and sent them some CDs," Leonard said in a telephone interview from his home in Carroll County, Md. (The film was shot almost entirely in the Baltimore area.)

"When they called us back, we explained that we know this big band style of music inside and out, so unlike other musicians, we wouldn't have to learn the music from scratch. So they said OK, and we had the gig within the week."

The 19-member Blue Moon Big Band will give a foretaste of the film to come Saturday, Aug. 8, at Nissley Vineyards & Winery Estate in Bainbridge as part of the vineyard's series of lawn concerts.

Founded in Baltimore in 1998, Blue Moon celebrates the rich, full sound of the 1930s, '40s and '50s made famous by the likes of Count Basie, Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw.

The band, which rose to prominence in the midst of the modern-day swing revival, has released five studio albums and has been featured on NPR's "Swingin' Down the Lane."

"My One and Only" is Blue Moon's first feature film. The picture stars Renee Zellweger as Ann Devereaux, who is leaving her unfaithful high-society bandleader husband (Bacon) and taking their two teenage sons (Logan Lerman, Mark Rendall) on a road trip to find a replacement spouse. The picture opens Aug. 21 in limited release.

As could be expected, members of the band were initially apprehensive about working closely with a Hollywood heavyweight like Bacon, who's starred in dozens of films including "Frost/Nixon," "Mystic River," "A Few Good Men" and "JFK."



Kevin Bacon

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Blue Moon: Big-band swing

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"On that first day, we didn't even know what to call him," Leonard said. "Like, would he be surrounded by his 'people' and demand we call him 'Mr. Bacon'? But Kevin turned out to be great. He's got a sense of humor and he loves to carry on."

"He's just a regular guy who also happens to work as a big-budget Hollywood movie star."

The band spent almost 40 hours on the set with Kevin,

and there was seldom a dull moment, Leonard said. If downtime between shots dragged on too long, they just jammed.

Jamming is something the band does well. The upcoming concert at Nissley Vineyards will feature such swingin' classics as Glenn Miller's "In the Mood," Benny Goodman's "Sing, Sing, Sing," Ellington's "Satin Doll" and Frank Sinatra's "In the Wee Small Hours."

"When you've been doing this for 11 years, you get to

know what people like. A lot of people know this music, even if they don't know the title, because they've been hearing it their whole lives," Leonard said. "This is music that touches everyone because it has endured the test of time."

Blue Moon Big Band will perform at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 8, at Nissley Vineyards, 140 Vintage Drive, Bainbridge, with the wine and snack bar opening at 6 p.m. Because alcohol is served, guests must be 21 to attend. For ticket information, visit <http://missleywine.com> or call 426-3514.