Alexander Lofts closure is emerging as a potential turning point in the efforts of residents and local officials.

By Tony Doris

Reported by Palm Beach Post staff writers

West Palm Beach — A section of the brick walls of the Alexander Lofts peeled off the 90-year-old apartment building and crashed four stories onto a one-story law office Thursday morning, causing minor injuries to four people and leading firefighters to evacuate all buildings on a section of Fourth Street and halt construction of apartment buildings across the street for at least three days.

At least three of the four injuries happened inside the law offices of William W. Price, P.A., at 120 Fourth St., whose roof was smashed by the avalanche of bricks at 11:20 a.m., causing severe damage to a wall and ceiling of one of the office suites, said city officials. No further information was available on the injuries.

Firefighters evacuated people and pets from the buildings and escorted residents back in by one-by-one to retrieve essentials and leave. Assistant Fire Chief Diana Matty said the apartment building would have to remain vacant for at least three days, pending theBrunswick on the street.

The accident to rusted metal tie rods that attached the facade, causing severe damage to one of the office suites, said city officials. No further information was available on the injuries.

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WHY IS THIS 12-YEAR-OLD A YOUTUBE SENSATION?

Jazz whiz kid Joey Alexander plays Festival of the Arts Boca

PLUS: REGGAE FEST IN NORTHWOOD, PAGE 3

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FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS BOCA RATON

‘I love the freedom in jazz’

At 12, pianist Joey Alexander is a rising star.

By Leslie Gray Streeter
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

What were your middle school performances like? Did they involve some sort of group singing of “Jingle Bells?” Some now-regrettable and dubiously rhymed poetry? Were Herbie Hancock and Common in the room, smiling and doing the approving jazz head bop while you played? It’s likely you can’t say “yes” to the third question, unless you’re 12-year-old Joey Alexander. The Indonesian-born piano prodigy recently performed an original composition, “City Lights,” at the Grammy Awards, where he was nominated for Best Improvised Jazz Solo and Best Jazz Instrumental Album, garnering a standing ovation from the fancy crowd.

He’ll be bringing that virtuosity to Festival of the Arts Boca Raton on Friday, March 11, along with his trio. The very busy young man answered some questions for us about the Grammys, his jazz-fueled inspirations and his musical hero.

Question: Your Grammy performance was pretty thrilling, because you seemed so confident. Were you nervous at all?

Answer: Oh yes … The venue was so big, and this is a new experience for me. I prayed to the Lord.

Q: What was it that first drew you to piano, and especially to jazz?

A: I love the sound of a piano and I love the freedom in jazz.

Q: Tell me about jazz as personal expression.

A: I love jazz because it connects me with this great tradition, and also allows me to tell my own stories and put my personality into my arrangements and, of course, improvisation.

Q: Who is the biggest hero of yours, someone you have worked with?

A: Mr. Wynton Marsalis

Q: I’m sure that for a lot of people, seeing a kid your age play how you play seems like a novelty, until they actually hear you and see how great you are. What advice do you have for kids, or even adults, who might feel underestimated?

A: Well, first of all, I’m not “great” and I would say to them, “never feel underestimated,” even though it sounds and looks like it. My dad gave me understanding about this, so I know it is normal for people to doubt. Keep playing, keep listening and keep improving. … Never give up. Read the story of the great Thelonious Monk. It took a long time for people to understand what he was trying to say.

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Piano prodigy Joey Alexander performs during Festival of the Arts Boca Raton. The 12-year-old jazz star will play at the Mizner Park Amphitheater at 7:30 p.m. Friday, March 11. For tickets, visit FestivaloftheArtsBoca.org.
5 ACTS TO SEE AT FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS BOCA RATON

By Leslie Gray Streeter
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Festival of the Arts Boca Raton is South County’s annual exhibition of some of the most compelling singers, musicians, authors and others who combine personal expression with undeniable artistry. While Grammy-nominated prodigy Joey Alexander is one of the biggest draws this year, here are five more acts to watch:

“Raiders of the Lost Ark”, Friday, 7:30 p.m., Mizner Park Amphitheater: Already the subject of a fun video by Boca notables to promote the festival, Steven Spielberg’s 1981 archaeological adventure epic is presented with the Henry Mancini Institute Orchestra from the University of Miami Frost School of Music, conducted by Constantine Kitsopoulos interpreting John Williams’ gorgeous score.

Herb Alpert & Lani Hall, Sunday, 7 p.m. Mizner Park Amphitheater: Legendary trumpeter, A&M Records founder, producer and Latin jazz impresario Albert appears with wife Lani Hall, noted singer from Sergio Mendes and Brasil 66 and “Never Say Never Again,” the theme to the 1983 James Bond movie of the same name.


Joshua Bell, Vivaldi’s “Four Seasons”, March 16, 7 p.m. Mizner Park Amphitheater: Combine one of the most evocative, expressive musical works ever composed - there are soaring parts of Vivaldi’s “Spring” movement that are an inducement to weep heavily and joyfully - and world-class talent like Bell, and it’s heart-stopping genius.

Laila Lalami, March 9, 7 p.m., Cultural Arts Center: The Moroccan-born Pulitzer Prize-nominated poet and author is a provocative commentator on race, immigration and forgotten lives. It looks like a fascinating evening.

See “Raiders of the Lost Ark” today at Mizner Park Festival of the Arts BOCA. CONTRIBUTED

Lani Hall and Herb Alpert will perform Sunday at the Festival of the Arts BOCA. CONTRIBUTED 2012

Poet and author Laila Lalami performs Wednesday. CONTRIBUTED

Joshua Bell will perform Vivaldi’s “Four Seasons” at the Mizner Park Amphitheater Saturday. CONTRIBUTED BY PHIL KNOTT

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