

Arts & Culture Magazine

RAPID RIVER

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Baritone David Malis performs as part of Asheville Lyric Opera's 10th Year Anniversary Concert. PAGE 5



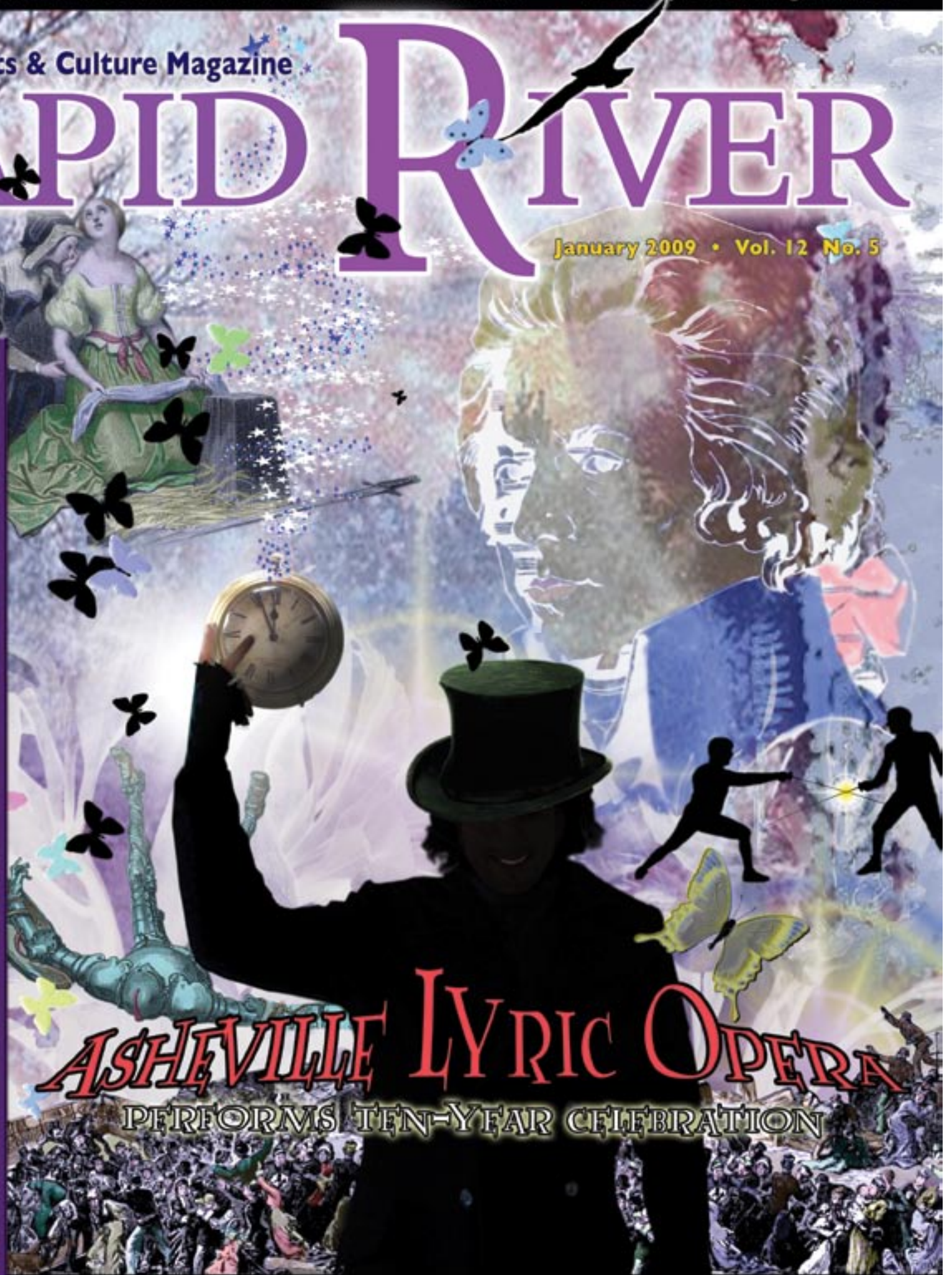
"Galumph," a three-performer acrobatic ensemble, performs on January 23 and 24. PAGE 8



Adam Avery of Avery Brewing Co., with Jason and Julie Atallah, co-owners of Brusin' Ales, at a beer tasting event. PAGE 32



Southern Fried Chicks PAGE 6



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ART TALK

Experience Christo and Jeanne-Claude: Projects

The Asheville Art Museum invites you to experience the innovative works of internationally acclaimed artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude in the exhibition titled Christo and Jeanne-Claude: Projects opening Friday, January 16, 2009 with an opening reception from 5 to 7 p.m. that evening. This event is free with Museum Membership or admission.

Held in conjunction with the Asheville Art Museum's smArt speak: Distinguished Artist Series, Christo and Jeanne-Claude: Projects offers audiences the chance to see the artistic process behind many of the monumental public art projects undertaken by Christo and Jeanne-Claude during the past five decades.

Christo and Jeanne-Claude have transcended the traditional boundaries of painting, drawing, sculpture and architecture. This exhibition examines the wide variety of media used by the artists and explores the breadth of their work as they move from contained forms to more fluid, open structures that evoke tensile architecture. The exhibition will include early packages and wrapped objects like Package, 1961, a tightly wrapped and bound mass. It continues with drawings and collages for most of the artists' monumental projects, including The Umbrellas, Japan—U.S.A., 1984-91, The Pont Neuf Wrapped, Paris, 1975-85, Surrounded Islands, Biscayne Bay, Greater Miami, Florida, 1980-83, and Running Fence, Sonoma and Marin Counties, California, 1972-76.

Christo and Jeanne-Claude's installation projects require years of planning. The considerable activity which precedes the installation of a piece is as much a part of the work as the actual installations. Zoning board hearings, public forums, parliamentary debates, legal negotiations, preparatory drawings and collages are part of the process. This is why each particular progression of activities is referred to as a "project" and the dates for each start with the inception of the idea and end with the completion of the piece.



Christo and Jeanne-Claude at "The Gates, Central Park, New York City, 1979-2005" in February 2005.

Photo by Wolfgang Volz.
Copyright Christo and Jeanne-Claude 2005.

BY KIM ZDANOWICZ

Christo and Jeanne-Claude were both born on June 13, 1935, he as Christo Javacheff in Bulgaria and she as Jeanne-Claude Denat de Guillebon in Morocco of a French military family. Christo studied at the Fine Arts Academy in Sofia, Bulgaria from 1953 to 1956. In 1957, he escaped Prague, eventually making his way to Paris. There Christo met Jeanne-Claude in 1958 when he was commissioned to paint a portrait of

her mother. Jeanne-Claude was educated in France and Switzerland, and earned degrees in philosophy and Latin from the University of Tunis. Since that time, they have collaborated on an impressive array of artistic work.

This exhibition was organized and curated by the Asheville Art Museum with special thanks to Christo and Jeanne-Claude. This exhibition is sponsored in part by Bank of America.

Related programs:

Christo and Jeanne-Claude Community Poster Installation, Thursday, January 15 to Sunday, February 15, 2009.

Art Break: Christo and Jeanne-Claude: Projects. Friday, January 30, 12 noon. Free with Museum Membership or Admission.

www.ashevilleart.org. Visit our blog!
www.ashevilleartmuseum.blogspot.com



Centrally located in downtown Asheville on Pack Square, the Museum is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday. The Museum is open every Friday until 8 p.m. Admission to the Museum is \$6 for adults and \$5 for seniors, students with ID and for children 4-15 (children age three and younger are admitted free). Members are admitted free to the Museum.



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Tonio DiPaolo



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Message from the Publisher



Harrison Graham Ray, son of Dennis Ray.

I've always found it kind of funny how at the beginning of the year those who cringe at yet other birthday welcome in a *new* year with such an incredible amount of excitement.

I do love the start of each year. There is something nice about being able to start anew, to be able to say "Okay, I forgive myself for all my faults and weaknesses and will strive to do better." This is what January has come to mean to me — a month to attempt to do anything and everything I have put off doing. I find it to be my most productive month as far as projects go.

Most of all I believe January is a month to reflect on all that we have, and a month to dream of all that we

can become. In February we will be announcing the winners of our 2008 Poetry Contest. We will also launch a new section, Downtown Asheville, a handy map pinpointing arts, dining, shopping, and other destinations and activities in downtown Asheville. Be sure to check that issue out.

Also, a quick reminder on the importance of advertising (that's how we pay the bills so bear with me on this one). It's easy to want to pull the horns in and hope people magically buy your product or service, but a business has a very hard time generating income without letting people know they're out there.

I've easily seen more than 100 local businesses who said they didn't believe in advertising, or those who spent too much on expensive advertising that didn't do them much good, come and go during the past 12 years. *Rapid River Magazine* reaches over 35,000 readers every month and has almost a 100% pick-up rate. We are the most affordable and legitimate form of advertising in the area. Give us a call, we can help.

*To all of our readers, supporters, writers, and staff,
I wish you all the best in 2009.*

~ DENNIS RAY, PUBLISHER RAPID RIVER MAGAZINE

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JANUARY 2009

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Inside

2 Fine Art

Christo and Jeanne-Claude . . . 2
Arts Council of Henderson Co. . 16
Heather Lewis 17
Focus Gallery 19
Gallery 86 19
Jerry P. Cram 20

5 Stage

Asheville Lyric Opera . . . 5
Southern Fried Chicks . . . 6
Aquila Theatre Company . . . 7
Galumph 8
Dublin Philharmonic Orchestra . . 8
Young Audience Series 10
Asheville Community Theatre . . 12
HART's Feichter Studio 12
Lipizzaner Stallions 33

11 Music

Dehila Low 11
Steep Canyon Rangers . . . 11
David Bromberg 15
Alejandro Escovedo 38
Sol Driven Train 38

13 Columns

James Cassara - Music . . 16
H. Byron Ballard - Books . . 22
MariJo Moore - Poetry . . 23
Michael Parker - Wine 29
Peter Loewer - Garden . . . 30
Bill Walz - Artful Living . . 31
Joe Zinich - Beer 32

25 Movie Reviews

34 Classes

UNCA Writing Program . . . 34
John MacKah 35
Cloth Fiber Workshop . . . 35

36 What to Do Guide™

Best in Show by Phil Juliano . . 37
Callie & Cats by Amy Downs . . 37
Corqi Tales by Phil Hawkins . . 37

COVER STORY

Anniversary Concert

Three Metropolitan Opera performers.
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Three choral programs represented by more than 80 singers. All on one stage in Asheville. Yes, Asheville. And for those who have ever longed to see a live performance by a Metropolitan Opera singer but have not, this is your opportunity to do so in an architectural setting that is reminiscent of the Italian city where opera began.

"We are bringing some of the biggest names in opera to Asheville," said David Craig Starkey, founder and General and Artistic Director of the Asheville Lyric Opera (ALO), which celebrates its tenth year anniversary on Friday, January 30. "This concert is set to rival operatic celebrations of larger cities."

Asheville Lyric Opera's Tenth Year Anniversary Concert, to be held at the historical First Baptist Church in downtown Asheville on Oak Street, will feature Metropolitan Opera performers Soprano Angela Brown, Baritone David Malis, and Tenor Tonio DiPaolo.

Each soloist will perform favorite Italian arias. Members from the Lyric Opera Orchestra, Hendersonville Symphony and the Asheville Symphony Orchestra will perform under the direction of Dr. Robert Hart Baker. The Lyric Opera Chorus will be joined by the choruses of Mars Hill College and Brevard College to create a legend of over 80 voices on stage.

"This is truly a world class experience right here in the best of all small cities," said Starkey. "To have our anniversary performance at the historical and acoustically superb First Baptist Church of Asheville has added significance."

The church, designed by architect Douglas D. Ellington and completed in 1927, is one of Asheville's great architectural treasures. "Ellington based the design of the sanctuary space on the famous cathedral and dome of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence, Italy. What is interesting is that Santa Maria del Fiore was built during the Renaissance period when opera was said to have originated in Florence. There is a tie between time, place and space as we perform at First Baptist Church of Asheville."

BY BETH CARTER

The Stage is Set

"For the anniversary concert Dr. Robert Hart Baker and members of the Asheville Symphony Orchestra will return and be with us as they were at our inaugural performance in 2000 when we co-produced *La Boheme*," said Starkey. "We are excited to have Dr. Baker to conduct and lead the wealth of talent that will fill the stage that evening."

"An opera highlights concert is a lot of fun for people because, sonically speaking, you get to hear something that approaches the type of music on the Met broadcast," said Baker by phone

from his home in York, PA, where he is music director of the York Symphony and Harrisburg Choral Society. "The Met has a huge orchestra and they can do some pretty spectacular

things. This anniversary concert will give us a chance to give a concert with that amount of electricity and sheer sound to it."

Tenor Toni DiPaolo is one of three lead performers at the concert. He believes a concert is a great way for newcomers to be introduced to opera. "Without having to listen to a full opera, they hear pieces that are very famous and popular," he said. The connection is also greater between the audience and the performer. "When you are in full costume and make-up, you are more involved with your role and you stay in character. When in concert, you are out there to present yourself."

DiPaolo, described as a rich tenor with comic gifts and sheer acting ability, has performed throughout North America and Europe on the stages of the Metropolitan Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Canadian Opera Company, Houston Grand Opera, and Lyric Opera of Chicago.

The powerhouse concert will also feature Angela Brown who made her Metropolitan Opera debut in 2004 to rave reviews and has been described as



Opera legend
Sherrill Milnes



Soprano
Angela Brown



Baritone
David Malis



Tenor
Tonio DiPaolo

America's most promising Verdi soprano. She has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Oprah Magazine* and *Ebony*.

"Angela's personal charm wins fans quickly," said Starkey. "In this concert setting where she has more opportunity for audience interaction Asheville will see why she is loved by so many audiences."

David Malis, the first American to win the prestigious Cardiff *Singer of the World* Competition, began his operatic career with the San Francisco Opera,

followed by 12 years as a leading baritone at the Metropolitan Opera. Malis was also involved in ALO's inaugural production of *La Boheme*.

A highlight of the concert will be an appearance by Sherrill Milnes who will be presented with a special honorary award from Asheville Mayor Terry Bellamy.

In his 40-plus year career as the international leading Verdi baritone,

'Asheville Lyric Opera' continued on pg. 13

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~ DAVID CRAIG STARKEY

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STAGE PREVIEW

The Southern Fried Chicks Comedy Tour

BY JOHN ELLIS

The top-grossing all female comedy tour on the road today, the Southern Fried Chicks, are where the Old South, the New South, and the Deep South come together for an evening of non-stop laughter and clever story-telling. Life and love in the USA have never been funnier than when these four original “desperate housewives” give their points of view.

The Southern Fried Chicks Comedy Tour was inspired by the success of the Comedy Stage franchise on the national cable network, Country Music Television (CMT). “Chicks” ringleader Etta May is a headline comic on CMT’s “CMT Comedy Stage”, which is the second highest rated show in CMT history and ultimately led to the production of the Southern Fried Chicks Comedy Tour. Etta May is often described as “Minnie Pearl with a migraine.” The reigning queen of Southern sass, she won the prestigious American Comedy Awards’ “Stand-Up Comic of the Year”, and has appeared on *Oprah*, *Comic Strip Live*, MTV, as a guest commentator on *CBS Sunday Morning*, in several CMT specials, and is a regular on the syndicated *Bob & Tom* radio show and on XM Radio’s comedy channels.

Joining Etta May for the Southern Fried Chicks Comedy Tour are comedienne Trish Suhr, Sonya White and Beth Donahue. Trish Suhr is a Kentucky native who left the family funeral business to become a stand up comedian. Suhr is the host and yard sale diva on the Style Network’s hit show, *Clean House*. Sonya White is originally from Virginia but now lives in Chicago, making her the “city girl” of the Chicks. White has appeared on *Last Comic Standing* and is a featured comedian on Verizon Wireless’s “Fun and Games” mobile accessories option. Beth Donahue is a native from Nashville and has appeared on VH-1’s *Stand-Up Spotlight With Rosie O’Donnell*, *Evening at the Improv* and Showtime’s *Comedy Club Network*.

The Southern Fried Chicks Comedy



Tour’s Asheville performances are made possible by Special Attractions Series Sponsors Michael & Catty Andry and Bank of America, with additional support from Media Sponsor WNC Magazine.

The Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack Place is located in the center of downtown Asheville on historic Pack Square within walking distance of many shops and restaurants. The intimate theatre seats just over 500 and boasts

exceptional acoustics and sightlines, making it the premier performance space in all of Western North Carolina. The Mainstage Series is supported by a grant from the North Carolina Arts Council, a state agency. The Mainstage Series 2008/2009 season sponsors are Asheville Citizen-Times, Creative Energy, Laurey’s Catering and Gourmet-to-go, and Renaissance Asheville Hotel.

To obtain more information about The Southern Fried Chicks Comedy Tour at Diana Wortham Theatre or to purchase tickets (Regular \$30; Senior \$28; Student \$25; Children \$10), call the theatre’s box office at (828) 257-4530 or visit www.dwththeatre.com. Student Rush tickets (\$10 for students with valid I.D.) are sold the day of the show, based on availability.

www.southernfriedchickscomedytour.com

**IF
YOU
GO:**

The Southern Fried Chicks
Comedy Tour starring Etta
May and featuring Trish Suhr,
Beth Donahue and Sonya
White. Part of the Mainstage Special
Attractions Series.

Saturday, January 17, 7:00 p.m. and 9:30
p.m. at the Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack
Place. Tickets: Regular \$30; Seniors \$28;
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Aquila Theatre Company is one of the foremost producers of touring theater and is widely renowned for bringing a thoroughly modern sensibility to great classics throughout the United States and abroad.

Wonderfully vibrant and imaginative, Aquila Theatre Company has been recognized as a "classically trained, modernly hip troupe," by theatre reviewers of *The New York Times*. Over the past several Mainstage Series seasons, Asheville audiences have come to know and anticipate the annual repertory offering of this creative company. With superb acting, clever staging, and innovative takes on strong scripts, Aquila makes classical theatre fresh and accessible.

On January 30, Aquila presents *The Iliad*: Homer's epic story of Achilles and the Trojan War, and undoubtedly one of the greatest works in world literature. The story of a disparate group of soldiers and refugees taking refuge from a savage war and finding solace and humanity, *The Iliad* has had a profound influence on every generation since its first performance by ancient Greek bards in the Mediterranean over 2500 years ago.

Aquila's production is inspired by the cover of Stanley Lombardo's translation, entitled *Into the Jaws of Death*: a photograph of the D-Day landings. Described by *The New York Times* as "A performance of staggering power," the Aquila Theatre Company's production of Homer's *Iliad* creates a "stunning, stirring, and memorable" theatrical experience.

On January 31, Aquila's presents Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors*, a sensational new revival that celebrates

BY JOHN ELLIS

ten years since it first toured the United States. The Aquila Theatre Company's imaginative and exuberant production of Shakespeare's classic comedy is a "must-see" for newcomers to Shakespeare and Bard enthusiasts alike. Aquila's smash hit has played extended engagements in New York, Boston, Los Angeles and, Europe.

Brilliant comedy abounds in this witty take of mistaken identity, assumed personas, hilarious machinations and whimsical family ties. Shakespeare expertly weaves these boisterously entertaining strands together allowing his audience to stay one step ahead of his characters and laugh heartily at the outrageous results. *The New Yorker* qualifies, "The Classics made relevant with superb acting and clever staging."



"If you see only one piece of theatre this year – see Aquila's *Iliad*." ~ Backstage

Pre-Show Discussions:

Audience members can attend free pre-performance discussions in The Forum at Pack Place at 7:00 p.m. before both performances. The January 30 *The Iliad* pre-show discussion is hosted by Dr. Mario DiCesare, former Professor at the State University of New York.

The moderator for the January 31

The Comedy of Errors pre-show discussion is still to be announced. In addition to its evening performances, Aquila Theatre Company presents *The Iliad* for students and teachers as part of the Diana Wortham Theatre Young Audience Series, 10 a.m. Friday, January 30.

The Aquila Theatre Company's performances of *The Iliad* and *The Comedy of Errors* are presented in partnership with UNC Asheville Cultural and Special Events, and are



"No one who sees the rousing production by the excellent Aquila Theatre will forget a whit of it." ~ The New York Times on Aquila's "The Comedy of Errors"

made possible by Mainstage Theatre Series Sponsors UBS and Drs. Lee & Mario DiCesare. Additional support for *The Iliad* is made possible by Performance Sponsors Gary & Patty Coleman.

IF YOU GO:

The Aquila Theatre Company, directed by Peter Meinck, presents Homer's "The Iliad," 8 p.m. Friday, January 30, and Shakespeare's "The Comedy of Errors," 8 p.m. Saturday, January 31.

At Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack Place in downtown Asheville. Tickets: Regular \$32; Senior \$30; Student \$27. Call the box office at (828) 257-4530 or visit www.dw-theatre.com. Student Rush tickets (\$10 for students with valid I.D.) are sold the day of the show, based on availability.

ACDT: Celebrating 30 Years of Modern Dance

5 choreographers, 22 dancers, 48 hours... See what happens when five choreographers of different genres of movement are challenged to create a piece of choreography for dancers they may have never worked with before in only 48 hours.

The first annual 48 Hour Dance Project, sponsored in part by the Asheville Area Arts Council, puts five local dance artists up to this challenge. The five completed (or not so completed) pieces will be performed on Sunday, February 1 at 7 p.m.

To add to the fun of this project, three judges who are avid watchers and fans of dance from the Asheville

community will adjudicate the concert and award the top three pieces with cash prizes and offer the top two pieces the chance to be performed again in a Tropicana Cabaret later in the spring.

What happens when a break-dancer has to choreograph a piece for modern dancers and salsa dancers? What happens when a salsa dancer has to create a piece for hip hop artists? Come enjoy this fun, creative, and rowdy experiment in movement.

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STAGE PREVIEW

Muscle and Merriment Combine in Acrobatic Troupe *Galumph*

Formed in 2002 by dancers Andy Horowitz and Greg O'Brien (Asheville audiences will recognize them from Second Hand Dance), Galumph is a three-performer ensemble including Horowitz, Marlon Torres and Erin Stanley.

Combining stunning acrobatics, striking visual effects, physical comedy and inventive, world-class choreography, Galumph brings to life a world of imagination, beauty, muscle and merriment through a fast-paced, athletic brand of movement, distinctive for its ingenuity. A triumphant mix of art and entertainment, Galumph is a recipient of the coveted Edinburgh Festival Critics' Choice Award.

Hailed as "a giddy balancing act" by *The Washington Post*, and as "preposterous, wonderful stuff" by *The Boston Globe*, Galumph creates a sensory feast of images ranging from the ridiculous to the sublime, drawn together into a seamless whole, consistently bringing audiences to their feet. Viewed by over one billion viewers around the globe, television performance highlights include the work

BY JOHN ELLIS

Velcro on "The Late Show with David Letterman," "Crook and Chase" (TNN), and the 2002 MDA Jerry Lewis Telethon, and the work *Clackers* as seen on MTV, Showtime, A&E, and the show *Just for Laughs* in Montreal.

Andy Horowitz is a co-founder of Galumph; he has been performing and creating choreography since 1982 when he was an undergraduate at Binghamton University. Horowitz has had varied roles that exploit his physical talents, including performing in Kung Fu movies and working as a Wild West stunt rider. Adept with working with his hands, Horowitz



also creates the company's costumes and props.

Marlon Torres joined Galumph in 2002 and co-created the work *The Cellar Door* with Horowitz and Greg O'Brien. He has performed lead dance roles on stages throughout the Americas, Europe and Asia. Torres is a regular guest dancer with the Fokine Ballet Company in New York, is on the teaching faculty of North Carolina Arts

in Action, and was accepted to train at the National Dance Institute's Teacher Artist Training Program.

Erin Stanley has performed with Galumph since 2005. A well-rounded performer and teacher, she is in her senior

year of a Binghamton University Theatre major. Additionally, she received first place in competitive Women's Sparring at the International World Championships in Cardiff, Wales for the martial art *Tang Soo Do*.

Galumph's Asheville performances are made possible by Performance Sponsor Henry LaBrun and Special Attractions Series Sponsors Michael & Catty Andry and Bank of America, with additional support from Media Sponsor WNC Magazine.

www.galumph.com

IF YOU GO:

"Galumph," part of the Mainstage Special Attractions Series, Friday & Saturday, January 23 & 24, 8 p.m. at the Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack Place.

Tickets: Regular \$30; Seniors \$28; Students \$25. Student Rush day-of-the-show (with valid ID) \$10. Box Office (828) 257-4530 or visit www.dwttheatre.com.



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The Dublin Philharmonic Orchestra was initially formed in the mid 1800's and gave regular concerts throughout the capital city until the late 1930's, at which point there was a cessation of activities with the advent of World War Two.

In 1997 The Dublin Philharmonic Orchestra was reconstituted under the guidance of Music Director Derek Gleeson, drawing its members from the finest orchestral musicians in not only Ireland but all of Europe. The second incarnation of The Dublin Philharmonic Orchestra gave its premier concert during the 1997 Kilkenny Arts Festival at the great 13th century Norman cathedral "St. Canices," in the ancient city of Kilkenny. The orchestra has recorded classical and contemporary repertoire for numerous major record companies, as well as a plethora of scores for motion pictures and television.

Currently, The Dublin Philharmonic

Orchestra is in the midst of their inaugural 49 concert tour of the United States of America, including this January 31st in Asheville. Bravo is proud to bring one of the superlative symphonies of the world right here to Western North Carolina for an evening of Brahms and Beethoven.

In addition to this performance, Bravo includes a complimentary thirty-minute educational lecture regarding the performance one-hour prior to the show. This lecture will be led by Dr. Vance Reese and will take place in the Banquet Hall of the Civic Center.

For more information about Asheville Bravo Concerts or this performance please call (828) 225-5887 and visit us on the web at www.ashevillebravoconcerts.org.

IF YOU GO:

Presented by Asheville Bravo Concerts

Saturday, January 31 at 7:30 p.m. in the Thomas Wolfe Auditorium, Asheville, NC.

Tickets: \$20-\$50, through Ticketmaster at www.ticketmaster.com, The Civic Center Box Office, or by calling (828) 225-5887. Students receive half-price seating.

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IN THE FEICHTER STUDIO



Ladyhouse Blues

January 9, 10, 11 (possible hold over dates January 14-18)
By Kevin O'Malley
Featuring: Teresa Breskey, Emily Warren, Shanda Jacobs
and Adrienne Mollette

It is St. Louis in 1919 and five women are gathered awaiting the return of the family's men from the war in Europe. "A strangely atmospheric play... [that] has the haunting quality of Chekhov." - N.Y. Times. "An exceptionally talented playwright." - N.Y. Post.

Scattergood

January 23, 24, 25 (possible hold over dates January 30-February 1)
By Arto Howard
Featuring: Steve Lloyd, Sean Bruce and Becky Harper

"This suspenseful drama features what might be the most provocative student-teacher relationship since David Mamet's 'Oleanna'." - Time Out. "There is something warm and delightful in the relationship between the two men, as if Don Quixote were passing along his Quixoticness to the next generation." - N.Y. Times.

The Belle of Amherst

February 6, 7, 8 (possible hold over dates February 13-15)
By William Luce
Featuring: Christy Bishop

A play based on the life of Emily Dickinson. "Magnificent... Full of passion and poetry and heart... An arresting, riveting experience." N.Y. Daily News. "One of the most singularly beautiful evenings I've ever spent in the theater... A beautiful play." - Boston Globe.

Desperate Affection

February 20, 21, 22 (possible hold over dates February 27-March 1)
By Bruce Graham
Featuring: Julie Kinter and Jack Ross

"You will walk out of the theatre slightly dazed by the outcome." - Philadelphia Daily News. "A comic look at how ridiculously people can be and how much they will sacrifice for the chance at true love." - Variety.

Inside Out: A Musical

March 6, 7, 8 (possible hold over dates March 13-15)
Book by Doug Hevory with Music by Adrián Rius
Featuring: Lorraine Connard, Frances Davis, Casey Dupree, Margaret Evans, Anne Rhymer, Suzanne Tinsley, Tabitha Judy

"[The] characters seem like real people even when they sing and dance... A bright, witty and wise musical comedy about the way we live now." - N.Y. Times. "A cheerful enterprise with buoyant music... Very satisfying." - N.Y. Newsday. "Could be the next Fantastical!" - WABC Radio.

Rabbit Hole

March 20, 21, 22 (possible hold over dates March 27-29)
By David Lindsay-Abaire
Featuring: Jennifer Seiner, Christy Bishop, Frances Davis, Jeff Messer
and Jonathan Miller

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize. "A beautifully observed new play blessed with David Lindsay-Abaire's customary grace and wit. The sad, sweet release of 'Rabbit Hole' lies precisely in the access it allows to the pain of others, in its meticulously mapped empathy." - Ben Brantley, New York Times.

Krapp's Last Tape

April 17, 18, 19 (possible hold over dates April 24-26)
By Samuel Beckett
Featuring: Tony Nienhuis

The Off Broadway sensation, a tour de force for one man, is the most affectionate portrait of a character that Beckett has ever done. One of the 20th century's most important plays by one of its greatest playwrights.

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STAGE PREVIEW

The Diana Wortham Theatre At Pack Place Announces its 2009 School Show Series for Young Audiences

Diana Wortham Theatre's School Show Series serves more than 5,000 students and teachers every season – stretching minds, working imaginations and deepening learning. The popular School Show Series provides professionally produced, curriculum-related performances for thousands of young people each year complete with study guides and a post-show question and answer period.

Tickets / Reservations: Ticket pricing information for students is listed based on the performance. Teachers and bus drivers are free with groups of 10 or more. The Y.E.S. (Youth Education Scholarship) Fund provides need-based scholarships to cover the cost of admission for students and schools; limited scholarships available by application for students on free or reduced lunch programs.

2009 School Show Series

January 30

Aquila Theatre Company presents *The Iliad* • \$10

The Iliad has had a profound influence on every generation since its first performance by ancient Greek bards in the Mediterranean over 2,500 years ago. Aquila's innovative production tells the main parts of the story in an action packed hour and a half show combining ritualistic movement, original music, and superb acting. 10 a.m. *Recommended for grades 6 and up.*

February 5

Eleone Dance Theatre • \$6

The Philadelphia-based Eleone Dance

Theatre is an exhilarating and "soul-stirring" dance company presenting a spectrum of works that are multicultural, intergenerational, socially and visually appealing to all audiences. Eleone's works of dance inspire critical, intellectual thought and requires the community to look at both historical and contemporary issues from a variety of viewpoints. 10 a.m. *Recommended for all ages and grades.*

March 4-6

The Emperor's New Clothes • \$6

A new Diana Wortham Theatre production! Laugh with Peter, the mischievous tailor, as he comes up with his sure-fire get rich quick scheme to embarrass the vain Emperor and make off with a basket of gold. Full of action, music, magic tricks and well-integrated audience participation this play is a hit with students and teachers. Area students attending *The Emperor's New Clothes* are eligible for free in-school workshops, directed by actor-educators from the production. 10 a.m. *Recommended for grades K-5.*

March 20

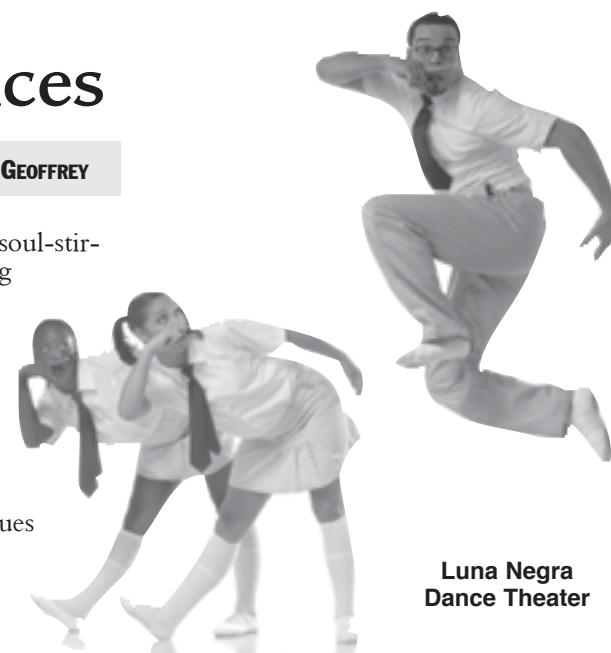
Luna Negra Dance Theater • \$6

Luna Negra's Student Matinee Program offers students a memorable and meaningful introduction to dance and Latino culture, giving students of all backgrounds an awareness and appreciation of the richness and diversity of Latino culture and of the arts through dance. 10 a.m. *Recommended for all ages and grades.*

May 11

Theatreworks USA presents *Nate the Great* • \$6

Young Audiences learn about teamwork and friendship (imaginary and otherwise) in this new musical based on the first volume in Marjorie Weinman Sharmat's classic book series. Two shows: 10 a.m. and 12 noon. *Recommended for grades 1-5.*



Luna Negra Dance Theater

The Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack Place is located in the center of downtown Asheville on historic Pack Square within walking distance of many shops and restaurants. The intimate theatre seats just over 500 and boasts exceptional acoustics and sightlines, making it the premier performance space in all of Western North Carolina. The School

Show Series for Young Audiences is presented in partnership with The Center for Diversity Education at UNC-Asheville, and is sponsored by Target and by Don and Nancy Ackermann Cole.

To obtain more information on the School Show Series or to make reservations, contact Rae Geoffrey, Director of Outreach and Education, at (828)

257-4544 x307, or e-mail rae@dwtheatre.com. You can also visit the Teacher's Page link at www.dwtheatre.com. For information about donating to the Y.E.S. (Youth Education Scholarship) Fund, look for the Get Involved link at www.dwtheatre.com.



"Nate the Great." Left to right: Katt Leisy, Kyra Lorraine Selman, Vincent Ortega. Photo by Joan Marcus.

National Biblical Storytellers to Present "Favorite Bible Stories"

Biblical storytellers from across the country will present a concert of *Favorite Bible Stories* at the Black Mountain Center for the Arts on Sunday, February 1, 2009 at 7 p.m.

The storytellers are members of the Network of Biblical Storytellers, International, an ecumenical organization made up of both clergy and laity from across the United States, Africa, Canada, Australia, and Scotland.

The storytellers are presenting this concert to introduce western NC to biblical storytelling and to give people a taste of the art form in advance of the 2009 International Festival Gathering of Biblical Storytellers, which will be held near Black Mountain at Ridgecrest (NC) Conference Center this August.

Stories to be featured at the concert include the entire book of Jonah, which will be told by the Network's president, the Rev. Dr. Lynn White, a Disciples of Christ pastor from Georgia; the story of the Samaritan woman told by the Network of Biblical Storytellers' Vice President, Dina Ferguson of Manhattan Beach, CA.; the story of the Hebrew boys from the book of Daniel, which



Kathy Culmer



Lynn White

will be told by Kathy Culmer who works with the Diocese of Texas; and The Marriage of Isaac from the book of Genesis, which will be told by Shelley Gnade of Wilmington, DE.

The concert will also feature music by storyteller and singer Donna Marie Todd, and acoustic musicians performing old time hymns.

IF YOU GO:

Black Mountain Center for the Arts, 225 W. State St., Black Mountain, NC
Sunday, February 1, 2009
- 7 p.m. Suggested Donation of \$10.

For more information, contact the Black Mountain Center for the Arts at (828) 669-0930.

MUSIC

Dehlia Low Performs

at Jack of the Wood on January 30

Dehlia Low is a young Asheville-based band focused on early bluegrass, country, and original music. Their songs feature honest, hard-hitting vocals with tight harmonies backed by masterful dobro and mandolin playing, lively fiddling, solid guitar, and a booming upright bass. Dehlia Low performs original songs as well as classic and modern bluegrass and old country numbers influenced strongly by Hazel Dickens, the Stanley Brothers, James King, and others.

Dehlia Low came together – as many bands in Asheville do – through the rich local bluegrass jam scene. The band was built around the incredible vocal harmonies of Anya and Stacy, who met in early 2007. The band quickly grew and Dehlia had her first show in August 2007 at the Grey Eagle in Asheville. Since then, Dehlia Low has been incredibly busy performing regionally and nationally and released an 8-song EP in February.

“We’ve fallen in love with this CD



BY ERIN SCHOLZE

over here, every one of us...we’ve had more requests for it than any other disk in the past year and a half. It’s a hit record....fresh....

solid songwriting and the vocal duet is what gets them. It’s the thing folks ask... ‘Who’s that singing?’” ~ Dennis Jones, WNCW 88.7 FM

Dehlia Low’s 8-song EP was released in February 2008 at The Garage at Biltmore. It was recorded at Ticknock studio in Lenoir, NC. The disk features five original vocal and instrumental tunes.

IF YOU GO: Dehlia Low, Friday, January 30 at Jack of the Wood, 95 Patton Ave, Asheville, NC. Show begins 9:30 p.m. 21+ Tickets: \$5. For more information call (828) 252-5445, visit www.sonicbids.com/dehliallow, or www.myspace.com/dehliallow

Steep Canyon Rangers

at the Orange Peel

BY JAMES CASSARA

Western North Carolina favorites, The Steep Canyon Rangers, like to think of themselves as a band of young souls who play old-time bluegrass music, extolling the virtues of the past while keeping a clear eye on the future.

The quintet formed during the late ‘90s. Responding to a restaurant’s call for bluegrass entertainment for a weekly shindig, the band members – Elizabeth “Lizzie” Hamilton on fiddle, Charles Humphrey III on bass, guitarist Woody Platt, banjo player Graham Sharp, and mandolin player Mike Guggino – quickly discovered a shared love of traditional music recast into a more modern setting.

That performance led to their association with Newgrass Revival producer Curtis Burch, who helped secure the band some studio time and guided their self-financed debut *Old Dreams and New Dreams*. Following its well-received release the band put together their follow-up, *Mr. Taylor’s New Home* in 2002.

Since that time the group has become a mainstay of the Bluegrass circuit, playing numerous festivals and countless venues.

They’ve shared a stage with such artists as Doc Watson, Peter Rowan, Rhonda Vincent & the Rage, Donna the Buffalo, and Norman Blake.

North Carolina festival appearances have included the Doc Watson Festival, Bluegrass under the Elm, the Eno River Festival, and the Brushy Mountain Jamboree. They’ve played major festivals in Tennessee and Colorado (including the prestigious Rocky Mountain Bluegrass Fest) and have toured extensively here and abroad.

In short, the Steep Canyon Rangers have become nearly synonymous with the contemporary Bluegrass scene. But they’ve never strayed far from their local pedigree nor forgotten those fans who have helped propel them along. With that in mind any showing of The Steep Canyon Rangers is indeed a special treat.

IF YOU GO: The Steep Canyon Rangers (with Larry Keel) Friday, January 16 at the Orange Peel in Asheville. Visit www.theorangepeel.net for show times and ticket information.

2nd Annual Echo Early Music Festival

The Echo Early Music Festival will present The Golden Age: Music of England, January 30 - February 28, 2009.

This year, over five weekends spanning the month of February, the festival’s concerts will focus on early chamber music from England. Audiences will enjoy repertoire written in the time of Elizabeth I and Shakespeare and continuing through the following two centuries.

Several workshops by nationally

renowned performers complement our weekly concerts in Asheville and Davidson and outreach concerts around the region. Performers include the Farallon Recorder Quartet, Muses’ Delight, Carolina Pro Musica, Pastyme, Ian Howell, countertenor, and Tableau Baroque.

More information online at www.eemf.net or call (828) 505-2858. Please help spread the word about the festival, and consider joining our Friends of Early Music.

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STAGE PREVIEW

Shakespeare, Slapstick, and Men in Dresses:

BY JENNY BUNN

Asheville Community Theatre Opens Leading Ladies!

Asheville Community Theatre will open the side-splitting comedy *Leading Ladies* by Ken Ludwig on Friday, January 16 at 8 p.m.

In *Leading Ladies*, two English Shakespearean actors, Jack and Leo, find themselves so down on their luck that they are performing "Scenes from Shakespeare" on the Moose Lodge circuit in the Amish country of Pennsylvania.

When they read about a rich old woman in a nearby town, who is about to die and leave her fortune to Max and Steve, her two, long-lost relatives whom no one has seen since birth, they decide to impersonate the two men. Once their plan is hatched, they realize that "Max and Steve" is short for "Maxine and Stephanie," and they must appear as nieces instead of nephews if they're to collect the loot.

Three special events are planned during the opening weekend of *Leading Ladies*. The *Opening Night Champagne Reception* begins at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, January 16 and will feature complimentary hors d'oeuvres and a glass of bubbly prior to curtain.

Saturday, January 17 is *Sweet Saturday* – patrons



Meg (Brooke Whitcomb, center) enjoys the attention from traveling actor Leo (Steve Wilde, left) as she gets to know her long lost "cousin" Maxine (also played by Steve Wilde, right).

will nibble on a variety of delectable desserts before enjoying the show. And on Sunday, January 18 the *Q&A Matinee* will spotlight the director and members of the cast in a talk-back session immediately after the show. All *Leading Ladies* special events are included in the price of a ticket.

Leading Ladies is directed by Michael Lilly, who staged the summer comedy *I Hate Hamlet* for Asheville Community Theatre. *Leading Ladies* stars Steve Wilde and Brad Pearsall as Leo and Jack. Also appearing are ACT veterans Shirley Cohen, Chris Martin, and Mike Vaniman as well as Drew Collins, Zoe Renert, and Brooke Whitcomb who are making their ACT debuts. The set is designed by Don Baker, with lighting design by Rob Bowen, and costume design by Ida.

Performances will run for three weekends through February 1, 2009. Opening weekend of *Leading Ladies* will feature several special events, all of which are included in the price of a ticket.

IF
YOU
GO:

Leading Ladies, a comedy by Ken Ludwig,
Directed by Michael Lilly

January 16 – February 1, with performances
Friday and Saturday nights at 8 p.m. and

Sunday afternoons at 2:30 p.m. Asheville Community
Theatre, 35 E. Walnut Street, Asheville, NC.

Tickets: \$22 for adults, \$19 for college students and
seniors (60+), \$12 for children (17 & under). Special
discounts for groups of 10 or more. Box Office hours are
10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday.

For more information call (828) 254-1320, or visit www.ashevilletheatre.org.

Haywood Arts Regional Theater presents

2009 Feichter Studio Theater

Ladyhouse Blues

By Kevin O'Morrison
Directed by Susan Rudniak

January 9, 10 at 7:30, January 11 at 3 p.m.
Hold over dates: January 16, 17, 18.

Featuring: Teresa Breaky, Emily Warren,
Shanda Jacobs, Adrienne Mollette and
Ashley Millett

It is St. Louis in 1919 and five women are gathered awaiting the return of the family's men from the war. The central character is Liz a widowed woman and

her four daughters. As the play unfolds it is apparent that 1919 is a watershed year in America's history.

There are hints of the country heading uncertainly towards a new and different way of life. Each of Liz's daughters face different challenges, some with exciting prospects, others with little ahead. This is a lovely and powerfully atmospheric play that the New York Times said "has the haunting quality of Chekov."

Scattergood

By Anto Howard
Directed by Julie Kinter

January 23, 24 at 7:30,
January 25 at 3 p.m. Hold over dates:
January 30, 31 and February 1.

Featuring: Steve Lloyd, Sean Bruce, and
Becky Harper.

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Dr. James Scattergood, Trinity College Professor of Medieval Romances is also known on campus as Dr. Love. Enter

a shy withdrawn freshman with a crush on a graduate co-ed. What follows are unexpected twists as the advice from Dr. Love reveals unexpected consequences.

IF
YOU
GO:

The Feichter Studio is located backstage in the Performing Arts Center at the Shelton House, 250 Depot St. in downtown Waynesville.

Reservations can be made by calling (828) 456-6322. Tickets are \$8 for all adults and \$5 for all students. Productions are uncensored so if adult content is indicated patrons should exercise personal discretion.

"There is something warm and delighting in the relationship between the two men, as if Don Quixote were passing along his Quixoticness to the next generation." ~ NY TIMES

A lovely and powerfully
atmospheric play...

STAGE PREVIEW



'Asheville Lyric Opera' continued from pg. 5

Milnes conquered the great opera capitals of the world, sang more than 650 performances at the Metropolitan Opera, received three Grammy awards, and had the honor of performing for every United States President in the last 40 years. His remarkable voice, artistic integrity, commanding stage presence, and rugged handsomeness have made him a favorite for all audiences.

Now an international lecturer on opera and a master class instructor for the next generation of opera performers, Milnes will offer a guest lecture at AB Tech's Ferguson Auditorium the day following the concert. He will discuss

his career and share video highlights and personal insights in what promises to be a fascinating lecture for opera lovers.

Following the lecture, Milnes will hold a master class for six of the area's top vocal students where he will work one-on-one to hone their vocal technique, stage presence and acting. The event is sponsored by Brevard and Mars Hill Colleges' Music Departments. The public is invited to both of these events. The cost is \$20 at the door.

Looking Ahead

Since its inception in 1999 ALO has produced 30 full scale opera productions including *Madame Butterfly*, *Don Giovanni*, *La Traviata*, *Barber of Seville*, and *Carmen*. ALO has its own orchestra and chorus to support its productions and is the only touring opera company in the nation. Their educational outreach program has introduced opera to over 10,000 school age children. For Starkey, this is just the beginning.

"We take seriously our commitment to investing in our community and helping people understand that opera is for anybody who appreciates music. That is no small feat," said Starkey. "We do this by producing classical works that honor the opera tradition and contracting with the most talented performers possible for our stage. We want to be the best small professional opera company in the southeast."



Asheville Lyric Opera's anniversary concert performance at the First Baptist Church of Asheville. Tickets are being sold through the Diana Wortham Theatre box office (828) 257-4530, or call the Asheville Lyric Opera (828) 236-0670.

Morning's at Seven

Asheville Community Theatre's senior theatre group, The Autumn Players, and the University of North Carolina Center for Creative Retirement partner to present Paul Osborn's *Morning's at Seven*, a marvelously life affirming play.

Two houses, whose backyards adjoin, set the scene for this buoyant and

charming comedy where we meet four sisters in a small Midwestern town in 1938, their husbands, and offspring.

Performance will be held Sunday, January 11 at 2:30 p.m. at the Reuter Center on the UNCA campus. Tickets are \$5. For more information visit www.ashevilletheatre.org.

JANUARY 2009 mainstage performances



SOUTHERN FRIED CHICKS COMEDY TOUR

January 17 2 SHOWS
7pm & 9:30pm

Galumph
January 23-24
8pm



Aquila Theatre Company in

The Iliad

January 30 • 8pm

The Comedy of Errors

January 31 • 8pm



Diana Wortham Theatre
at Pack Place in downtown Asheville

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MUSIC

SPINNING DISCS:

January CD Reviews by James Cassara

Let's start off the New Year in good fashion, with an assortment of music most readily found at one of Asheville's local independent record stores. These are the folks who most deserve our support and appreciation for bringing it all back home.

The Nightwatchman

The Fabled City
Red Ink Records

Rage Against the Machine guitarist Tom Morello's latest folk rock entry (under the assumed alter ego Nightwatchman) is a radical leap from his previous Watchman outings. The Fabled City stands in sharp contrast to 2007's sparsely arranged One Man Revolution, a distinction which can be largely attributed to the presence of producer Brendan O'Brien.

O'Brien – best known for his work with Pearl Jam and his long association with Bruce Springsteen – brings to the plate impeccable musical credentials and a clear desire to move Morello beyond mere voice and guitar.

As a story teller Morello shares much with both Springsteen and John Mellencamp. These are tales of ordinary folks struggling through difficult times, an American landscape that, through no fault of their own, has left them down and out.

No grandiose songs or slogans, just casual, and often piercing narratives that demonstrate a remarkable growth in Morello's songwriting; he may be speaking in his own voice but unlike its predecessors The Fabled City is filled with people who we know and whose wounds we share.

As a producer O'Brien knows how to flesh out each song, avoiding Morello's tendency towards bombast in favor of a more subtle and – in the long run – satisfying examination of the themes that run throughout the album. This simpatico is reflected in the instrumentation; small drum kits sit alongside pedal steel, Hammond organ, and cello, but rarely does one instrument overpower another.

The sonic textures shift as steadily as do the tempos; just when things begin settling into a predictable groove Morello throws in a surprise or two. His acoustic six string and bass are pumped to the frontline for "Whatever It Takes," an urgent first person narrative about a soldier who struggles against despair and resignation, while against the Biblical imagery of "Lazarus on Down" cello and nylon-string guitar gently cushion the song's urgency. This sense of dynamics – quiet moments of introspection nuanced with volatile instrumental mixes – makes for a fascinating listen.

Every time you think you've pegged where The Fabled City might take you



next it swerves elsewhere. It's a huge step forward for Morello, a gamble of sorts that pays off in huge dividends, especially when you least expect it. ★★★★★

Diane Marino

Just Groovin'
M & M Music

Singer Diane Marino is a proud throwback to an era of cocktail jazz and elegantly arranged pop songs. Her voice is as smooth as good bourbon over ice and as buoyant as wading through a cool stream on a summer's day, an inflection occupying a space somewhere between Dinah Washington and Shirley Bassey, with a bit of Dionne Warwick tucked carefully into the mix.

Just Groovin' is her tribute to the 1960's, and while Marino is clearly beholden to that decade (aren't we all?) the album, which certainly does capture the groove of that most imaginative of times, never fully stakes an identity of its own. That's in part due to Marino's over reliance on style over substance.

The arrangements on the album are lush, swirling, evocative, but largely predictable: a piano-based jazz accompaniment leading to a similar-sounding horn solo again giving way to piano and fade out. The soloists, which include Kirk

Whalum and Houston Person, are laudable, and play their parts with expected precision.

However the song to song approach is so similar



that after a few listens the songs become nearly indistinguishable. It's only when Marino and producer Gary Dales step out that the music truly becomes interesting. The duet with Felix Cavaliere (who sang the original) on "Groovin'" is a nostalgic delight, along with Cavaliere's Hammond B-3 organ solo. And Anthony LaMarchina's cello on "Never My Love" breaks the monotony of saxophone/trumpet/saxophone.

Yet despite its flaws there is much about this album to love. Marino is a disciplined and nuanced vocalist and the songs

remain true to their tradition. All of which gives optimism to a future which might well fulfill Marino's promise and truly pays tribute to the era she so loves. ★★1/2

Tracy Chapman

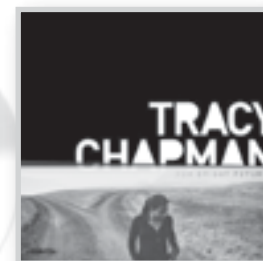
Our Bright Future

Two decades after her debut album propelled her to stardom not much in Tracy Chapman's oeuvre has changed. While the confessional singer/songwriter has occasionally stretched her trademark sound with various producers and support players, the essential nature of her music – a starkly reflective socially engaged optimism tinged with a bit of melancholy – remains largely the same.

That's not to say she's not grown and matured as an artist – certainly her best songs are more nuanced than before while the concerns they express are different from those of the twenty year old who wrote them – but Chapman's over reliance on mid-tempo acoustic oriented songs, however well crafted, has begun to wear thin.

Our Bright Future seeks to change that and while producer Larry Klein, best known for transforming the sounds of Joni Mitchell, does tinker with the formula, the overall effect seems more a mild tremor rather than the major shake up Chapman could use. What it does do well is hearken back to the early '70s. The presence of drummer Steve Gadd and guitarist Dean Parks add an intriguing veneer to the disc but, with the notable exception of the delightful cabaret of "I Did It All," much of Our Bright Future could easily have been plucked from any of Chapman's earlier discs.

It's a well crafted, heartfelt effort passionately sung and impeccably performed. Chapman's talents are as clearly evident, but ultimately the album offers little in the way of adventure or surprise. It straddles a fine line between showcasing the artist's strengths and revealing her limitations, and ultimately leans too far towards the bad side of that equation for her, and our, own good. ★★1/2



'CD's' continued on next pg.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Master Roots Musician David Bromberg in Concert

BY ALAN EDWARDS

David Bromberg, one of America's foremost folk-blues-roots musicians for over four decades, will play the first Asheville show of his career on Thursday, January 15. Bromberg's "Try Me One More Time" CD, issued by Appleseed Recordings in February 2007, was his first release in 17 years and was rewarded with a Grammy nomination as the year's "Best Traditional Folk Recording."

Vocalist/guitarist/multi-instrumentalist Bromberg, a popular solo artist and band-leader who first earned his reputation as a noted session musician for artists ranging from Dylan to Dion, retired from recording and extensive touring in 1980 but was reinvigorated by his comeback CD's popular and critical success, and he has returned to the road.

Earlier this year, Appleseed released an archival "Live New York City 1982" album by Bromberg's bluegrass quartet, one of several lineups he performs with. He'll be backed up at The Orange Peel by his wife, Nancy Josephson, leader

of the female trio Angel Band, which often performs with Bromberg and vice versa, on electric bass and backing vocals, with Mitch Corbin on acoustic guitar, mandolin and fiddle.

Bromberg, raised in Tarrytown, NY, started studying guitar at the age of 13 and eventually enrolled in Columbia University as a musicology major. The call of the Greenwich Village folk scene in the mid-'60s drew David to the downtown clubs and coffeehouses, where he could watch and learn from performers such as his inspiration and teacher, the Reverend Gary Davis.

Bromberg's sensitive and versatile



approach to guitar-playing earned him the occasional paying gig, and lots of employment as a backing musician for Tom Paxton and Jerry Jeff Walker, among others. He became a "hired gun" guitarist for recording sessions, playing on hundreds of records by artists including Dylan, Link Wray, The Eagles, Ringo Starr, Willie Nelson, and Carly Simon. Several tracks which he produced for Bob Dylan in the early '90s have just

surfaced on Dylan's "Tell Tale Signs: Bootleg Series Vol. 8" release.

In recent years, Bromberg and his wife relocated to Wilmington, Del., where they became part of the city's art-

ist-in-residence program; David established David Bromberg Fine Violins, a retail store and repair shop for high quality instruments, and also leads regular jam sessions for area musicians.

The revitalized Bromberg subsequently returned to the recording scene with "Try Me One More Time," an acoustic album of solo folk-blues material, and has reclaimed his reputation as a hugely entertaining live attraction, interspersing his eclectic repertoire and virtuoso musicianship with wonderfully droll between-songs commentary.

IF
YOU
GO:

David Bromberg will perform at The Orange Peel, located at 101 Biltmore Avenue, at 8 p.m. on

Thursday, January 15. Tickets for this over-18 show cost \$18 in advance, \$20 at the door. For more information, please visit the www.theorangepeel.net website or call (828) 225-5851.

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'CD's' continued

Sam Phillips Don't Do Anything Nonesuch Records

Back when she was the singer known as Leslie Phillips, T Bone Burnett was already helping guide the musical career of the future Sam Phillips. He produced her 1987 release *The Turning* after Phillips adopted her nickname Sam, and began expanding into the world of effervescent pop.

Unfortunately, by the time Phillips' 2004 album, *A Boot and a Shoe*, was released, Phillips and Burnett, who were husband and wife as well as musical collaborators, had divorced. Thus her seventh album as Sam Phillips finds her truly in charge of her own music for the first time. Strangely the new disc doesn't represent a sharp turn in the sonic direction of her work.

While the veneer of *Don't Do Anything* is lush and more decorative than its immediate predecessors, Phillips' knack for tuneful arrangements and succinct delivery is as strong as ever. Thickly layered electric guitars cascade over acoustic hooks, with a bevy of superbly arranged string arrangements setting a tone that is both imaginative and assuring.

Best of all Phillips' occasional predi-



lection for glossy synthesizer-pop is kept to a minimum – the sound is more textured and gritty than ever.

If you're looking for *Don't Do Anything* to be the "Sam Phillips confessional break up album" you'll likely be disappointed. She's far too astute and accomplished a songwriter for that.

Instead she gives us a glimpse of heartache, heard best in "Little Plastic Life" and while such lyrics as "I thought if he understood he wouldn't treat me this way" (from "No Explanations"), suggest incidences of betrayal and broken promises, those themes have always been woven throughout her music.

As with all her best efforts the lyrics here work on two levels; Phillips lashes out at those who have caused her hurt but she's just as quick to point the finger back at herself. The album's stunning closer, "Watching Out of This World," confronts a regret far more complicated than mere heartache – it's more about the tension between joy and pain, and the dependence one often has upon the other.

It's a powerful message among an album sated with them. *Don't Do Anything* is among Phillips' most confident and challenging albums yet, and solidly reaffirms her position among the most consistently intriguing artists making music today. ****

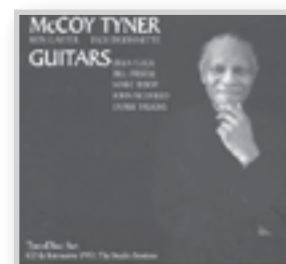
McCoy Tyner Guitars Half Note

While McCoy Tyner will likely not be labeled a "guitarist's best friend" he's actually employed a number of superb players over the years. He is, along with Bill Evans, the most influential jazz pianist in the past 50 years.

His work with John Abercrombie on the fabled *4 x 4 sessions* was phenomenal, as was the acoustic guitarist coupling with Earl Klugh for the *Inner Voices* recordings. Ted Dunbar was in the group for *Asante*, and Carlos Santana joined Tyner for the bravely executed but ill-conceived album *Looking Out*.

Guitars pairs him with his reunited trio of bassist Ron Carter and drummer Jack DeJohnette. Contemporary performers including Marc Ribot, John Scofield, banjoist Bela Fleck, Derek Trucks, and Bill Frisell are also included. The results are mixed: no matter which player you favor, Tyner's well deserved stature as a legend is surely intimidating to any of his disciples, regardless of how successful they've been on their own.

Ribot especially seems out of place, resorting to ill placed power chords during "Passion Dance," but rebounding on the soulful version of "500 Miles". Pair-



ing with Derek Trucks may seem a convenient way of introducing Tyner's music to a new generation but, with the exception of "Slap-back Blues" the two seem uncomfortable with each other.

Scofield is clearly the most comfortable partner, swinging easily through "Mr. P.C." and playfully sliding between the rhythmic lines of "Blues on the Corner." Surprisingly, Bela Fleck is among the most compatible of Tyner's cohorts: "Tradewinds" integrates a delightful Middle Eastern progression while Tyner really cuts loose on the fiery "Amberjack".

The pair of songs with Frisell merges together as one in *Boubacar* (a tribute to the world guitarist Boubacar Traore) before exploding into the loose framework of "Baba Drame." So while Tyner's playing is beyond reproach, and the contributions of Carter and DeJohnette are always welcome, there's a sense of genuine harmony on some tracks and a palpable awkwardness on others.

The accompanying DVD provides welcome insight into how this music was created, but also reveals how forced many of these pairings are. *Guitars* ends up being not much more than an intriguing snapshot of what might have been a worthy but in no way essential addition to Tyner's already Herculean output. ***

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FINE ART

Masters of Southern Folk Art

BY JIM FAUCETT

vision that motivates them to preserve the precious legacy of southern culture, past and present.

A landmark exhibition at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington D.C. in the early 1980s focused international attention on the contributions of contemporary southern folk art, focusing on

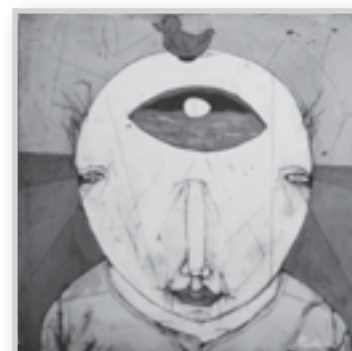
self-taught African-American artists from 1930 – 1980. The Corcoran show captured the art world's attention, proving to be a defining moment in the appreciation of this uniquely American art form.

Masters of Southern Folk Art is the exhibition curated by Ann and Ted Oliver, nationally renowned collectors and dealers. The exhibition features contemporary southern folk art from their private collection as well as from their gallery, Oliver's Southern Folk Art. Some pieces will be available for purchase.

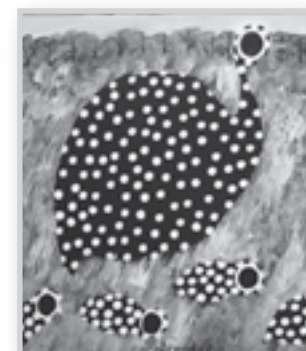
The Henderson County Public Library (Washington and 3rd in Hendersonville), in partnership with the Arts Council, will host "A Vision of Southern Folk Art" by the Olivers on Thursday, February 19 at 6:00 pm. They will share their very personal journey through the South they knew as children. It is a shared



Lorenzo Scott, "Happy Family"



Michael Banks, "Memeory - A Boy's Sea"



John "Cornbread" Anderson, "Guinea Hen and Chicks"

The Arts Council of Henderson County is a community organization that advocates for the arts and provides opportunities to enrich the lives of children and adults through the arts by offering exhibits, art education and performances. The Arts Council is located at 538 North Main Street, 2nd Floor (the corner of 6th Avenue and Main) in Hendersonville.

The Arts Council is supported in part by the North Carolina Arts Council, the State of North Carolina, the Community Foundation of Henderson County, Henderson County, and the Henderson County Travel and Tourism Bureau.

IF
YOU
GO:

The Arts Council of Henderson County presents its first exhibition of 2009, *Masters of Southern Folk Art*, in the D.

Samuel Neill Gallery, February 6 – 28.

The Gallery is located at 538 North Main Street, 2nd Floor in downtown Hendersonville. The exhibition is free and open to the public. Gallery hours are Tuesday – Friday, 1 – 5 p.m., and Saturday, 1 – 4 p.m.

For more information contact The Arts Council of Henderson County at (828) 693-8504 or acofhc@bellsouth.net. Visit us at acofhc.org.

NOTEWORTHY

Heather Lewis: Cottage/Industry

Heather Lewis is a British artist who currently resides in Asheville, and whose creative approach incorporates and examines semi-industrial processes. Often focusing on painted surfaces, the artist is currently working in a three-dimensional format.

The gallery will feature six light installations and ten two-dimensional artworks, along with other experimental pieces and assorted documentation. The work is conceptual with a strong visual (though not always material) presence, subverting conventional assumptions of skill, perfection or precious materials. In this way it questions perception of the art object's value.

The exhibit will feature an enormous shadow, a coin-operated light painting that invites the viewer to draw on the wall, and the reflections of numerous mirror circles. Alongside these are various installations including a collection of glowing, imperfectly molded wax bottles, a painting (displayed as a coffee table) that bears the scars of a gravel driveway, and three plastic tubs of recycled cartons lit by cheap Christmas lights.

Laura Steward Heon, Phillips Director at SITE Santa Fe contemporary art space in New Mexico has found Lewis' work interesting in its combination of natural and industrial spaces, commenting that as Lewis "bring(s) different elements together, they pose questions that are answered in unexpected ways".

Lewis, who is a British national, and permanent resident of the USA was born in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago



**Detergent bottles
Medium : molded wax
bottles and Christmas
lights. 30" x 30" x 12"**

in 1961. She has a BFA and an MFA from the University of Dundee, Scotland and has traveled widely, citing the experience of living in different cultural environments as being instrumental in her work.

Heather's work has been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions in

galleries in the United States and abroad, including the Ewing Gallery of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville; and her paintings are in various public and corporate collections including that of Chevron UK Limited, in London.

**IF
YOU
GO:**

*At the Holden Gallery,
Warren Wilson College,
701 Warren Wilson Road,
Swannanoa, NC.*

*Opening Reception on Friday, January
23 at 6:30 p.m. (includes a talk by the artist).*

*Exhibition runs January 19 through February
28. Gallery hours: 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Monday through Thursday; 1:00 to 4:00
p.m. Sundays.*

Young Composer Mixes Classical, Funk, Rock n' Roll

Transcending easy categorization, a fresh new album from a fiercely talented young musician shakes up everything we thought we knew about contemporary music.

In *Thesis Statement*, 23-year-old composer, guitarist and musical mastermind Silas Durocher creates music for the head, the heart and the hips. His ensemble, Silas Durocher and Everybody Knows, has been getting rave reviews from listeners across the musical spectrum.

"I was struck by the way Silas integrated disparate musical styles from Bartok, to minor-toned Weimar style jazz, to the Beatles, to ethnomusics from Africa and the Middle East, into a very distinctive musical voice," says Leif Bjaland, artistic director and conductor of the Sarasota Orchestra in Florida. Bjaland has

commissioned Durocher to compose a new work for his orchestra.

The album blends Durocher's roots in rock n' roll and funk with his training in classical composition. Also drawing on reggae, folk, blues, jazz, bluegrass and world music, *Thesis Statement* creates a new, inclusive sound for the 21st century.

The world-class group features Silas Durocher on guitar and vocals, Bharat Chandra on clarinet, Sasha von Dassow on cello, Garrett Dawson on drum set and percussion, and John Miller on upright bass.

For more information about Silas Durocher and Everybody Knows, the new album, or to request music, photos or an interview, please visit silasdurocher.com or e-mail music@silasdurocher.com.

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FINE ART

Russ and Nan Jacobsohn: Focus Gallery Exhibition

On display now through January 27 in the Folk Art Center's Focus Gallery are the wood animal rockers of Russ Jacobsohn and the ceramic sculptures of Nan Jacobsohn.

This husband and wife pair from Sparta, TN have been members of the Southern Highland Craft Guild since 1999.

In his artist statement, Russ explains that as a child he was always around animals since his parents owned a pet store. Now he lives on a rural farm which



Russ Jacobsohn, Hare Rocker

keeps him connected to nature and his own pets. He draws inspiration from them which can easily be seen in his craft. "I enjoy sharing my love of animals through my rocking critters, knowing that, because I make them with the best materials and craftsmanship, they will last for generations."

The Focus Gallery exhibition includes pieces entitled: *Bear, Swimming Bird, Rocking Horse, Tortoise and Hare Rocker and Mountain Mule*. Nan Jacobsohn's contributions to the



Nan Jacobsohn, Lion Mask

exhibition include ceramic sculptures and masks. In her artist statement, she says that she loves the direct connection the artist can have with clay. "The fact that clay was once molten rock, was eroded over time and now to return it to a rock form again with the aid of fire...I love that," she says. She hopes the viewer of her work will respond to one of the many layers in the artwork; that they will be affected in some way. Her Focus

Gallery titles include: *The Fall, Icarus' Mother, Ring of Fire, Lion Mask and Moose Mask*.

BY APRIL NANCE

The Southern Highland Craft Guild is a non-profit, educational organization established in 1930 to bring together the crafts and craftspeople of the Southern Highlands for the benefit of shared resources, education, marketing and conservation. The Southern Highland Craft Guild is authorized to provide services at the Blue Ridge Parkway's Folk Art Center under the authority of a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

IF YOU GO:

The exhibition will be on display through January 27. The Folk Art Center is located at milepost 382 on the Blue Ridge Parkway in east Asheville and is open daily. For more information, call (828) 298-7928 or visit www.craftguild.org.

Civil Rights Exhibitions at Gallery 86 in Hendersonville

The Haywood County Arts Council's Gallery 86 is proud to present, *Visions of Freedom*, an exhibition of Alabama Folk Artists, on display from Wednesday, January 14 to Saturday, January 31.

Beginning Tuesday, February 3, 2009 *No Water Can Put Out This Freedom Fire*, works by Athlone Clarke will be on display through Saturday, February 28.

Ted Oliver from Oliver's Southern Folk Art in Hendersonville will lead a discussion on Friday, January 16, and artist Athlone Clarke will discuss his work on Saturday, February 7 from 6 to 8:30 p.m.

Visions of Freedom explores the fight for Civil Rights led by key leaders of the South and bring to life this difficult period in American history. Artists represented in *Visions of Freedom* include Bernice Sims, Chris Clark, Tres Taylor, Michael Banks, and Jimmy Lee Sudduth.

Bernice Johnson Sims

Bernice enrolled in an art class at Brewton's Jefferson Davis Community College. A class field trip to visit the famous Mose Tolliver in Montgomery, Alabama, was a turning point. Bernice



Bernice Sims, "Rosa Parks on Montgomery Bus" Acrylic on canvas. 16" x 20"

BY KAY WALDROP

recounts, "I realized that people took Black artists seriously and if Mose could do it, I could be an artist as well". Some of her most important work separates her from other artists and it was her painting of Petrus Bridge that was reproduced as a postal stamp in 2005.

Michael Banks

Banks has been widely exhibited in his home state of Alabama as well as Atlanta, Denver, Chicago, Paris-France, Florence-Italy and New York, and Kentucky Folk Art Festival in North Port, AL (2005, 2006). In January 2007 at the Outsider Art Fair in NYC, Banks had a sell-out show. In 2005, he had a solo exhibition at the Hurn Museum in Savannah, Georgia and in 2007, a major exhibition in Mobile, Alabama.

Chris Clark

Although Clark is widely revered for his quilts, he also paints on sticks, furniture, as well as new and used canvases. Chris's work is included in many books, like *Revelations: Alabama Visionary Folk Art*, on quilts and folk art. His

work is in museums across the U.S., and was featured in an exhibition at the Smithsonian in 2005.

William Henry Taylor III

After 20 years as a biochemist Tres saw a book on Alabama folk artists and decided to make some radical changes in his life. He spent the next months visiting folk artists across the south learning from their wisdom. Tres has been a part of exhibitions across the southeast, Japan and California. Tres has stated, when he is painting, "these are the times I feel closest to God and divine love".

Jimmy Lee Sudduth

Jimmy Lee is known for his paintings of "sweetmud" berries and acrylic using his fingers, rags, sticks and spoons to apply his media to plywood. His works are featured in over 50 books concerning folk/outsider art, The Smithsonian, American Museum of Folk Art in New York, The High Museum and countless other collections all over the world.

The second civil rights-themed show is a solo exhibition entitled, *No Water Can Put Out This Freedom Fire* and features the work of self-taught artist Athlone Clarke.



work by Athlone Clark

Athlone Clarke

Athlone thrives on experimentation and is a firm believer that there is no "have to" in art. His mixed media journey allows for a rich amalgam of found objects that seem to have chosen him to interpret their stories, in as much as he has chosen them.

Athlone states that at the end of the day, "the work should be capable of standing completely on its own, and therefore is more eloquent than anything that could be written describing it".

IF YOU GO:

Exhibition I: "Visions of Freedom," an exhibition of Alabama folk artists, Wednesday, January 14 through Saturday, January 30, 2009. Opening reception: Friday, January 16, 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Exhibition II: "No Water Can Put Out This Freedom Fire," Tuesday, February 3 through Saturday, February 28, 2009. Opening reception, Saturday, February 7 from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday.
Haywood County Arts Council's Gallery 86 located at 86 North Main Street, Waynesville, NC. FREE & open to the public.

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FINE ART

Western North Carolina Artist

For artist Jerry P. Cram, Sr., it all started with a snow-covered barn.

BY PAM J. HECHT

He passed by it one day, sitting peacefully at the bottom of the mountain road leading up to his Burnsville, North Carolina, home, and was mesmerized by the purple shadows it made.

He took some photographs, picked up a paint brush, and finally, after a successful, 35-year career as a commercial artist, advertising executive and ad agency owner, began life anew to pursue his long-abandoned passion.

Although he received a college degree in fine arts, specializing in drawing, painting and sculpture, he hadn't picked up a paint brush since.



"Green Pitcher & Lily"
by Jerry P. Cram

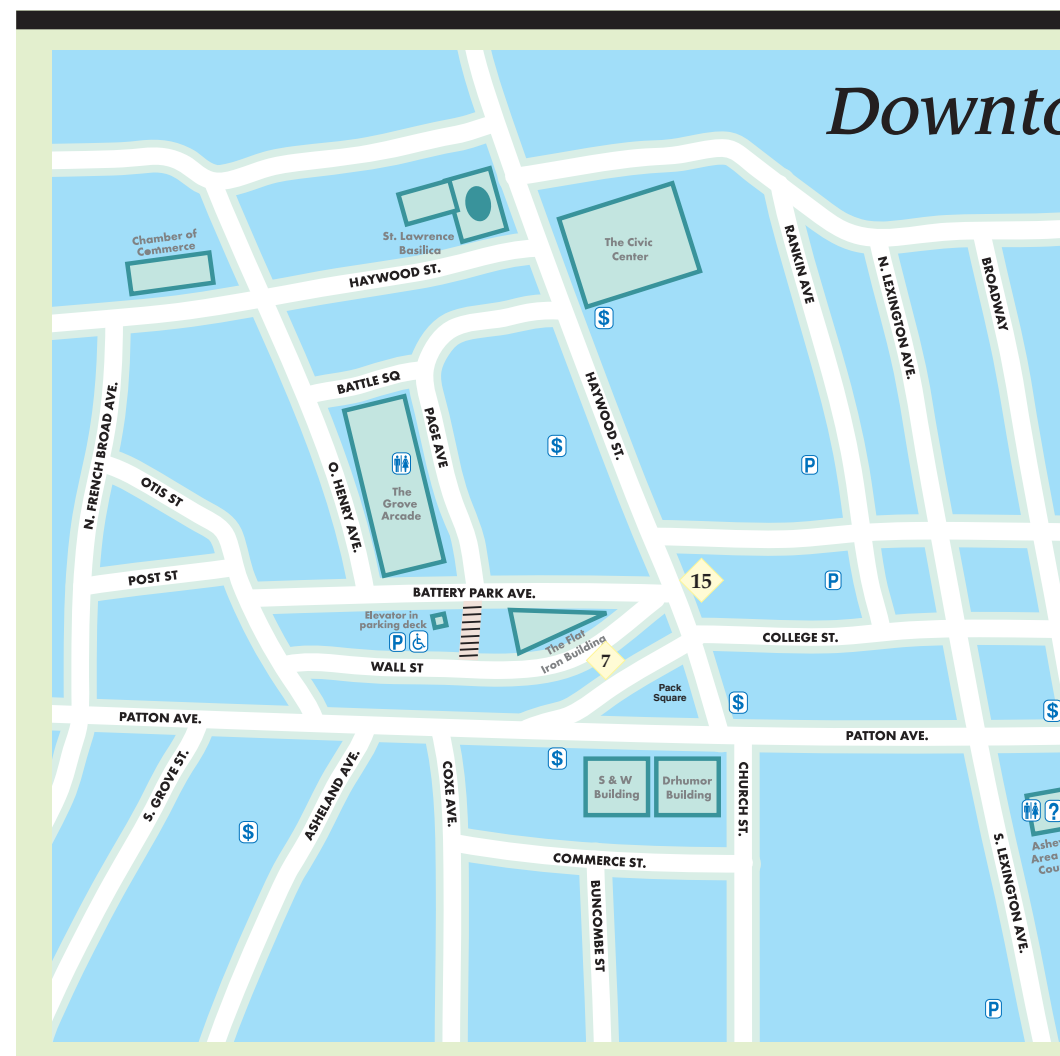
Now, surrounded by the peaceful pastures, forests and streams of the North Carolina mountains, Cram paints the pastoral world around him, with a unique, colorful perspective. He also paints from his second, lakeshore home in Chapala, Mexico.

"People like his paintings because they're bright, colorful and unusual,"

said Lynn Seibel, manager of Frame Shoppe & Gallery in Asheville, where Cram's work is exhibited. "He can make a green sky work."

Cram's work has evolved since he first began exhibiting, he said, when a gallery owner suggested that his paintings were a bit dark.

He began reading a book by an artist using bright colors and the next thing he knew, he said, he had painted a yellow barn with a turquoise sky. The painting sold immediately and he began to enjoy using color more



FINE ART

Paints a World of Color



"Lilacs"
by Jerry P. Cram

and more, focusing on the colors of light and its effects on the color of shadows.

He said he's painted each of his best pieces in one sitting and that they "capture the quality of spontaneity." It happens

when he paints quickly, he said, without continuing to rework the piece or "fix every blade of grass."

"I feel like painting and then the brush is moving, painting, flying and it feels like someone else did it – the paint jumps off the edge of the brush and I'm an innocent bystander.

"It is this quality of quickness that gives the painting life," he said. "If I

work too long on a painting, it will begin to appear labored and lose all of the quick, fresh spontaneous appeal that it may have had at the outset."

His paintings, while complex in color, are simple in composition.

"There are no hidden meanings in a painting of a field with cows – if you put it up and it pleases you then it's a successful work of art.

"I enjoy painting pretty pictures that make me feel good and hope that they make others feel good, too," he said. "I want people to share the same joy I had while creating them."

Meanwhile, after several years of painting and selling landscapes, he is now also venturing into the realm of still life paintings. He was asked to teach a class involving still life painting in Chapala and thought he "ought to paint a couple first."

"I'm going in a new direction by



"Spittoon & Static"
by Jerry P. Cram

painting commonplace things in different perspectives and doing extreme close ups on large canvases," he said. "It'll be a different look."

Cram's work is currently on exhibit at Frame Shoppe & Gallery, 1378 Hendersonville Road, #C, Asheville, (828) 274-3635, www.frameshoppeandgallery.com.

His work can also be found at Art Source Fine Art, Raleigh,

www.artsource-raleigh.com; The Art Cellar, Banner Elk, NC, www.artcellaronline.com; and John Collette Fine Art, Highlands, NC, www.johncollettefineart.com.

Jerry Cram, acrylics on canvas,
www.jerrycramart.com



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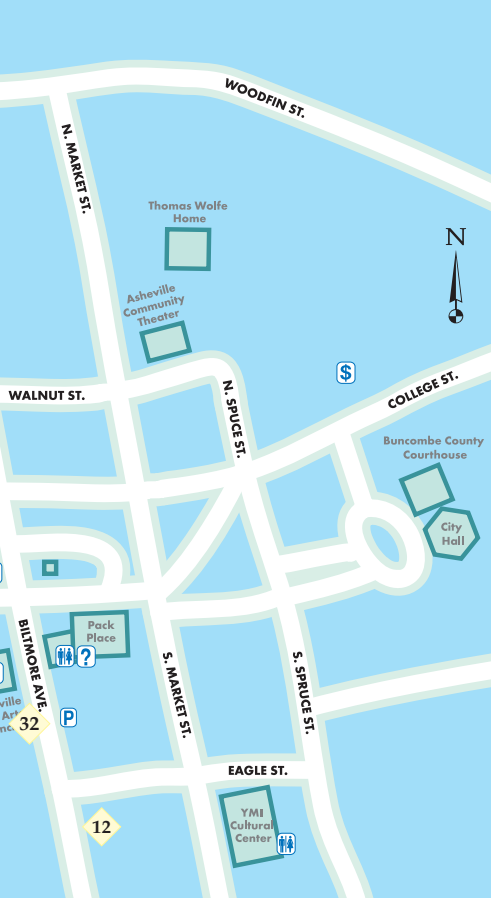
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JANUARY 2009

Sunday, January 11, 3:00 p.m.
Women Respond to War – This moving anthology by award-winning author Marijo Moore encompasses a wide range of voices – a Blitz evacuee, an ex-slave, an incarcerated mother, and many other courageous women from around the world. Their poetry and essays, examine war in all its permutations.

Thursday, January 15, 7:00 p.m.
Jill Conner Browne, author of *American Thighs: The Sweet Potato Queens' Guide to Preserving Your Assets*. Comic relief for a culture addicted to finding the Fountain of Youth.

Friday, January 23, 7:00 p.m.
Heather Tosteson reads from and discusses her latest book, *God Speaks My Language, Can You?*.

Saturday, January 24, 7:00 p.m.
Cynn Chadwick, author of *Babies, Bikes and Broads*. The third book in the *Cat Rising* series.

Saturday, January 31, 7:00 p.m.
Poet Jeffery Beam, author of *The Beautiful Tendons: Uncollected Queer Poems 1969-2007*. Award-winning Beam reads from his collection of more than three decades of lyrical, metaphysical work.

February 1, 3:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 1, 3:00 p.m.
Jonathan Rosen, author of *The Life of the Skies: Birding at the End of Nature*. We are all birdwatchers. Rosen explores the significance of this timeless pursuit, chronicling his own birding adventures alongside those of John James Audubon, Teddy Roosevelt, and others.

Friday, February 6, 7:00 p.m.
Simone Lipscombe

Saturday, February 7, 7:00 p.m.
Jack Riggs, a masterly voice in Southern fiction. *The Fireman's Wife* is an emotionally bare and moving novel about one woman's struggle to do what's right – for her family, for her love, and for herself.

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BOOKS

Into the Lands of Dawn

Books for New Beginnings

There's something breathlessly refreshing about January, when everything and anything seems possible. Even for those of us who celebrate the beginning of the new year at a different time than this, the switch-over of the cultural new year is a time of resolve and dreams, of expectation and commitment.

Here are some reading choices for this month — choices that will inspire and motivate you.

The Art of Pilgrimage: The Seeker's Guide to Making Travel Sacred by Phil Cousineau.

There's been a movement in the last decade to make vacation travel more meaningful by thinking of it as pilgrimage. So if you are planning to travel for either business or pleasure — or even to take your high school senior to visit potential colleges — take a look at this book for stories, suggestions and a series of excellent meditations. Taking time to be present when you travel makes the trip more meaningful for everyone involved.

What Now? by Ann Patchett.

Patchett's book began as a commencement speech at Sarah Lawrence College in 2006, and it has that visionary, yet practical, wisdom that we've come to expect from Patchett. A little wacky, amazingly sincere and also far-sighted, this little book is a wonderful companion as you reinvent yourself or rediscover what is really important to you. The talk has been expanded somewhat but never loses Patchett's trademark warmth and style.

The New Secret Language of Dreams: The Illustrated Key to Understanding the Mysteries of the Unconscious

by David Fontana.

The title is a mouthful, but this is a lusciously-illustrated edition of a dream-diviners' favorite. It's also been rewritten and freshened up a bit. Fontana has a impressive reputation as a dream analyst and this edition is easy to use. There are also suggestions for keeping a dream journal and for remembering and structuring dreams. And once you know your dreams, then you can structure your life to achieve them, can't you?

Steering by Starlight: Find Your Right Life No Matter What by Martha Beck

So many people tend to put their lives on hold, waiting to get the next batch of things done, before they live



BY H. BYRON BALLARD

their “real” life. Beck's earlier bestseller “Finding Your Own North Star” was a brilliant introduction to her life-coaching style and its usefulness for the average person looking for a more authentic way

to live. She delivers an easy-to-use process that's been time-tested on her clients. You may also know Beck's writing from her column in O Magazine.

Sleeping with Bread: Holding What Gives You Life by Dennis Linn, Sheila Linn and Matthew Linn

Sometimes the hardest thing about living well is acknowledging what you already have and realizing how lucky you are. There are several good books about gratitude but this is one of my favorites. It is sweet without being cloying, spiritually-based without knocking you over the head with religiosity.

The authors have a personal style and don't shy away from discussing their own journeys through sadness and grief to a profound and grounded joy. This is one to tuck under your pillow for those nights when you confront the Hour of the Wolf.

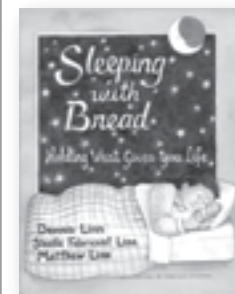
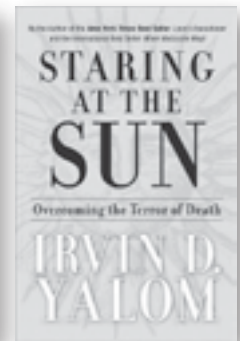
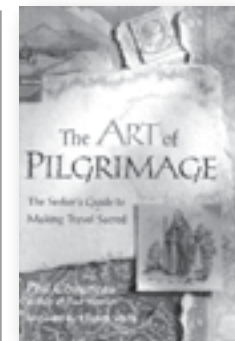
Staring at the Sun: Overcoming the Terror of Death by Irving D. Yalom.

Charles Dickens knew what he was about when he trotted out three Ghosts in his story of “A Christmas Carol”. The December holidays have a way of bringing us face-to-face with our own mortality, as we gather with family and friends, noting those who are no longer at the feast.

Yalom's work is always accessible, without giving the reader a sense of being talked-down to. This may be his most important work to date, as the ubiquitous aging Baby Boomers come up against old age and the eternal cycles of life.

Roads to Quoz: An American Mosey by William Least Heat-Moon

If you have never read this author, this is a grand place to start. When we are looking to live differently or better, sometimes it requires a road trip, a break with and from all we know. Nobody does



this better than Heat-Moon whose “Blue Highways” redefined the idea of “travel writing”. And it really is a mosey — less a romp than a meandering through some pleasant and weird and astounding places.

This book does nothing less than return the American landscape to its rightful place in the cultural imagination of her people. I can not recommend it highly enough.

New year, new life. Why don't we all take this opportunity to invest in something a little more heartfelt than the usual “lose 20 pounds” resolution and start a revolution in our own lives? Take an inventory of who you are, who you were, who you can be. Start with some reading, add some writing, spend real time with people — and books! — you love.

Byron Ballard is a bookseller, organic gardener and a beekeeper. Her writings have appeared in local and national print and electronic media. She blogs for the Asheville Citizen-Times as “the Village Witch”.

Byron lives on an urban farmstead in Asheville's historic West End with her husband Joe and daughter Kate.

Byron Ballard, Asheville's Village Witch
<http://blogs.citizen-times.com/blogs/index.php?blog=18>

Poetry And Children

Spirituality and creativity are deeply connected. I've seen this connection proven over and over while spending time with my granddaughters and other children. This connection needs to be fed if they are to believe they have a place in this world.

Helping young people understand their connection to the earth is one of my passions. Inspiring them on to creative works through this spiritual connection has become one of the greatest joys of my life.

The First Snowfall of 2008

Night of January 1

It's snowing little balls.

They're hitting the face of the car.

It's snowing in little balls.

Little bitty balls.

The snowflakes are spinning in the wind.

They're spinning and spinning.

Zoey Makayla Jaynes © 2008 (age 6)

My beliefs about spirituality are deeply connected to nature and creativity. To the American Indian, humankind and earth are one. There isn't humankind's

existence and the animal and plant kingdom's existence. It is *our* existence. Our bodies are connected to the earth, both physically and spiritually.

At the most basic level, everything is created, lives, dies and returns to the earth to nourish things to come. Before European contact, Indigenous peoples had definite forms of education for children that were passed down from generation to generation, and all were centered on contact with the natural world. In many nations, this teaching continues.

Nature is as much a part of human beings as our eyes, heart, and blood. We are connected to the animals, plants, rocks, the earth, and their voices and energy can speak to all of us. Understanding our connection with nature brings an understanding of our connection with all things.

I believe this connection starts in the womb. Reading to the unborn child, sending the baby thoughts, getting out in to nature, sitting by a stream, telling the baby about the bigger picture are all extremely important aspects of connectedness. Once the child is born, this tradition should continue. Children's dreams, ideas, and thoughts are often the product of creative energy. Their curiosity leads them and we should

poetry

A sacred fury...
an uncommon madness...



a scattering of birds...

BY MARIJO MOORE

always listen to what children have to share and teach us.

Children know innately when they touch a tree or hold a flower that something inside them is going to click. If we can reinforce this innate knowing that they are part of the whole — a part of everything — they won't be as likely to abuse the

land, each other or themselves. They will realize all of their actions effect so many other people.

Today, there are video games and television that are often more appealing to young people than finding their own creativity. Though I do not believe these things are all bad, they provide less of a creative outlet than other activities. There are many ways we can help guide children toward a spiritual connection through nature by encouraging them to express their creativity. Creating can add significance to one's life and a deeper understanding of the universe.

Children need opportunities to express themselves. Having a child draw or write about a walk

in the woods is a kind of ceremony because it is reconnecting the child with the earth. Poetry is ceremony. Dance is ceremony. Creating with clay, fabric squares, or even rearranging the furniture can be a child's way of expressing connections.

American Indians do not have a corner on spirituality. The connection is

Children need
opportunities to
express themselves.

Touch

We step outside the restaurant into early evening.

In the distance church bells are chiming the time.

"Hear the bells?"

I ask three-year-old Emma.

"People are praying," she answers.

"And well they should," I say.
"And well they should."

She reaches to hold my hand and my world changes yet again.

MariJo Moore © March 2007

in every one. We all owe it to others as well as ourselves to pursue our creative gifts. I think what causes so many people to be sick and depressed is they stifle their creative energy due to fear of failure.

So, if you are feeling stagnated in your creativity, spend time with children. As Vincent Van Gogh commented on his painting "*Camille Roulin, Le Collégien*" (January 1889), "If you watch a child closely you will see that he already has the infinite in the expression of his eyes."

MariJo Moore is the author of a dozen books including three books of poetry: Spirit Voices of Bones, Confessions of a Madwoman (now available on CD), and the forthcoming Poets Inhale The Darkness Artists Breathe. www.marijomore.com

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BOOKS

See You in a Hundred Years: Four Seasons in Forgotten America

Written by Logan Ward

In January 2000 Logan Ward, his wife, and their toddler son left New York City and the 21st century behind. They bought a small home and some land in the country and decided to move there for one year and live as if it were 1900.

This meant no indoor plumbing, no cars, nothing that has been invented in the past century. They also would plant their own crops, cook over a wood burning stove and milk a couple of goats. The Wards had never done anything like this before so they had no idea what they were getting into. Or what they would get out of this experience. *See You in a Hundred Years: Four Seasons in Forgotten America* is Ward's journal of that special year — one filled



REVIEWED BY FRANK POLK

with excitement, drama and most of all, a magical learning experience that very few ever get the opportunity to discover.

This charming book reads like a grown-up version of the timeless children's classic *My Side of the Mountain*, where a young boy leaves New York City to go live in a dead tree in the mountains.

Ward brings his adventures to life with fresh crisp prose that propels the reader through just under 250 pages. This is a real treat for anyone who finds themselves daydreaming about getting away from it all.

writers wanted

To cover theatre, the arts, events and other interesting things. Please respond by email with sample writings to info@rapidrivermagazine.com

After Dayton

written by C.S. Carrier

The suburban world of *After Dayton* is radioactive, diseased and energetic in equal measure. It pulses and strobes with the exothermic reactions of modern science and the familiar everyday colliding: "battery-operated candlesticks still burn the secrets of Christmas." These poems strive desperately to name, but objects and people squirm and metamorphose before them. Bodies and machines become indistinguishable: "diaphragmatic camshafts," "anvils in my ears." *After Dayton* offers us a strange and frightening animation, the phenomenal world alive in singular ways. This is, as Carrier writes at one point, "avantgarde choreography."

In *After Dayton* Carrier gives us an innovative reworking of the lyric voice, unsettling what we can expect from lyric poetry. In the speaker's own words:

"It's nothing I could have imagined." C.S. Carrier was born in Dayton, Ohio and grew up in North Carolina. He attended Western Carolina University, and earned an MFA from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. His work has appeared in *6x6*, *American Letters and Commentary*, *Coconut*, *LIT*, *Pleiades*, *Verse*, *Word For/Word* and elsewhere.

He teaches at the University of Hartford in West Hartford, Connecticut. ISBN: 978-1-884800-85-6

Price: \$15.95 paperback, 68 pages. Order from the University Press of New England by calling 1-800-421-1561 or visit www.upne.com.



Laura McDowell to Publish Book on Music in the Renaissance

BY VALERIE LEEPER

Dr. Laura McDowell has been awarded an Appalachian College Association (ACA) grant in response to her proposal to produce a book from her dissertation *Death in the Renaissance: Musical Symbols and Styles in the Commemorative Motets 1460-1539*. The grant makes it possible for her to complete this comprehensive project during a much deserved one year sabbatical during the 2009-2010 academic year.

McDowell's dissertation was a genre study of the large corpus of commemorative works from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. These vocal works memorializing some of the most distinguished patrons of music, composers, and noted historical figures were written by the preeminent composers of that time.

The interrelationship of the composers, their music, and the persons memorialized in the seventy-nine years from 1460-1539 forms a fascinating chapter in the history of Renaissance music and culture. McDowell said, "It is fortuitous that I am returning to this project at this remove in time, because of the wealth of



Dr. Laura McDowell

new scholarship generated on many of these composers, including new critical editions of their music.

The resulting book will be the definitive study of this genre of motet, unique for its inclusion of contextual/historical information on the deceased persons, the composers, complete texts with translations, listing of both

musical sources and modern editions, and musical analysis."

Due to current economic constraints, the ACA found it necessary this year to limit financial support by awarding to fewer applicants. Though there were many applicants in competition for ACA funds, only 10 such awards were granted, further highlighting the strength and quality of McDowell's proposal.

McDowell has a contract with the Edwin Mellen Press Ltd. for the manuscript to be submitted by December 2010. She is Professor and Coordinator of Music at Brevard College and has served on the faculty of the Division of Fine Arts since 1976.

Rare Birds: Conversations with Legends of Jazz and Classical Music

by Thomas Rain Crowe with Nan Watkins

Thomas Rain Crowe, known locally for his poetry and writing (having written over 20 books), has just come out with a compilation of interviews and essays on Jazz.

For music lovers this could very well be one of the most entertaining books in 2008; if not it certainly is one of the most beautifully produced books I have seen in a great while. The typeset is sharp and easy to read and the photos capture the abstract poetry of Jazz. The interviews are even better.

The last few decades have produced mountains of books, methods, histories and criticisms on almost every aspect of the art of jazz. What *Rare Birds* does



REVIEWED BY FRANK POLK

differently is go beyond interpretation by simply letting the musicians do the talking. It is honest and gritty, emotional and sometimes funny, but always powerful.

Rare Bird focuses not only on the music but also the artists. It dives into their personal lives and comes close many times to almost answering the age-old question "What is the meaning of art?"

Thomas Rain Crowe on tour for book *Rare Birds: Conversations with Legends of Jazz and Classical Music*, Sunday, January 18, at 7 p.m. Malaprop's Bookstore and Cafe, 55 Haywood St., Asheville, NC. (828) 254-6734.

Reel Take Reviewers:

CHIP KAUFMANN is a film historian who also shares his love of classical music as a program host on WCQS-FM radio.

MICHELLE KEENAN is a long time student of film, a believer in the magic of movies and a fundraiser for public radio.

SIERRA BICKING, our Teen Reviewer, prefers movies that show teenagers as brilliant and brave.

Questions/Comments?

You can email Chip or Michelle at reeltakes@hotmail.com



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- ★★★★ - Fantastic
- ★★★★ - Pretty darn good
- ★★★ - Has some good points
- ★★ - The previews lied
- ★ - Only if you must
- ☹ - Forget entirely

Australia ★★★★★

Short Take: Baz Luhrmann's *Down Under* epic is a salute to the kind of movie they just don't make anymore.

REEL TAKE: It has been a long time since such a large scale, old-fashioned epic like *Australia* has been seen on movie screens and judging from the box office results, contemporary audiences are not that interested and that's too bad.

Australia is Baz Luhrmann's salute to the films of Hollywood and Australia's past. There are references scattered throughout from *The Wizard Of Oz* (*Somewhere Over The Rainbow* plays a key part in the story) to the classic Western *Red River*. There are also "quotes" from several Australian films of the 70's and 80's as well as the use of such Aussie actors as Bryan Brown, Jack Thompson and especially Aboriginal actor David Gulpilil.

Hugh Jackman and Nicole Kidman are a strong couple in the classic tradition of two different people who start out hating each other only to fall in love, are separated, and then get reunited in the end. There is a surface resemblance to Meryl Streep and Robert Redford in *Out Of Africa* causing some critics to dub it "Out Of Australia" but the film has a much larger scope and storyline.

There are several large scale set pieces throughout the film including a cattle stampede in the middle and the bombing of Darwin by the Japanese at the end. Tucked away in all of this is the examination of the Australian policy of removing mixed race children from their Aboriginal mothers and placing them in schools to prepare them for a life of servitude. The film is narrated by one of these children (Brandon Walters) ala *Days Of Heaven*.

I immensely enjoyed *Australia* despite the film's 2hr 45min length. It's the ideal combination of old-fashioned and new-fangled filmmaking. Anyone who loves



Nicole Kidman & Hugh Jackman in Baz Luhrmann's homage to old-fashioned epics, *Australia*.

"the movies" will find much to admire and process here. It's just a shame that more people aren't doing it.

Rated PG-13 for violence, some sensuality, and brief strong language.

Review by Chip Kaufmann

Doubt ★★ 1/2

Short Take: Good but not great film taken from the acclaimed stage play.

REEL TAKE: Like Ron Howard's *Frost/Nixon* (reviewed elsewhere in this issue), John Patrick Shanley's *Doubt* is based on a play. In this case Shanley not only wrote the original but directed the film as well. This turns out to be its major weakness.

While *Doubt* certainly isn't a bad film, it lacks a visual dynamic quality that would have drawn me more into it. A more experienced director would have added a little more flair and perhaps staged the character confrontations a little more forcefully from a cinematic point of view.

The story, based on Shanley's Catholic school background, deals with the confrontation between an old school nun (Meryl Streep) and a reform minded



Meryl Streep as Sister Aloysius in *Doubt*.

minister (Philip Seymour Hoffman). Caught in the middle is a young nun (Amy Adams) who looks up to the Sister for guidance while admiring the priest's new approach.

When Sister Aloysius suspects Father Flynn of taking indecent liberties with one of the students, she sees an opportunity to get rid of him and what he stands for. Although the evidence is circumstantial and the Father denies it, she enlists the aid of Sister James in her effort to bring him down.

Those who attended Catholic school in the 1960s will definitely have an inside track as to the look and feel of the film. They will also have a stronger emotional identification with the characters and the events that take place than I did. Such was the case at the advance screening that I attended.

Doubt is loaded with fine performances not only from the three principals and Viola Davis as the mother of the boy in question, but also from the child performers as well. Unfortunately I never got past the point of thinking that I was watching a play transferred to the screen. I was engaged while I was in the theatre but it just didn't stick with me after I left.

Rated PG-13 for thematic material.

Review by Chip Kaufmann

Frost / Nixon ★★ 1/2

Short Take: Outstanding film version of the Peter Morgan play about the famous 1977 interviews.

REEL TAKE: *Frost/Nixon* is one of those movies that not only celebrates its origins (the play by Peter Morgan (*The Queen*)), but also its performers as well. Not many movies have their origins in plays these days (another one *Doubt* with Meryl Streep and Philip Seymour Hoffman is reviewed elsewhere in this issue) but few have been done as well as this.

Although the play was essentially a two man show between David Frost and Richard Nixon (Michael Sheen and Frank Langella recreating their stage roles), *Frost/Nixon* contains several fine sup-



Frank Langella as Richard Nixon in *Frost/Nixon* with Michael Sheen as David Frost looking on in the background.

porting performances especially from Sam Rockwell as journalist James Reston, Kevin Bacon as Nixon's Marine bodyguard and confidante, and former child star Patty McCormack (*The Bad Seed*) as Pat Nixon.

For those of you too young to have been there, here's the background. In 1977, three years after having resigned the presidency, Richard Nixon agreed to do a series of four televised interviews with British talk show host David Frost for \$600,000. Nixon and those around him believed that Frost was a lightweight who wouldn't ask tough questions and who could be easily outmaneuvered. For three of the four interviews that was the case but then came the fourth. During the last interview Nixon surprisingly broke down and admitted his involvement in Watergate.

Director Ron Howard, in what may be his finest film to date, allows the story to tell itself. Perhaps because of the play's TV origins, he keeps the film technically simple (although the editing is superb) which allows us to follow the proceedings and to savor the performances. *Nixon/Frost* not only recreates a defining moment in American television history, it shows how David Frost unwittingly opened the door for future celebrity interviews that unlike this encounter promise more than they actually deliver.

Rated R for strong language.

Review by Chip Kaufmann

'Movies' continued on pg 26

FILM REVIEWS

'Movies' continued from pg 25

Gran Torino 1/2

Short Take: Rumored to be his last performance, Eastwood directs and stars in the story of Walt Kowalski, a retired, widowed auto-worker who decides to clean up his Detroit neighborhood.

REEL TAKE: *Gran Torino* is Eastwood's second directorial film credit this year. *Changeling* would have been most people's guess for the better of the two. Oddly enough, while *Changeling* is indeed a fine film, to me *Gran Torino* is clearly the superior and even made my Top 10 list for the year.

In what is possibly his final performance, Eastwood plays Walt Kowalski, a retired auto-worker and Korean War veteran complete with all the prejudices of his age and class. He is recently widowed and not particularly close to his children. Much to Walt's chagrin Father Janovich (Christopher Carley) insists on visiting him because Walt's wife asked him to before she died.

The presence of the Lors (a Hmong family) next door is proof to him that the neighborhood is going downhill. However it is the increasing presence of gang activity that drives Walt to take a stand



Clint Eastwood defends the neighborhood in *Gran Torino*.

for his neighborhood, taking the young man (Bee Vang) of the Lor family under his wing along the way. Barriers between Walt and the neighbors are broken and a genuine friendship is forged.

The story is peppered with wonderful moments of humor. To that end, Walt's observations and prejudiced quips muttered throughout the film serve as verbalized bubble captions. Eastwood balances Walt's prejudices with words of equal contempt from the Hmong family.

Gran Torino could have been fairly rote material, but Eastwood elevates it to higher ground by infusing it with touches from the sum of his vast experience. It's tight, streamlined, thoughtful and appealing to the masses without ever dumbing down. There is a climatic moment of symbolism that struck me as a little cheesy, but that event worked for story.

If this is indeed Eastwood's final performance as an actor it was an apt one. Beyond the geriatric Dirty Harry quality of Walt Kowalski, the story offers periodic tips of the hat to his expansive career. *Gran Torino* personifies the striking combination of Eastwood the cowboy, Eastwood the cop and Eastwood the Renaissance man.

Rated R for language throughout, and some violence.

Review by Michelle Keenan

Milk 1/2

Short Take: Sean Penn gives the performance of a lifetime as civil rights activist and San Francisco's first openly gay politician Harvey Milk.

REEL TAKE: I knew the name Harvey Milk. I knew he was gay and I knew he was dead, but I didn't really know much else. People a little bit older probably have more recall



about Milk's story while most people a little bit younger than I probably have no knowledge of who he was. Regardless of age, orientation, political or religious views, *Milk* should be mandatory viewing for all Americans.

Directed by Gus Van Sant, *Milk* tells the story of the last decade of Harvey Milk's life – a decade where he went from a closeted investment banker in New York to an openly gay businessman and civil rights activist in San Francisco. After becoming involved in fighting for gay rights, Milk became a charismatic leader and brilliant strategist for the movement, eventually seeking public office and running several times before becoming elected to a city supervisor seat in 1977. Less than year later Milk and San Francisco Mayor George Moscone (Victor Garber) were shot and killed by fellow supervisor, Dan White (Josh Brolin).

Van Sant intersperses just enough footage to show the political fervor and climate in the country of the time. Writer Dustin Lance Black smartly does not depict Milk as a perfect man. In fact he paints a very honest picture of a flawed man, but a good man. The flaws actually help us understand Milk and the fervor of his fight. Penn balances the aspects of Milk's larger than life personality with integrity and humanity. Apparently some who actually knew Harvey Milk say that Penn's performance is uncannily like their friend. Supporting cast members Josh Brolin, Emile Hirsch and James Franco (as Milk's partner Scott Smith) turn in top notch performances.

Ultimately two sad truths really struck me watching this film. This was the first time I've ever seen a real love story unfold between two men in a feature film. Secondly and most profoundly we forget that Harvey Milk's fight and Proposition 6 didn't happen very long ago, and the fight still goes on today. One would like to think we'd evolved earlier than that, but sadly we didn't and we haven't.

Rated R for language, some sexual content and brief violence.

Review by Michelle Keenan

Slumdog Millionaire 1/2

Short Take: An eighteen-year-old from the slums of Mumbai becomes a contestant on India's version of "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" in order to win the heart of the girl he has loved his whole life.

REEL TAKE: British director Danny Boyle (*Millions*, *Trainspotting*) meets Bollywood in one of the best films of year. *Slumdog Millionaire* tells the story of Jamal (Dev

Patel) an 18-year-old orphan from the slums of Mumbai. In an effort to win the heart of the woman he loves and prove himself worthy of her, he becomes a contestant on India's "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" In a feat never before seen on Indian television, Jamal makes it to the final round. On the eve of the final round, Jamal is arrested for cheating and interrogated.

How did an uneducated kid from the slums get on the show and then know the answers to the questions. Did he cheat, or was it written? The interrogation takes us back through each question from the show. As each question is asked, we are taken to Jamal's memories. The answer to each question lies in his life experiences. Through those experiences we also learn Jamal's life story.



Jamal (Dev Patel) and Latika (Frieda Pinto) find each other in *Slumdog Millionaire*.

Orphaned after a fit of sectarian violence when they were small boys, Jamal and his older brother set off to make their way in the world. It's a world most of us can't even fathom. Jamal's story is cruel, but throughout it Jamal is a pure spirit, ever the optimist, never losing hope and unflagging in his love for Latika (Freida Pinto), an orphan he has known since they were little. Even in an unfamiliar culture in a far away land, Boyle does what Boyle does best, mixing a childlike spirit with an ugly world. The film is beautifully photographed, cleverly told and offers something for everyone.

On first mentioning a movie set in India about a game show contestant will not sound appealing to most westerners, but you will root for Jamal. I can't imagine anyone not enjoying *Slumdog Millionaire*.

Rated R for some violence, disturbing images and language.

Review by Michelle Keenan

'Movies' continued on next pg

Theatre Directory

Asheville Pizza & Brewing Company
Movieline (828) 254-1281
www.ashevillepizza.com

Beaucatcher Cinemas (Asheville)
Movieline (828) 298-1234

Biltmore Grande
1-800-FANDANGO #4010
www.REGmovies.com

Carmike 10 (Asheville)
Movieline (828) 298-4452
www.carmike.com

Carolina Cinemas
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www.carolinacinemas.com

Cinebarre (Asheville)
www.cinebarre.com

The Falls Theatre (Brevard)
Movieline (828) 883-2200

Fine Arts Theatre (Asheville)
Movieline (828) 232-1536
www.fineartstheatre.com

Flat Rock Theatre (Flat Rock)
Movieline (828) 697-2463
www.flatrockcinema.com

Four Seasons (Hendersonville)
Movieline (828) 693-8989

Smoky Mountain Cinema (Waynesville)
Movieline (828) 452-9091

FILM REVIEWS

'Movies' continued from pg 26

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button 1/2

Short Take: A beguiling story of life, love and death told through the eyes of a man born old and grows young.

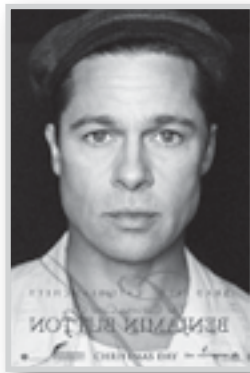
REEL TAKE: As it says in my byline – I believe in the magic of movies. All year, I've been waiting for a film that exemplifies that most wonderful, transcendent essence. It's finally here in *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*.

"I was born under unusual circumstances," says Benjamin Button (Brad Pitt). Indeed while everyone else is born young and grows old, Button was born old and grows young. While the streets of New Orleans were full of revelers on the night "The Great War" ended, Benjamin's mother died giving birth to him.

His father, unable to bear the sight of the withered, arthritic babe, deposits him on the steps of a nursing home/boarding house of sorts. There he is raised by a black woman named Queenie (Taraji P. Henson). "He's not the kind of miracle you hope for, but he's a miracle nonetheless," says Queenie. To me this sentence set the tone for the whole movie.

One would not expect a film as emotionally wholehearted and vivacious as this to have been directed by the man who directed *Fight Club* (a brilliant movie in its own right). However when combined with writer Eric Roth (whose many credits include *The Good Shepherd* and *Forrest Gump*), it starts to make sense. Roth adapted and expanded upon a short story by F. Scott Fitzgerald. The result is a story that revels in the human experience.

Being a little boy in an old man's body gives Benjamin a unique perspective on life. He meets the love of his life when the granddaughter of one the home's residents comes to visit; Daisy (Cate Blanchett) and Benjamin become fast friends. She somehow understands that he's not as old as he looks. He quietly and amicably observes and accepts the passages of life from the nursing home until he grows up (yet younger physically) and heads



The Best of 2008

2008 IS COMING TO A CLOSE. UNFORTUNATELY SOME OF THE BEST MOVIES OF THE YEAR ARE COMING OUT JUST AS WE ARE PUTTING THIS ISSUE TO BED, BUT BASED ON WHAT WE'VE SEEN, WE'VE DECIDED TO DO OUR OWN REEL TAKES RANKINGS FOR THE BEST MOVIES OF THE YEAR.

CHIP KAUFMANN'S TOP 10 MOVIES OF 2008

(in alphabetical order)

1. *And When Did You Last See Your Father* – Superbly acted drama of a son coming to terms with the death of his overbearing father.
2. *Australia* – Baz Luhrmann's *Down Under* saga is an homage to old style Hollywood epics.
3. *The Dark Knight* – Heath Ledger's Joker highlights Christopher Nolan's comic book meditation on moral ambiguity.
4. *Frost / Nixon* – Ron Howard superbly captures the essence of the play while making it cinematically interesting.
5. *Gran Torino* – Clint Eastwood's "last stand" as an actor essays his career while touching on the nature of America today.
6. *Jimmy Carter, Man From Plains* – Superb documentary on the former President from filmmaker Jonathan Demme.
7. *Miracle At Saint Anna* – Spike Lee's ambitious World War II drama deals with racism while defining the nature of sacrifice.
8. *Slumdog Millionaire* – Danny Boyle's look at life and love in the slums of Mumbai may be the best film of the year.
9. *The Visitor* – This low budget independent feature speaks volumes about the nature of human relationships.
10. *W.* – Oliver Stone's meditation on what made the former President the man he is today has a great performance from Josh Brolin.



Laz Alonso, Derek Luke, Mike Ealy and Omar Benson Miller star in Spike Lee's overlooked *Miracle at Saint Anna*.

Best Foreign Film

Let The Right One In (Sweden)

Honorable Mention

The Bank Job, Eagle Eye, Elegy, Flawless, In Bruges, Iron Man, Kit Kitteridge, Kung Fu Panda, Transsiberian, Zach & Miri Make A Porno.

MICHELLE KEENAN'S TOP 10 MOVIES OF 2008

(in alphabetical order)

1. *Australia* – Baz Luhrmann's grand epic is a love letter to his homeland, and to sweeping, old fashioned movies. See it on the big screen!
2. *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* – A beguiling, oddly magical story of life and love as told through a life aging in reverse.
3. *Frost / Nixon* – Ron Howard deftly directs the story of the tumultuous interview between British television presenter David Frost and former President Nixon, brilliantly showing the fragility of a nation and the complicated man that was Richard M. Nixon, in an Oscar-worthy performance by Frank Langella.
4. *Gran Torino* – At first glance, it's a geriatric *Dirty Harry*, but it's a fine story and a nice tip of the hat to Eastwood's career.
5. *In Bruges* – A not for the faint-of-heart story yet thoughtful story of two hit men hiding out in Bruges (that's in Belgium). Brendan Gleeson and Colin Farrell give top notch performances.
6. *Milk* – An honest, inspiring, eye opening, must-see story of civil rights activists and San Francisco's first openly gay councilman Harvey Milk. Sean Penn gives the performance of his life.
7. *Persepolis* – An engaging story of a young Iranian girl told through a simple, black and white line style French animation.
8. *Slumdog Millionaire* – The fantastic tale of an eighteen year old orphan from Mumbai who becomes a contestant on the Indian version of "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire" to win the heart of a girl.
9. *Tell No One (Ne le Dis a Personne)* – A smart, entertaining, French who-done-it and moreover a beautiful love story.
10. *The Visitor* – A wonderful little independent movie that depicts the beauty, vulnerability and kindness of humanity.



François Cluzet as Dr. Alexandre Beck and Marie-Josée Croze as Margot Beck in *Tell No One (Ne le Dis a Personne)*.

Honorable Mention

My honorable mentions include *Rock-N-Rolla, Mama Mia, Iron Man* and *The Dark Knight*. All four were solid films in their own right and were utterly entertaining. Guy Ritchie is back in the saddle with *Rock-N-Rolla*. *Mama Mia* is the feel good film/musical of the year. *Iron Man* is an old fashioned comic book hero, Saturday afternoon matinee fare, while *The Dark Knight* boasts the stand-out performance of the year in what was sadly Heath Ledger's last completed role.

'Movies' continued on pg. 28

FILM REVIEWS

'Movies' continued from pg 27

out on his own adventures. Eventually Daisy and Benjamin meet in the middle of their lives and simply love one another, for life is lived in moments.

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button is not perfect but it is a beautiful, oddly magical love letter to life.

Rated PG-13 for brief war violence, sexual content and language.

Review by Michelle Keenan



Jennifer Connelly and Keanu Reeves in *The Day The Earth Stood Still*.

The Day the Earth Stood Still

Short Take: Remake of the classic 1951 film is a lot better than it should be.

REEL TAKE: I'll admit upfront that I went into this remake with a palpable sense of dread. Here comes yet another trumped-up special effects extravaganza of a classic older film offering us visual style over thematic substance. I am happy to report that I was wrong.

Director Scott Derrickson has indeed updated the material (which needed to be done) but he retained the essence of the original. If the Earth is to survive then humans have to change their ways or perish. Although the message here is environmental rather than economic, the recent financial meltdown only underscores that aspect of human behavior that is "leading us to the precipice" as one character puts it.

This time around the alien Klaatu (Keanu Reeves in the Michael Rennie role) arrives in Central Park rather than Washington D.C. and his robot companion is far more intimidating than in the 1951 original. One change I didn't like was the giving of the name "Gort" to the military rather than Klaatu. It eliminates the classic line "Klaatu barada nikto" which halts the destruction of Earth. Imagine *Citizen Kane* without "Rosebud".

Jennifer Connelly inherits the Patricia Neal role as the woman who ultimately saves the world although it's her emotions as opposed to her strength that saves the day. John Cleese plays the scientist who

Four Christmases

Four Christmases

If you're like me, you might have had some trouble getting into the Christmas spirit this year and hoped that seeing a good Christmas movie would get you in the mood. In my case, I went to see *Four Christmases*, which has five Oscar winners and two well-known singers in it.

Four Christmases is about an unmarried couple, Kate (Reese Witherspoon) and Brad (Vince Vaughn), who are forced to visit all four of their dysfunctional, divorced parents' houses on Christmas Day.



dysfunctional in some way, which can make Christmas gatherings tortuous. *Four Christmases* not only reflected

TEEN REVIEW by Sierra Bicking

Once there, they become entangled in disturbing situations (I won't spoil the surprises) and learn more about each other than they ever wanted to know.

Most families are a bit

this, it took it to a whole new level.

While some of the acting was marvelous and the characters intriguing, the movie ultimately snowed itself in with its vulgar, sexual, and extremely lame humor. So if you have a dysfunctional family of your own, go see this movie. It will make them seem positively functional.



Sierra Bicking is an arte aficionado extraordinaire.

Chip Kaufmann's Pick: "Pennies From Heaven"

January's DVD Picks

Michelle Keenan's Pick: "The Visitor"

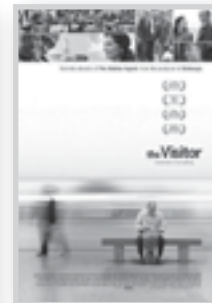
Pennies From Heaven (1981)

As we start off the New Year in a time of economic uncertainty, what could be a better choice than this underappreciated gem from 1981 that shows how the grim reality of the Great Depression was hidden by the happy lyrics of such musical offerings as the title song.

Pennies From Heaven was adapted from a British TV series by Dennis Potter of *The Singing Detective* fame. The film gave Steve Martin his first opportunity to shed his "wild and crazy guy" persona and teamed him up with future long time companion Bernadette Peters.

The story concerns the downward spiral of a 1930s sheet music salesman and a rural teacher. As their situation worsens, they take solace in the upbeat sentiments of the songs he sells. These songs are staged as 1930s musical numbers ala *42nd Street* and are truly eye-popping showing off Martin and Peters to good advantage. A young Christopher Walken does a tap dance number that will leave you breathless.

Pennies From Heaven tanked



upon its initial release as it wasn't what Steve Martin fans expected or wanted to see.

It has since developed a strong cult following over the years and now can be appreciated for the highly original entertainment it was. It's definitely a movie worth seeing if you like your musicals on the dark side ala *Cabaret* or if you like entertainment that provides food for thought.

The Visitor

You may have missed this wonderful little movie when it played at the Fine Arts Theatre earlier this year. You'll notice that it made my Top 10 list as well as Chip Kaufmann's. *The*

Visitor is now out on DVD and well worth the rental fee.

Richard Jenkins (HBO's *Six Feet Under*) plays Walter Vale, a mild mannered Connecticut professor whose passion for his work has long since faded. Since his wife's passing, any remnant of zeal is gone and he just quietly goes through the motions of the day-to-day, almost sleepwalking through life. When sent to New York City to deliver a paper he didn't write, Walter returns to an apartment he seldom uses. Much to his surprise he finds two illegal immigrants living there. In an unlikely turn he invites the young couple to stay (at least until they find some place else), a friendship is forged and Walter starts to emerge from his daze.

The immigrants are Syrian and African, so one can guess early on that the government will rear its ugly head at some point. What unfolds is a pointed commentary on post-911 immigration policy, especially The Patriot Act. While this is prominent, it is not the main point of the movie. What really resonates is the universality of people coming together in kindness.

tries to convince the alien through logic of the worth of human beings (a bad idea). This part is considerably reduced from the Sam Jaffe original which is also something of a disappointment.

While not as good as the original overall, this new version is a worthy suc-

cessor for its willingness to give us food for thought rather than more bang for our buck by making the impressive special effects subservient to the screenplay. As the movie tells us in no uncertain terms, it's time to eliminate our excesses and get down to what's really important.

Rated PG-13 for disaster images and some violence.

Review by Chip Kaufmann

Questions/Comments? You can email Chip or Michelle at reeltakes@hotmail.com

RESTAURANTS & WINE

Bourbon and Bubbles

- Federal Fizz, Sore Throat Troubles

With this month's peaceful transfer of power in Washington, DC, California wine-maker Joy Sterling is hopeful her sparkling wine will be served and enjoyed by a fifth Presidential administration.

Her winery, Iron Horse, excels at sparkling wine, and made the headlines in 1985 when President Ronald Reagan and Russian General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev raised their glasses for a toast to peace. This was the beginning of glasnost (openness), the acceleration of the Russian economy we later called perestroika. Ironically, the new movement included an anti-alcohol campaign.

Choosing Iron Horse for the summit was perhaps an easy choice for a President from California, and the wine is from Sonoma County's Russian River Valley.

Before that, in 1972, California's Schramsberg Winery filled a federal government order for 13 cases of sparkling wine. Soon after that, President Richard Nixon and Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai shared a toast on television to celebrate the historic Shanghai Communiqué. Schramsberg's owners were very pleasantly surprised when Barbara Walters told the world what the heads of state were drinking.

Again, it was a President from California who was also a wine enthusiast.

Our local winery, the Biltmore Estate, also excels at sparkling wine. Even way back in the 1990's, when their labels were generic and utterly dull, the wine inside was a local best-kept secret. Today, their packages are updated and their selection expanded. Even their high-dollar choices are worth the money.

Biltmore has been on the White House Menu a few times, and the news

BY MICHAEL PARKER

media has recently made hay about the conspicuous absence of Southerners in the incoming administration. They should at least include more of our bounty. Advice to Biltmore: work it, work it, work it!

Hot Toddy Season Arrives Early

The Phone rings. It's Jami. "I feel like crap and I need hot toddies. I'll bring a movie and a puppy."

It was a perfect hot toddy night. The weather had been rainy and the holiday parties were wearing us down. A night off was definitely in order.

I was feeling on the edge of ill myself, having spent much of the day with my mother, who had acute bronchitis and talked the entire time while we were in the car together. I didn't know if I had caught any germs or if my feelings were psychosomatic, but my throat was getting tight.

I went to Greenlife for oil of oregano (this stuff is awesome for advancing sore throats, \$25 for 60 capsules), and then I spent more there on cinnamon sticks and lemons than I did on the Bourbon.

About expensive Bourbon: save it for when you are healthy and your taste buds are uninhibited by a stupid cold.

A former Frog Bar-tender, the much-missed Thomas Scott, gave good advice. "Cheap Bourbon is good Bourbon." He was right. Next time you are in the ABC store, look at the lesser-priced choices. They don't advertise, so they don't charge you for their advertising. You can almost judge them by their labels. My personal choice is Benchmark at \$10 for a .750L bottle.

Hot Toddy

This is my toddy. It's not as involved as it looks, but it can get a little messy when you make a lot of them:

- Cinnamon Sticks
- Whole cloves
- Fresh lemons
- Honey
- Bourbon

Boil a stick or two with five to ten cloves in two mugs of water until the water turns brown. I use the microwave and a large glass measuring cup for this. You can reuse the cinnamon and clove at least twice. In this step, you are simply making a tea.

Put a soup spoon-sized blob of honey in your glass or mug and add the hot liquid so the honey dissolves. Add one or two ounces of Bourbon, your preference, and squeeze in a fat wedge of lemon.

Even better, there's always someone in the store, employee or customer, who has a reliable opinion about Bourbon. Yes, Virginia, there is good ten-dollar Bourbon.

There are a variety of ways to make a good hot toddy. The hot liquid can be water, tea, or coffee. The liquor can be Bourbon, any other whisky, brandy, or even rum.

Personally, I have no interest in a toddy that is made from something other than Bourbon. Call me a fool for Southern folklore, but I do believe that Bourbon is good for the body. If the reason for making a toddy is an ailing body, then there is no better choice.



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THOREAU'S GARDEN

The Amaryllis or *Hippeastrum*

Over the years I've been asked more questions about keeping an amaryllis in bloom from year to year than any other single plant question. And the biggest hurdle that I see is the mistaken belief

that this plant is a bulb that should be allowed to become dormant for at least half of the year.

To begin with, the amaryllis is a more or less evergreen plant that nursery suppliers and many growers allow to dry off after flowering both for convenience in the greenhouse and for the ease of shipping dormant bulbs to market. In fact, seedling plants should never be dried off until they reach flowering size. If properly cared for, your amaryllis will become larger every year and will continue to flower with increasing vigor and blatant display.

There is confusion even with scientific nomenclature because many people still believe that *Amaryllis* is the correct generic name for this popular winter houseplant. Well, it's a generic name but for a genus with but one species, an entirely different bulbous plant known as the bel-ladonna lily or *Amaryllis Bella-*



Illustration by
Peter Loewer

donna. The confusion arose in the United States because growers did not want to confuse the American consumer with the correct name of *Hippeastrum*.

The genus *Hippeastrum* contains some 75 species, mostly native to Tropical America (one hails from Africa), and is sometimes called the equestrian star-flower. This last name comes from *Hippeus* or knight on horseback, and *astron*, a star. Why? Nobody really knows for like many names in the botanical world, the initial reasoning is lost in the mists of time.

The bulbs can be left out-of-doors in the southern tip of Florida, a bit of southern Texas (where it touches Mexico and the Gulf), and a few small areas of California. Elsewhere this is a potted houseplant with a sojourn to the backyard during the heat of summer.

In 1769 *Hippeastrum vittatum* was first introduced from the Chilean Andes. The plants sported strap-shaped leaves and up to six six-inch wide flowers of white with magenta stripes. One watch-maker in England, by the name of Arthur Johnson, crossed this plant with *H. reginae* – the one African plant – and produced the first hybrid, now called *Hippeastrum x Johnsonii*, or St. Joseph's lily, a bulb that produced three or four tubular flowers of brilliant scarlet, streaked with white.

Using this plant as a starter, Dutch hybridizers have produced the 'Leopoldii hybrid' bulbs that bear flowers of almost all colors except blue. So today when you see an amaryllis advertised for home or greenhouse, it's usually a descendant of one of these plants.

Sometimes an entirely new bulb appears on the plant horizon. The butterfly amaryllis (*Hippeastrum papilion*) is described as having a blossom five and a half inches high and three and a half inches wide with a background color of white, lightly touched with soft green and having crimson-maroon markings radiating from the throat.

As for a lacking of a blue flower, for years horticulturists and nurserymen have touted the fabulous blue amaryllis *Hippeastrum procerum*, but this turns out to be *Worsleya Rayneri*, a one species genus from Brazil. This long-necked bulb was named after Arthington Worsley (1861-



Peter examines the
blossoms of early-blooming
Lenten roses.

BY PETER LOEWER

1943), a mining engineer who travelled extensively in South America.

To plant an amaryllis fill a pot to two-thirds with a soil mix of potting soil, peat moss, composted manure, and sand, one-quarter each. Choose a pot no larger than two inches

more than the bulb's diameter. Bury the bulb in the soil but leave the top part (about one-quarter) uncovered. Keep the soil moist but not wet and set the pot in a warm spot.

After the leaves appear, feed the plant every month during active growth and allow at least four hours of full sun with 50°F at night and 70°F during the day. Every summer after the first year, replace the top inch of soil with fresh, and pot on

every three years. In time a healthy bulb can produce many flowers and attain a circumference of some 14 inches. After nights warm up and frost danger is past, you can place the potted bulbs out in the garden for the summer.

From late October to mid-December, keep the bulb slightly drier and allow a rest. When you wish to start bloom, bring the pot into a warm place. When the flower stalk is some 6 inches high, place the plant in a sunny window.

If you wish to store the bulbs, in September withhold water completely and allow the leaves to turn yellow and die back. When completely brown, cut them off at the top of the bulb. Dormant bulbs and pots are best stored on their sides in a place with temperatures no lower than 40°F. To start flowering add water and bring to a warm room.

Remove the flowers after blossoming is completed unless you wish to set seed. Don't worry about the water that seeps out of the sheared stalk – it will soon stop.

Amaryllis from Seed

Cross-pollinating your own amaryllis hybrids is a fascinating hobby. Try to pick two parents of pure color – a red with another shade of red or bright orange with a dark orange – since hybridizers say this gives the best results. Using a small,

'Amaryllis' continued on pg. 33

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ARTFUL LIVING

Personal Evolution

I have to admit, I have strong reservations about "psychotherapy". I always have. I was trained and practiced as a clinical psychologist for years, but was never very comfortable with the model. When I was in college in the late 60's, I discussed my reservations with the chairman of the Psychology Department.

I told him, that I didn't want to be part of a profession that seemed to do no more than patch up people that society had screwed-up so they could resume their place within the society that screwed them up in the first place. I also had an intuitive mistrust of Freudian analysis and behaviorism. It all seemed to lack a deeper insight and compassion for the universal human condition.

Don't get me wrong, I do see the value in psychotherapy for exactly the purposes I object to, and am not telling others to not practice or receive it, it's just that I was and am interested in something else. I was and am interested in what the wisdom and sanity potential for a human being and the human species is. With that, in college, I chose to pursue Cultural Anthropology rather than Psychology.

That same professor, however, introduced me to the humanist psychology of Carl Rogers and Rogers' student, Sydney Jourard, the existentialism of Rollo May, and the human potential Gestalt psychology of Fritz Perls. I came to know there were those within psychology who had a very different track than the analysts and the behaviorists I was suspicious of, and eventually, it was this existentialist/human potential modality combined with a strong training in clinical practice that I took professionally.

Over the years, however, my anthropologist beginnings called to me ever stronger, as my early concerns about the profession of psychology seemed to be increasingly confirmed, and the humanists, existentialists, human potentialists, and even the analysts of newer more insightful schools, were marginalized more and more. I became convinced that exploring non-Western wisdom traditions combined with an anthropological exploration of the evolution of human consciousness, rather than any traditional psychology, held the secret to personal sanity in the modern world.

In truth, it's not the idea of psychotherapy in its purest sense that's so unappealing to me; it is what the profession became. I see it now more than ever as an instrument of socialization rather than an exploration of healing the "soul/mind", as the word "psychology" in its Greek origins implies. "Psychotherapy" as a healing of the soul/mind is exactly what I care

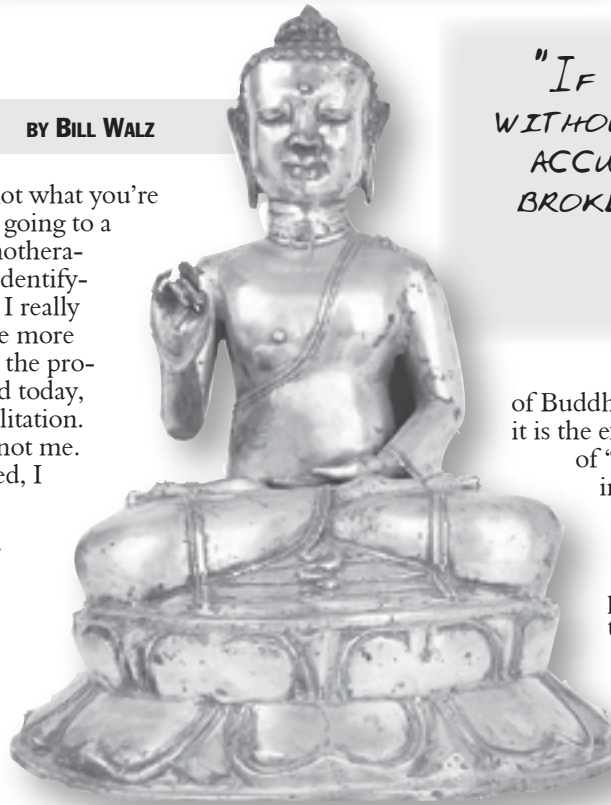
BY BILL WALZ

about, but that's not what you're likely to get when going to a professional psychotherapist, so I stopped identifying myself as one. I really believe it would be more appropriate to call the profession as practiced today, mental/social habilitation. That is definitely not me.

So, when asked, I say that I do "personal evolution", the exploration of the fulfillment of a person's understanding of their placement and potential in an unfolding universe. This does, of course, have its implications for healthier relating in the social/family context, but not necessarily in a way most of today's psychotherapists or counselors would relate to. I am back to being an existentialist/human potentialist.

I am deeply curious and inspired by the question of what human potential really is, not in an intellectual, scientific sense, but in the dimension that can only be called wisdom, a deep knowing of our placement in this mystery of life. With that, must come an exploration of the phenomenon of consciousness, the core of who we are and our connection to life, with meditation and mindfulness as the necessary methodology.

I am drawn to the concept of evolution because it brings a macro-perspective that places the personal dimension of you and me living our ordinary lives within a truly liberating view. As a student of anthropology, I am drawn to the psychology



"If I HADN'T LEARNED HOW TO LIVE WITHOUT A CULTURE AND A SOCIETY, THE ACCULTURATION PROCESS WOULD HAVE, BROKEN MY HEART A THOUSAND TIMES."

~ KURT VONNEGUT IN THE VOICE OF KILGORE TROUT

of Buddhism because it is the exploration of "awakening" into a human being's trans-cultural, trans-egoic place within the Universe, in the eternity of the present moment and the unfolding of time. Buddhism,

as a psychology, attracts me because it is primarily the exploration of the nature of human suffering, not only at a personal level with an insight that Western psychology lacks, but at an existential, transpersonal, universal level that really does address the evolutionary journey of being human.

This Buddhist "awakening" is the realization, as Kurt Vonnegut shares, of how heart-breaking it can be to believe that what society and culture have conditioned into us are the limits of who we are. It is the realization of an unfolding evolution of human consciousness that places the personal within a vast and grand perspective that includes the heart-break without breaking our hearts.

It is about escaping the mental treadmill of relentlessly reconstructing our mental/social programming, to awaken into a much larger, deeper and liberated

identity, and that is what I am about. A liberating New Year to you.



Bill Walz is a UNCA adjunct faculty member and a private-practice teacher of mindfulness, personal growth and consciousness.

He holds a weekly meditation class, Mondays, 7 p.m., at the Friends Meeting House, 227 Edgewood. Information on classes, personal growth and healing instruction, or phone consultations at (828) 258-3241, or e-mail healing@billwalz.com. Visit www.billwalz.com

A Spiritual Survival Guide for Gay & Lesbian Christians

Saturday, January 17, 7:00 p.m.

Minister Candace Chellew-Hodge presents her book *Bulletproof Faith: A Spiritual Survival Guide for Gay and Lesbian Christians*.

A refrain heard relentlessly by gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people of faith is: "God hates fags." Whether it's hurled as a direct insult or stated more subtly in a "Love the sinner, hate the sin" theology, the message

to GLBT ears is the same: "God hates you and so do we."

In such a toxic religious environment, many GLBT people abandon their faith, believing that God hates them or at the very least will not love them unless they give up or deny their sexual orientation.

At Malaprops Bookstore, 55 Haywood Street, Asheville, NC. Phone (828) 254-6734 for more information.



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JOE'S BREW NOTES

Brusin' Ales: A Mecca for Beer Enthusiasts

Whether you have a passion for beer or not, a stop at Brusin' Ales is a must when you visit downtown Asheville. With over 700 different styles of beer just browsing the shelves for label art is fun. Even better, ask the friendly, knowledgeable staff to help you select just the right beers to suit your tastes and social plans.

Jason and Julie Atallah, co-owners of Brusin' Ales, are ardent beer connoisseurs. They opened their store in 2006 and used their knowledge of beer to promote the enjoyment of its many styles and flavors. It's a store that contains only beer and beer paraphernalia (glassware, books, T-shirts, etc.). They select beers from around the world (many of which cannot be found in Asheville or

BY JOE ZINICH

The couple met in college where they, as most collegians, drank mass-produced beer. A friend treated them to a Belgian beer, Chimay, which excited their taste buds and awakened their interest. After graduation, jobs took them to Charlotte NC where that interest developed into

zeal. They re-searched beers and traveled miles to stock their favorites and find new ones to evaluate. Along the way they learned to cook with beer and shared their growing knowledge and beer discoveries with friends and family.

With their desire to start a business, their appreciation of Asheville, and its beer community, they started Brusin' Ales soon after the change in NC beer laws. The business is based on their enthusiasm for and knowledge of beer plus a sincere

desire to share the information with their customers. The store reflects their expertise and desire to provide customers with a broad selection in a friendly atmosphere.

Visit Brusin' Ales and enter a neat,



Customers browsing the selection.



From left: Adam Avery of Avery Brewing Co., Julie and Jason Atallah at a Thursday night tasting.

the surrounding area) and also feature all available beers from local breweries. As testimony to their approach, the store was recently rated as the number 2 beer-retail-outlet in the world (yes, world) as seen at ratebeer.com.



Welcome to Brusin' Ales.

clean, and compact store. To your immediate left is a large monk with a belly-full of beer (bottles). Beyond is an extensive selection of glassware, books, T-shirts, and other beer-related items. The store's center has a check-out area tended by a ready-to-help staff member. Immediately on your right is a cooler filled with bottles and growlers from our local breweries.

Further in is an alcove designed for tastings and wall and floor racks with displays (out of the direct sunlight – bad for beer) of bottle after bottle of the world's finest beers. Expect to find Belgian, German, British Isles, American Craft, Local/Regional Craft, and World-Beer sections. The most expensive beer stocked is \$50/bottle. The highest alcohol content is 14.6%.

Jason and Julie also organize local events to introduce consumers to various

Brew News

Saturday, January 24, 2009

2nd Annual Winter Warmer Beer Festival

The first festival was filled with beer (all our local breweries), live music, food and people of good cheer; a fun event. The second festival is planned to be bigger and better.

It will be held at the Haywood Park Hotel ballroom and features all 9 local breweries, 4 from the Piedmont and Durham areas, and 3 from Nashville, TN. Expect excellent live music with time to socialize and enjoy the food and flavors of some great beers; an energizing winter respite.

Information and tickets:
brewscruise.com/beerfest
(828) 545-5181

breweries and their beers. For example, the in-store tastings held every other Thursday are mostly free with a selection of snacks paired with the featured beer. A representative of the brewery (staff or distributor) is on hand to describe and serve the beers. Also, beer dinners are held quarterly where a brewery spokesperson, between courses, explains the particular beer and food pairings.

Bruisn' Ales with its selection, expertise, and service is a first rate store to visit whether you're a beer fan or fanatic. Visit

anytime (preferably when they're open) or try their Thursday tasting night – great company, free snacks and well-chosen beers are tough to beat.

Brusin' Ales

66 Broadway Street
Asheville, NC 28801

(828) 252.8999
Brusin-ales.com



For five years, Joe Zinich has been taking a self-guided, high-intensity tour of Asheville's beer world. Contact him at: jzinich@bellsouth.net



Two New Beers for Winter

Imperial Stout & Doppelbock

125 B Roberts Street :: Asheville, NC :: 828.505.2792

STAGE PREVIEW

Famed 'Dancing' Lipizzaner Stallions to Perform at WCU

Tickets are now on sale now for a performance by the venerable Lipizzaner Stallions at Western Carolina University.

The famed "dancing white stallions" will perform at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, January 15, at Ramsey Regional Activity Center on the WCU campus. More than 25 million people worldwide have experienced the Lipizzaner tour, which travels to more than 140 cities per year and features fresh music and choreography, including a number set to big band music of the swing era.

The Lipizzaner tour, in its 39th year, features 12 to 14 stallions and their riders performing an "equine ballet" of selected maneuvers, including a segment called "Airs above the Ground."

Originating on the battlefield, "Airs above the Ground" includes the capriole, where the horse leaps into the air, draws his forelegs under his chest and kicks with his hind legs; the courbette, where the horse hops on his hind legs; and the levade, where the horse balances in a crouched position.

The performance finale features stallions and their riders executing the highest levels of dressage. "Audiences share in the magic when they see nostrils flare and tails fly as the powerful horses perform their acrobatics," writes the Dayton Daily News.

A rare breed with a storied history and 400-year-old European pedigree,

BY JILL INGRAM

Lipizzaners are known for their speed, strength and agility. With a life span of 30 to 35 years, Lipizzaners typically are born with black coats that turn white over the next decade. During World War II,



The world famous Lipizzaner Stallions will perform January 15 at Ramsey Regional Activity Center on the campus of Western Carolina University.

Gen. George S. Patton acted to ensure the safety of the Lipizzaner population, depicted in the Disney film "The Miracle of the White Stallions."

IF YOU GO:

Ticket prices are \$24.50 and \$19.50, with \$2 discounts for people 60 and older, 12 and younger and groups of 15 or more. Tickets are available at the Ramsey Center box office, open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday; by calling (828) 227-7722; toll free at (866) 928-3378; or online by visiting ramsey.wcu.edu.

'The Amaryllis' continued from pg. 30

clean watercolor brush, take pollen from the anthers of one flower and brush some on the stigma of the second. Separate the recipient plant and remove its anthers so no other pollen is involved.

When the pods ripen and burst, black seeds will appear, stacked like slices of bread. Sow seeds in sphagnum moss or a good prepared mix, covering them lightly. Using a germination temperature of 60 to

65°F, seeds should germinate within ten to fifteen days. When seedlings are old enough to handle, place ten in a six-inch pot and keep them in a warm place.

When the leaves are six inches long, pot each plant individually in a four-inch pot using the recommended mix. Remember, until they flower for the first time, never let them dry out.

Be sure and keep accurate records of your trials and errors.

Auditions for Narnia

Asheville Community Theatre will hold auditions for the musical *Narnia* on Sunday, January 4 and Monday, January 5 from 7 to 9 p.m.

Narnia will be directed by Cindy Baldwin with musical direction by Linda Walker. Roles are available for 16+ people ages 8 and up.

Those auditioning should prepare 16 bars of a song of their choosing and bring the sheet music to the audition.

For more information please visit the Asheville Community Theatre Web site at www.ashevilletheatre.org.



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CLASSES

UNCA's Great Smokies Writing Program Winter Workshops

BY DR. ELAINE FOX

Local writers will have the opportunity to hone their skills with the Great Smokies Writing Program's series of ten courses in poetry and prose. The classes, held at varying locations in Asheville and at two new locations in Hendersonville and Burnsville, are open to writers of varying levels. Students will earn UNC Asheville credit hours in Literature and Language.

Noted prose author Elizabeth Lutyens will lead "The Prose Master Class" at the Asheville School, located off Patton Ave., from 6-8:30 p.m. for 15 consecutive Tuesdays beginning January 27. This course is designed for students who have studied with Lutyens. The workshop is limited to experienced writers who are working on essays, stories, a novel or a memoir. Admission to the class is by invitation only.

Great Smokies Writing Program Director Tommy Hays will lead "Keeping Ourselves Company: An Advanced Cre-

ative Prose Workshop" at the Asheville School from 6-8:30 p.m. for 15 consecutive Wednesdays beginning January 28. The course is for advanced prose writers working on something new in either fiction or memoir. Prospective students must receive permission to enroll by contacting Hays at hays@main.nc.us.

UNC Asheville tuition and fees are \$172.12 for two-credit-hour courses and \$258.18 for three-credit-hour courses for applicants who meet North Carolina residency requirements. In addition, there is a one-time visiting student application fee of \$20. Class size is limited; early registration is suggested.

For more information or to register, call UNC Asheville's Extension and Distance Education Office at (828) 232-5122 or email fox@unca.edu.



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January 26 - March 23, 2009

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Register online at www.buildingbridges-asheville.org
Or in person at MAHEC on January 26, 6:30 p.m.

CLASSES

Art Classes with John Mac Kah

Landscape artist and painter, John Mac Kah, will start 2009 with two new series of classes: Introduction to Painting in Oils and Drawing for Painters.

Both are for students of any skill levels interested in best use of traditional materials to create artisanal paintings. If you wish to take advantage of oil paint's unique character and deepen your drawing skills, here's your opportunity. 12 week sessions beginning Saturday, January 12, 2009.

Weather permitting, after starting in John's studio in the historic River Arts District, students will work on location in city parks and gardens. Space is limited.



\$60 deposit required. Contact (828) 225-5000 or mail@JohnMacKah.com

Classes at Cloth Fiber Workshop

Cloth Fiber Workshop is a textile arts learning center that offers a variety of classes and workshops for students of all experience levels. Cloth's working fiber studio lets students, artists and customers express their creativity while learning new skills. In addition, our retail shop sells organic and sustainable fabric, yarn, notions, dyes, wearables and home furnishings by BZDesign.

**Saturday & Sunday,
January 10 & 11**

Low-Tech Screen Printing

Unlock the mysteries of screen printing by learning low-tech processes to print anything from t-shirts to fabric yardage. We will build our own screens and print with them using various stencil methods: screen filler, drawing fluid, wax texture rubbings, shelf paper, photo emulsion, and more.

Hours: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Instructor: Jen Swearington
Fee: \$180 + materials



Saturday & Sunday, January 24 & 25

Beautiful Wrap Skirts with Handmade Fabric

Learn to make a versatile thigh-length wrap skirt with outside pockets and button closures. The pattern is simple; you'll tailor it to your size and take it home with you. We'll design the fabric using dyes and paints, creating a one-of-a-kind garment with embellishments. The finished skirt is fun, classy, and comfortable.

Hours: Saturday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.,
Sunday 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Instructor: Jude Stuecker
Fee: \$180 + materials

**Friday, Saturday & Sunday,
January 30, 31 & February 1**

Stitching Stories: Narrative Art Quilts

Incorporating imagery from your imagination, observations, and memories, work with various drawing media and fabric collage to create a small personal art quilt. Along the way, learn the techniques of piecing, appliqué, embellishing, quilting, binding, and displaying an art quilt.

Hours: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Instructor: Jen Swearington
Fee: \$260 + materials



Friday, January 16


2-D Felting Foundations

Designed for the beginner, this course will provide a foundation of the materials and processes for 2-D felting. Newly acquired skills will be implemented to create a finely crafted felt scarf and inspire exploration for future felting endeavors and experienced courses.

Hours: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Instructor: Lisa Klakulak
Fee: \$95 + materials

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WHAT TO DO GUIDE™

January 1 - 31

Wintertime Sale

WICKWIRE fine art/folk art "... where the heart finds art," brings in the New Year with distinctive art choices to endure a lifetime. Ever-beautiful original paintings, American handmade craft, handcrafted furniture, stunning jewelry and more by emerging and recognized artists for family, friends, home and office décor.

WICKWIRE fine art/folk art, 330 N. Main, Hendersonville, NC. Open 7 days, and the first Friday of every month (gallery stroll evening on Main Street) until 9 p.m. (828) 692-6222, email wickwire@bellsouth.net or visit www.wickwireartgallery.com.

Tuesday, January 6

Volunteer Orientation Session

Asheville Community Theatre will hold a Volunteer Orientation Session at 6:30 p.m. at the downtown theatre. All who are interested in volunteering at ACT are invited to attend. No previous experience in theatre

is required to volunteer. The Orientation Session should last no longer than an hour and will include a tour of the theatre.

For more information please visit the Asheville Community Theatre Web site at www.asheville-theatre.org.

January 6, 13, 27

Asheville Civitan Programs

This is the 88th year Civitan has been in Asheville. Our motto, "Builders of Good Citizenship," leads us to present programs of interest to the community.

January programs:

January 6 – Susan Fisher
January 13 – Terry Bellamy
January 27 – Al Whitesides

Asheville Civitan meets at noon every Tuesday at Trinity Episcopal Church. If you would like to see more community leaders present their program and plans, please join us for lunch. Lunch is \$8.50. Call (828) 348-4222 to RSVP.

January 15-17

Take the Foot RX Ten-Ten Treadmill Challenge!

The challenge is 10% grade on the treadmill for 10 minutes at whatever speed you choose. Distance covered will determine the overall places.

Five exciting divisions to choose from: Open, Elite, Master's, Couples, and Junior. Awards to top three male and female finishers in each division. Awards ceremony and celebration will be held at 5 p.m. on Saturday, January 17.

Exciting prizes include: a Free pair of Inov-8 F-Lite 300's to the person who gets closest to guessing the distance they cover; free pair of Inov-8 shoes to overall male and female winners. And much more.

Free Entry. Call (828) 277-5151 Or email Aaron at aaron@footrx.com to reserve your time slot.

January 17

Auditions

From 2 to 4 p.m. at Asheville Community Theater. 2 men, 2 women (35-55). 1 man, 1 woman (multiple roles 25-45). Bill W. and Dr. Bob, the story of the 2

Asheville Playback Theatre

January 2, 2009

Playback Alchemy – 8 p.m. at NC Stage. An evening of interactive experiment & performance.

January 3, 2009

Kids Know It All! – 2 p.m. at NC Stage. For kids and everyone else too.

January 3, 2009

Forbidden Stories – 9 p.m. at NC Stage. For adults only.

Playback Theatre is unlike traditional theatre; at a playback show you will encounter real life rather than a scripted production. The actors improvise, guided and inspired by true life stories contributed by the audience. In the course of an evening, the individual's experience is heard and honored, the personal is connected to the universal, and an opportunity is created for new learning as a result.

Performance Schedule

January 16 at the BeBe Theatre, 20 Commerce St., Asheville (8 p.m.)

February 8 at the YWCA, 185 S. French Broad Avenue, Asheville (3 p.m.)

March 20 at the BeBe Theatre, 20 Commerce St., Asheville (8 p.m.)

April 12 at the YWCA, 185 S. French Broad Avenue, Asheville (3 p.m.)

\$10 (\$5 student/seniors), no one turned away for lack of funds. Visit www.ashevilleplayback.org or contact Raphael Peter (828) 670-5881 for more information.

NC Stage
15 Stage Lane
(opposite Zambra's)
Asheville, NC.

men who founded AA. Prepared auditions, experienced actors. Performance will be held in April 2009. Contact jerichoproductions@yahoo.com.

WNC Theatre League's 8th Annual Unified Auditions

A-B Tech will host the 2009 Western North Carolina Theatre League Unified Auditions at Ferguson Auditorium. The annual event allows local actors to showcase their talents in a professional audition setting for a variety of companies throughout the region.

The purpose of the Unified Auditions is to develop a database of local actors and technical artists for regional, community and professional companies.

The schedule for the Unified Auditions is as follows:

Friday, February 20

6 p.m., Auditions

Saturday, February 21

10:00 – 11:30 a.m., Technical interviews, designers, directors, stage managers, musicians and technicians

11:30 am – 12:30 p.m., Lunch Break and mingle time

12:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m., Auditions

Actors are asked to prepare 90 seconds of material: one monologue OR two contrasting monologues OR monologue and 16 bars of a song. An accompanist will be available. Please bring your own sheet music in your key, as the accompanist will not transpose.

Children will audition separately, and should present a memorized selection, poem, rhyme, monologue, and, if they wish, sing a song. Singing to tapes is not allowed.

Actors must also mail, by February 11, 30 copies of a photo/headshot and resume for distribution to the different companies. Designers, directors, stage managers, musicians and technicians should email for an interview slot and mail 30 resumes and appropriate visual materials; there will ample opportunity to speak with companies and field questions.

Pre-register by emailing info@montfordparkplayers.org or by mail with 30 copies of your photo/headshot and resume to Unified Auditions, Attn: John Russell, P.O. Box 2663, Asheville, NC, 28802-2663. Please indicate your preference for Friday evening or Saturday afternoon. Please indicate your age and if you will be singing.

Registration begins at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, February 20 for actors, 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, February 23 for designers, directors and technicians, and 11 a.m. Saturday for actors. An instructional meeting will take place approximately 15 minutes before each audition session.

An Audition Information Workshop will be held Wednesday, February 4 at 6 p.m. at A-B Tech's Ferguson Auditorium, 340 Victoria Rd, Asheville. Actors will hear from a panel of directors and casting agents on effective auditioning techniques and what to expect at the auditions.

The following companies have attended past WNC Theatre League Unified Auditions:

North Carolina Stage Company, Bright Star Children's Theatre, BellaLuna Theater, Flat Rock Playhouse, Burning Coal Theatre, Holderness Theatre (NYC), Poetry Alive!, Highland Repertory Theatre, immediate theatre project, Martin & Donalds Talent Agency, Inc., Parkway Playhouse, Brevard Little Theatre, Blowing Rock Stage Company, Serpent Child Ensemble, Hendersonville Little Theatre, Asheville Community Theatre, Bittersweet Productions, Barter Theatre (Abingdon, VA), North Carolina Theatre Conference, Haywood Arts Regional Theatre, Talent Trek, Southern Appalachian Repertory Theatre, Asheville: The Movie, HCC Film and Video Production Technology, Scapegoat Theatre Collective, The Montford Park Players, (Spartanburg, SC), Little Theatre, Asheville Storytelling Circle, Paris Model and Talent, Unto These Hills.

How to place an event/classified listing with Rapid River Art Magazine

Any "free" event open to the public can be listed at no charge up to 30 words. For all other events there is a \$9.95 charge up to 30 words and 10 cents for each additional word. 160 word limit per event.

Sponsored listings (shown in boxes) can be purchased for \$12 per column inch.

Deadline is the 19th of each month. Payment must be made prior to printing.

Email Beth Gossett at: ads@rapidrivermagazine.com or mail to: 85 N. Main St, Canton, NC 28716. Or Call: (828) 646-0071 to place ad over the phone.

– Disclaimer –

Due to the overwhelming number of local event submissions we get for our "What to Do Guide" each month, we can no longer accept entries that do not specifically follow our publication's format. Non-paid event listings must be 30 words or less and both paid and non-paid listings must provide information in the following format: date, time, brief description of what your event is and any contact information. Any entries not following this format will not be considered for publication.

JANUARY EVENTS ~ ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ CLASSIFIEDS

WHAT TO DO GUIDE™

Winter Classes at River's Edge Studio

Oil Painting Basics I

Wednesday, January 28 – March 25, 9:30 – 12:30

Get started with oil paint! Nine classes plus a private one hour class to be scheduled with student. Class taught by Fleta Monaghan. Tuition: \$325.

Color Mixing Basics

Saturday, January 17, 9:30 – 2:30

Color Contrast Basics

Saturday, January 31, 9:30 – 2:30

Learn about color relationships and create Bauhaus style paintings in this class. Tuition for weekend one-day workshops: \$75. Use class acrylics and supplies for an added \$10 material fee, or bring your own. A supply list will be provided. \$395 for complete five session Weekend Basics course and one hour private class.

Call Fleta Monaghan at (828) 776-2716 or email fleta@fletamonaghan.com for more information or visit www.fletamonaghan.com.

Get Your Name on a Picket

Waynesville Parks and Recreation Department offers an opportunity to have your name engraved on a picket at the Recreation Park Kiwanis Playground in Waynesville. The cost is \$25 a picket.

There is enough room for 25 characters on a long picket or 18 characters on a short picket. The pickets are a part of the fence that surrounds the playground.

For more information please call the Waynesville Parks and Recreation Department at (828) 456-2030 or email recdirector@townofwaynesville.org

UNC Asheville's January Calendar

Sunday, January 18

Writers at Home

Readings by Great Smokies Writing Program students, 3 p.m., Malaprop's Bookstore/Café, 55 Haywood St., downtown Asheville, free. Call (828) 232-5122 for more information.

Tuesday, January 20

Great Quotes Philosophy Lecture

"Neo-Confucianism," Dr. Cynthia Ho, 7:30 p.m., UNC Asheville's Kellogg Center, 11 Broyles Rd., Hendersonville, \$5. Call (828) 251-6272 for more information.

Wednesday, January 28

Music from the Baroque

12:45 p.m., UNC Asheville's Lipinsky Auditorium, free. Call (828) 251-6432.

Wednesday, January 28

UNC Asheville vs. Winthrop, 7 p.m., UNC Asheville's Justice Center, \$15 reserved or \$10 general admission. Call (828) 251-6459 for more information.

Friday, January 30

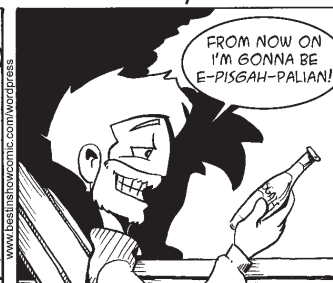
Lead Safe Work Training

8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Asheville Friends Meeting House, 227 Edgewood Rd., Asheville, \$100. Sponsored by UNC Asheville's Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. Call (828) 251-6104 for more information or to register.

Saturday, January 31

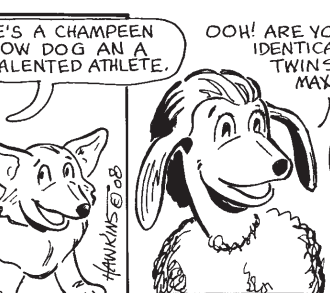
UNC Asheville Women vs. Winthrop, 2 p.m., UNC Asheville's Justice Center, \$8 reserved or \$6 general admission. Call (828) 251-6459 for more information.

Best in Show



by Phil Juliano

Corgi Tales



by Phil Hawkins

Callie & Cats



by Amy Downs

Asheville Art Museum's January Events

Sunday, January 11

Art Adventurers: Collections & Obsessions. Several fascinating and eclectic collections including regional studio craft and the metal sculptures of Stebbo. The day will end with a reception with wine and appetizers. Contact Rebecca Lynch-Maass for information or reservations, (828) 253-3227, ext. 114 or rlynchmaass@ashevilleart.org.

Friday, January 16, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

Art Break, William Christenberry: Site/Possession Docent-Led Tour. In addition to 50 drawings, the exhibition also features paintings, photographs, constructions. Free with museum membership or admission.

Friday, January 16, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Christo and Jeanne-Claude: Projects Opening Reception. Free with museum membership or admission.

Saturday, January 24 – February 12

WNC Regional Scholastic Art Awards Exhibition, Pack Place Community Gallery.

Sunday, January 25, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Pianoforte Series: Andrea Adamcova and Pavel Wlosok. \$4 members, \$4 + museum admission non-members. Gallery 6. This program will feature classical pieces performed by Andrea, and jazz piano performed by Pavel. Limited seating. For more information or to reserve tickets contact Nancy Sokolove (828) 253-3227, ext. 120 or email nsokolove@ashevilleart.org.

Friday, January 30, 5:00 p.m.

Eva Zeisel: The Shape of Life opens. The inspiration for Zeisel's sensuous forms often comes from the natural organic curves of the body. Zeisel's designs — furniture, metal, glass or ceramic — are often made in sets or in relationship to other objects.

Sunday, February 8, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Eva Zeisel: The Shape of Life, and **George Masa: Mapping the Mountains.** Opening Reception for these exciting exhibitions as well as gallery tours.

Centrally located in downtown Asheville on Pack Square, the Museum is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday. The Museum is open every Friday until 8 p.m.

Admission to the Museum is \$6 for adults and \$5 for seniors, students with ID and for children 4-15 (children age three and younger are admitted free). Museum is open free to the public every first Wednesday of the month, 3 to 5 p.m.

CLASSES ~ LECTURES ~ ARTS & CRAFTS ~ READINGS

ON THE SCENE

Bringing Back the Dead

The Recovery and Redemption of Alejandro Escovedo

The roots of Alejandro Escovedo's family tree run deep and strong and include such notables as Santana percussionist Pete Escovedo and Pete's daughter Sheila E, former drummer for Prince and later a pop star in her own right.

Alejandro began his music career during the mid 1970's punk explosion, helping form the San Francisco based band *The Nuns* before landing briefly in NYC. Once there he quickly established himself as one of the area's most innovative new arrivals while co-founding the pioneering cow punk band *Rank and File*.

The band relocated to the then newly emerging music scene of Austin, Texas, whereupon they were almost immediately signed to Slash Records. Their 1982 debut album *Sundown* garnered critical acclaim and surprising radio exposure, but the ever restless Escovedo again felt a desire to move on: he left the band to form the *True Believers* with his brother Javier.

BY JAMES CASSARA

The new outfit recorded a pair of albums for EMI and toured the country (often as an opening act for *Los Lobos*) but the label's decision not to release their second album led to the group's breakup. The album eventually surfaced as a bonus item when Rykodisc reissued the first set on CD, but by then the group was long gone.

After he parted ways with Rykodisc, Escovedo signed in 1998 with the Chicago-based alt-country label *Bloodshot*, which released the live album *More Miles Than Money: Live 1994-1996* and the highly praised studio set *A Man Under the Influence*. But the constant touring had taken a heavy toll.

In April 2003, following a show in Phoenix, Escovedo collapsed; it was subsequently revealed that he had been diagnosed with Hepatitis C in late '90s but had not sought treatment. An outpouring of support from musicians led to a series of

successful benefit concerts to help pay his spiraling medical expenses and keep his music before the public, shows which led to a 2004 tribute album, *Por Vida: A Tribute to the Songs of Alejandro Escovedo*.

Two years later Escovedo released *Boxing Mirror* while touring in support of the album with the newly formed Alejandro Escovedo String Quintet. His next album, *Real Animal*, produced by the legendary Tony Visconti (David Bowie, T. Rex) was released by Back Porch Music in June of this year.

A collective journey through Escovedo's various musical incarnations from punk rock to string quintets, *Real Animal* leans more towards the hard rocking side. It's as introspective as it is retrospective, recalling the musicians and places that helped shape his career. *Real Animal* represents the primitive aspect of Escovedo's music - the instinct, the urgency and a survivor mentality that fuels his musical passion. It further traces Escovedo's



journey from the brink of death to renewed strength and artistic creativity.

Escovedo's music has been widely lauded by the media, appearing in several high-profile publications including *Rolling Stone*, *Vanity Fair*, *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *PASTE*, *HARP* and *Entertainment Weekly*. In April of this year he was invited onstage by Bruce Springsteen to join him and *The E Street Band*, playing before a

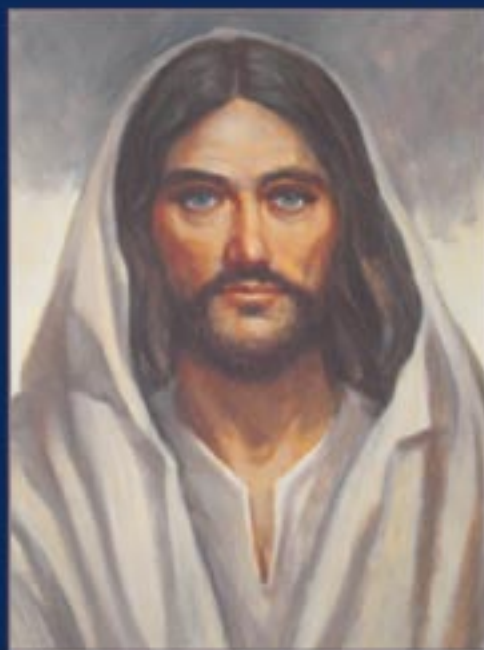
packed Toyota Center in Houston.

In short, 2008 has been a banner year for the re-energized musician. On Friday, January 23 Alejandro Escovedo brings his lifetime of influence, heritage, and talent to Asheville.

IF YOU GO:

Alejandro Escovedo at *The Grey Eagle*, on Friday, January 23, beginning at 9 p.m. \$18 advance/\$20 day of show.

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Inauguration Celebration

"Sol Driven Train" Performs Tuesday, January 20

ERIN SCHOLZE

Come and Celebrate the election of Barack Obama as the next American President!

Sol Driven Train has the momentum of their hard work and heartfelt music to propel them upward. At shows, the band members bounce to the pulse of the music along with the crowd. Stylistically the band "seamlessly mixes Allmanesque Southern rock, languid world-beat, swampy funk and downright catchy melodies as they swap lead singers and instruments. A punchy horn section adds an extra dimension of sweaty soul to the genre-blurring jam party." (*Atlanta Creative Loafing*, 11/21/06).

All that sweat is paying off for *Sol Driven Train*. With their honest songwriting and energetic live performances, they are attracting fans devoted to witnessing their musical progression.

They have shared stages and bills with a diverse array of artists including Micheal Franti, Richie Havens, Keller Williams, The Samples, Blueground Undergrass, Billy Jonas, Ryan Montbleau, and Arlo Guthrie. Covering an expanding tour area that stretches from Georgia to New Hampshire to Wisconsin, the band has independently recorded and produced three albums along the way.

"Live on the Outer Banks" was recorded in one night at one of the band's favorite coastal tour destinations. Released in January of 2007, this live album "captures the band's strongest elements: tight horn arrangements and complex, unforced vocal harmonies . . . crisp accents and tasty cymbal work tie in perfectly with precise bass licks." (*Charleston City Paper*, 1/24/07)

By the time the band released the live album, work was already under way on a new studio album. The band sandwiched recording sessions between gigs, and set up their mobile recording studio wherever they could along the way. The album, "Lighthouse" was released on April 8, 2008, and is gathering praise from fans and critics alike.

IF YOU GO:

Sol Driven Train, Tuesday, January 20 at *The Grey Eagle*, 185 Clingan Ave. All ages. Showtime 9 p.m. Tickets: \$6 advance - \$8 day of show. For more information call (828) 232-5800, visit www.thegreyeagle.com, www.soldriventrain.com, or www.myspace.com/soldriventrain.

NOTEWORTHY

Tupelo Honey Café Launches E-Commerce Site for Employees

Profits to Pay for Health Care Benefits

As runaway health care costs continue to outpace inflation, businesses nationwide are struggling to provide health benefits to their employees. One Asheville restaurant has found a creative solution, with the ambitious goal of fully funding its employees health insurance plan from a new profit stream.

Tupelo Honey Café is launching an e-commerce site and dedicating all of the profits from it to fund an HMO plan for employees who work at least 25 hours a week. The restaurant will offer the insurance to employees as soon as the site generates \$60,000 in profits, the annual estimated cost of the plan for its 47 employees.

"In the meantime, our employees can continue to take advantage of our current health plan, which reimburses managers 80 percent and employees 50 percent of their monthly health insurance premiums," said Proprietor Stephen Frabitore. "Compared with a lot of restaurants, we already have a good plan; but we want to do more and are confident that through merchandising and e-commerce, we can fully fund our HMO beginning in late 2009."

Offering health insurance is a perk that will enable Tupelo Honey Café to recruit and retain employees, Frabitore added. "Restaurants are notorious for having high turnover, so the health care plan is another way Tupelo Honey Café will be able to reduce that," he said.

"We have invested significant resources in the packaging and design of trendy products to drive the initiative. We're planning to provide a platinum-level health plan with the lowest deductibles and co-pays that we possibly can."

BY JONATHAN SCOTT

The merchandising program and e-commerce site are perks for patrons of the restaurant, too. People from Massachusetts to Miami regularly order Tupelo's special brand of fair-trade coffee, a unique and exclusive blend of Costa Rican beans sourced through Asheville Coffee Roasters.

In addition, the restaurant's local honey is sold online, and other food items will be added during the next several weeks, including its signature jams and jellies, honey butter and rosemary peach lemonade.

And there's a wide variety of THC merchandise for sale online and at the restaurant, from coffee mugs and travel mugs to hats, t-shirts, hoodies and infant onesies.

"Two very popular items this Christmas Season are our gift baskets and our gift cards," Frabitore said. "Gift cards are available in ten-dollar increments, and gift baskets range from \$21.99 to \$44.99."

About Tupelo Honey Café

Tupelo Honey Café's mission is to create a charming atmosphere with innovative Southern cuisine, emphasizing quality, selection and excellent service. A locally owned café, it has quickly distinguished itself from other regional restaurants by presenting familiar, creative comfort fare, healthier options, fresh ingredients and large portions at a fair price.

Featuring the work of local artists, the restaurant's interior has been described by The New York Times as "an old-fashioned tea room." Tupelo Honey Café also has been featured in *Southern Living* and *Our State* and is consistently voted one of the "Best Restaurants" by *Mountain Xpress*.

Classes & Lectures at Earth Fare

Improving Arthritis with Aquatic Therapy

Monday, January 26, 6:30 p.m.

Learn how aquatic therapy can greatly improve arthritic conditions in the body. Free informative lecture.

Advanced registration required for these events as seated is limited. Call (828) 210-0100.

Aging Youthfully™

Thursday, January 29, 6:30 p.m.

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