

# RAPID RIVER

Arts & Culture Magazine

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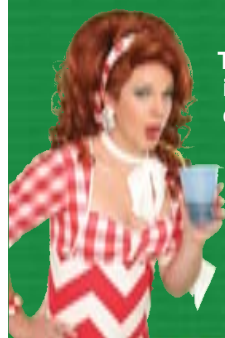
Jamie Laval and The Blue Ridge Orchestra present a program of Celtic music. PAGE 5



Maestro Daniel Meyer continues to elevate Asheville's classical music scene. PAGE 9



North Carolina Stage Company presents the two-man comedy "Stones in His Pockets." PAGE 18



The hilarious interactive comedy, "Dixie's Tupperware Party" starring Dixie Longate, opens on March 31 for seven performances. PAGE 10



...AND MANY OTHER CLASSICAL EVENTS NOT TO MISS





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# NOTEWORTHY

## StoryCorps, the National Oral History Project, Wants to Listen to Your Stories

BY MICHELLE KEENAN

StoryCorps, a national initiative to document everyday history and the unique stories of Americans, will arrive in Asheville on March 23 to collect the stories of Western North Carolina residents as part of its cross-country tour. StoryCorps is an independent nonprofit project in partnership with NPR and the American Folklife Center (AFC) at the Library of Congress.

The StoryCorps MobileBooth — an Airstream trailer outfitted with a recording studio — will be parked across the street from the WCQS studios (73 Broadway) in downtown Asheville for six weeks, conducting interviews from March 26 to May 2, 2009. StoryCorps plans to collect 160 interviews during its stay in Western North Carolina.

StoryCorps was created by award-winning documentary producer and MacArthur "Genius" Grant recipient Dave Isay. This unprecedented project has traveled to every corner of America, instructing and inspiring individuals to record their stories in sound. StoryCorps is the largest multi-year oral history project ever undertaken. Since its launch in October 2003, StoryCorps' mobile and stationary recording studios have collected interviews in over 100 towns in 48 states — over 20,000 stories in all.

In Asheville, StoryCorps is partnering with WCQS, Asheville's NPR station, which will air a selection of the local stories and create special programs around the project. Selected segments may also air nationally on NPR's *Morning Edition*.

At the MobileBooth, interviews are conducted between two people who know and care about each other. A trained facilitator guides the participants through the interview process and handles the technical aspects of the recording. At the end of a 40-minute session, the participants walk away with a CD of their interview. With their permission, a second copy becomes part of an archive at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress for future generations to hear.

"The StoryCorps residency at WCQS is one of the biggest events we've ever had," says WCQS General Manager Ed

Subkis. StoryCorps interviews help to define public radio's unique ability to share personal perspectives on the human experience with our listeners. We are very

excited about adding the stories of Western North Carolinians to this national oral history project."

"As StoryCorps has traveled across the country, we've seen the profound effect it has had not only on the lives of those who have participated in the project, but also on the millions who have heard them each week on NPR," said Isay. "We are so proud to continue

our mission to teach people to become better listeners, foster intergenerational communication among families and communities, and help Americans appreciate the strength in the stories of everyday people they find all around them."

StoryCorps currently operates a freestanding soundproof recording booth at Foley Square in New York's Lower Manhattan and at the Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco. In 2006, StoryCorps launched an initiative to reach out to people affected by memory loss. StoryCorps Griot is an ongoing initiative to ensure that the voices, experiences, and life stories of African Americans will be preserved and presented with dignity. All interviews recorded as part of the Griot Initiative will be archived at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History & Culture in addition to the Library of Congress.

Major funding is provided by State Farm Insurance and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. StoryCorps also relies on the support from its participants and listeners.



Public reservations will be taken at (800) 850-4406 beginning March 12. Individuals can visit [www.StoryCorps.net](http://www.StoryCorps.net) to

listen to stories, and learn how they can support StoryCorps' mission to honor and celebrate one another's lives through listening.



**WCQS Hosts  
StoryCorps as it Tours  
the U.S. to Capture  
Stories of Everyday  
Americans.**

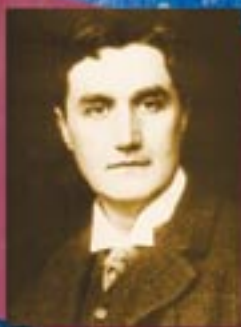


# GAIA: A Celebration of the Earth

Asheville Choral Society

Lenora Thom, Music Director

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Williams' choral/  
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masterpiece,  
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Lenora Thom  
Music Director



Elizabeth Keusch  
Soprano



Stephen Bryant  
Baritone



# Message from the Publisher



Publisher Dennis Ray's son,  
Harrison Graham Ray.

## It's Good to Worry

The economy, or at least the state of the economy, seems to be on most people's minds. Things could get a lot worse. And they just might. I've heard some uplifting folks say that unemployment will reach over 30% by 2011 and the stock market will collapse by this October — meaning it will no longer trade.

It could happen. A meteorite could plunge into earth and wipe us all off the map for good. A new disease could come along and take

out 3/4 of the total world population. Things can always get worse. In the same frame of thought things could get better.

For some reason it's easier to focus on things getting worse than it is on things improving. I think that's how we survive as a culture, as a country. If everyone just went about with no cares or worries figuring it will all just get better on its own we'd still be living in the years of hunting food with spears and cooking over an open fire. (Someone is saying, "What are you talking about? Before modern technology life was good and we were truly happy as a people.") Sure, unless you're someone whose life continues because of modern medicine or you're someone who...

The point is, I think worrying makes us act. It makes us put in a little more effort, to do a little extra work, because we know if we don't, we might find ourselves without a job. As consumers we always need to make an effort to support locally independently owned and operated businesses. We need to put our neighbors and our families first over businesses from outside the area.

See a play. Go to a concert. Visit the library. Support organizations that better our lives here in WNC. Go out of your way to be nice to those who visit the area. Don't take their presence here for granted. I know you already know all of this, but I worry that you just might forget. Until next month, take care.

~ DENNIS RAY, PUBLISHER RAPID RIVER MAGAZINE

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# COVER STORY

## Classic Performances

Classical music is a broad term that usually refers to mainstream music produced in, or rooted in the traditions of European culture, encompassing a broad period from roughly the 9th century to present times.

*Rapid River Magazine* strives each month to feature classical music events that are available for

residents in WNC. Classical music was created and designed as a public form of entertainment and should be experienced live to fully appreciate its scope and beauty.

Many of these organizations featured this month rely on ticket sales to continue so please support these venues and treat yourself to something special. Most events are relatively inexpensive (less than

### On Stage

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the cost of a movie ticket) and are extremely rewarding.

## Powerful Voices, Remarkable Music

### The Asheville Choral Society Honors the Earth in its GAIA Concert

Mother Earth will be honored through the stunning and joyous music of the Asheville Choral Society's concert GAIA: A Celebration of the Earth on March 28 and 29. Performing in the region for 32 years, the Asheville Choral Society is described by Classical Voice of North Carolina as "Asheville's finest chorus."

Music Director Lenora Thom has chosen three important choral works to capture the power, glory and mystery of our home in the universe. The concert opens with one of the most important choral works in the last century. *The Sea Symphony* by Ralph Vaughan Williams was instrumental in initiating a new period of symphonic and choral music in England during the first half of the 20th century. The text of this choral symphony is drawn from Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass" and is scored for chorus, orchestra and soloists. Featured in this performance are soprano Elizabeth Keusch and baritone Kurt Willett.

*Missa Gaia: Mass for the Earth*, which will open the second half of the concert, was composed in 1992 by American Libby Larsen. Larsen has been hailed as "the only English-speaking composer since Benjamin Britten who matches great verse with fine music so intelligently and expressively" (*USA Today*) and for "assembling one of the most impressive bodies of music of our time" (*Hartford Courant*).

"Missa Gaia," Larsen says, "is a celebration of those of us who live on this land, a land which can be terribly beautiful and gentle, a land which can be harsh - but which is always giving and always

renewing... I am reminded again and again that the Earth lets us live on it."

Sources for the text of the mass are from the Bible, from Native American poets Joy Harjo and Marice Kenny, from medieval mystic Meister Eckhart, from the Chinook Psalter and from poets Wendell Berry and Gerard Manley Hopkins. Soprano Elizabeth Keusch will be featured in the work.

The concert concludes with selections from Franz Joseph Haydn's *The Creation*. Written at the end of the 18th century, the oratorio is considered by



Libby Larsen Photo by Ann Marsden

BY JOHN CLARK

many to be his masterpiece. Based on the biblical book of Genesis, *The Creation* describes and celebrates the creation of the world.

A very religious man, Haydn was reported to have remarked, "I was never so devout as when I was at work on *The Creation*; I fell on my knees each day and begged God to give me the strength to finish the work." The selections from *The Creation* to be performed are "Awake the Harp," "By Thee with Bliss" (a duet by the two soloists) and "Achieved is the Glorious Work."

IF YOU GO

GAIA: A Celebration of the Earth will be performed by the Asheville Symphony Chorus, soloists and orchestra on Saturday, March 28 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, March 29 at 4 p.m. at Central United

Methodist Church, 27 Church Street in downtown Asheville.

Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$15 for students. The group rate for a party of at least ten people is \$20 for adults and \$10 for students. Tickets can be ordered through the ACS website: [www.ashevillechoralso-ciety.org](http://www.ashevillechoralso-ciety.org), by phone at (828) 232-2060 or at the door before each performance.

The ACS is offering a special on the remaining two concerts of the season: buy a \$25 ticket to the GAIA concert and receive a 40% discount on a ticket to the pops concert "Colors of My Life" in May. Details at (828) 232-2060.

## A Program of Celtic Music

presented by the  
Blue Ridge Orchestra



Jamie Laval

The program will feature violinist, Jamie Laval accompanied by the Blue Ridge Orchestra, under the direction of Ronald D. Clearfield.

Jamie is one of the premier Celtic violinists on the international music scene today. He creates rapt audiences with his intensely passionate performances of traditional music of Scotland, Ireland, Brittany and Quebec, rendered with hints of classical refinement and ethnic music from around the world.

The concert will also include selected Celtic favorites performed by the Blue Ridge Orchestra. Also appearing with Mr. Laval will be champion guitarist, Owen Morrison. The Blue Ridge Orchestra, which began in 1999, is composed of fine musicians from Western North Carolina and performs in a variety of venues throughout the region.

IF YOU GO

The Blue Ridge Orchestra with violinist Jamie Laval on Sunday, March 22, at 3 p.m. at the Diana Wortham Theatre.

Ticket prices are \$20 for adults, \$10 students and children 12 and under. Tickets are available at the Diana Wortham box office.

For more information contact Ron Lambe at (828) 252-0643, Ron Clearfield at (828) 683-4425, or visit [www.blueridgeorchestra.org](http://www.blueridgeorchestra.org)



# STAGE PREVIEW

## The Green Fields of America Perform Dynamic Irish Music

BY JOHN ELLIS

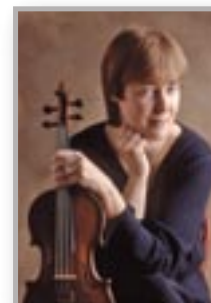
### About the Musicians:

Liz Carroll is internationally known for her dazzling fiddle style and original tunes. An All-Ireland fiddle champion and National Heritage Award winner, Carroll's album *Lost in the Loop* was voted "Celtic Album of the Year" by the Association for Independent Music (AFIM). Liz Carroll and John Doyle have been asked to perform at The White House for St. Patrick's Day.

John Doyle, now an Asheville resident, is known as an extraordinary acoustic guitarist as well as an accomplished singer and songwriter. An original member of the acclaimed group Solas, John has accompanied many top Irish artists, and is currently on tour with Joan Baez.

Billy McComiskey was strongly influenced by accordion player Sean McGlynn. After performing in a group known as *The Irish Tradition* in the Washington D.C. area, he went on to perform with *Trián*, a trio made up of fiddler Liz Carroll, and guitarist and vocalist Dáithí Sproule. Billy released his debut album *Outside the Box* in 2008.

Mick Moloney, founder of The Green Fields of America, holds a Ph.D. in Folklore and Folklife from the University of Pennsylvania and currently teaches Irish Studies at New York University. His album, *McNally's Row of Flats*, won the best traditional music album of the year award from *The Irish Echo* in 2006.



Liz Carroll



John Doyle



Billy McComiskey



Mick Moloney

Superstars of Celtic music, *The Green Fields of America* have the rare capacity to appeal to folk and Irish music devotees and to general audiences of any age.

Featuring Asheville's own John Doyle, famed fiddler Liz Carroll, master of the button accordion Billy McComiskey, and musician, singer and Irish folklorist Mick Moloney, *The Green Fields of America* perform a brilliant repertoire of

**Sparkling, innovative, exciting!**

slow airs, jigs, reels, and hornpipes, as well as a variety of traditional and contemporary songs in Gaelic and English. These include love songs, humorous songs, patriotic songs, songs of emigration and settlement, Irish American songs from variety theater and vaudeville, and the myriad other themes that have made the Irish oral literature and song tradition among the richest in the Western world.

This evening of Irish culture is further enhanced by the urbane, informative, and witty commentary for which this group is well renowned.

*The Green Fields of America* was first formed by Mick Moloney in 1978 after the Smithsonian Institution Festival of American Folklife presented traditional Irish music and dance in the nation's capital in a multi-cultural setting for the first time. Subsequently Moloney was hired by the Smithsonian Institution to carry out research in several major American cities to locate the best Irish musicians and dancers in the country.

Since that time the personnel have changed, but the concept has remained constant over twenty years: to showcase some of Irish America's finest musicians and dancers. The Green Fields of America has performed at Carnegie Hall, The Smithsonian Institution, The Festival of American Folklife, and The National Folk Festival.

IF YOU GO

The Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack Place, in partnership with The Swannanoa Gathering at Warren Wilson College, presents the dynamic Celtic music of *The Green Fields of America*, March 6 at 8 p.m.

Tickets: Regular \$28; Seniors \$26; Students \$23; Student Rush day-of-the-show (with valid ID) \$10. Tickets/Info: (828) 257-4530 or online at [www.dwtheatre.com](http://www.dwtheatre.com).

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# PERFORMANCE

## Asheville Lyric Opera presents Verdi's "Rigoletto"

The opera will be conducted by Maestro Timothy Myers and directed by Dave Toulson with baritone Mark Owen Davis in the title role.

### SYNOPSIS

**Act I - Scene 1:** The action opens with the Duke boasting of his romantic conquests in his famous aria "La donna é mobile" (Woman is fickle). As he escorts his latest lady, Countess Ceprano, to his private chambers, Rigoletto, the court jester, jeers at Count Ceprano.

The court retainers, disgusted with Rigoletto's continual caustic jibes, plot revenge. Monterone enters, furious with the Duke for seducing and disgracing his daughter. Rigoletto, delighted to find another victim for his sharp-witted attacks, heckles Monterone as he is arrested and dragged from the court. As Monterone leaves, he curses Rigoletto and the Duke.

**Scene 2:** Rigoletto mulls over the curse as he walks home. He encounters Sparfucile, a professional assassin, but refuses his help. Arriving home he is greeted by his daughter Gilda, the innocent young woman he keeps hidden from everyone.

The Duke of Mantua, disguised as the poor student Gualtier Maldier, pays off Giovanna and sneaks in to meet with Gilda. Gilda has seen him at church and has fallen madly in love with him. The Duke leaves quickly and, now alone, Gilda sings to his name in the opera's second famous aria "Caro nome".

Rigoletto is tricked into helping the men from court kidnap Gilda, who they think is Rigoletto's young and beautiful mistress. Rigoletto hears his daughter's cries, but by the time he is able to free himself, he finds only her scarf.

**Act II:** The Duke, upset after hearing of Gilda's abduction, is quite pleased when his court retainers tell him she has been taken to his private chambers. He very happily goes to seduce her. Rigoletto arrives, but is kept from reaching the Duke's chambers. The men are surprised to learn that Gilda is the jester's daughter, not his mistress. Rigoletto, irate, seethes with loathing.

**Act III:** Sparfucile's inn in a rough neighborhood at the edge of town.



Maestro  
Timothy Myers



Baritone  
Mark Owen Davis



Director  
Dave Toulson

BY DAVID CRAIG STARKEY

Rigoletto has taken Gilda to the inn so he can expose her to the Duke's womanizing ways. They watch the Duke seduce yet another woman, Maddalena, Sparfucile's sister. Rigoletto disguises Gilda as a boy and sends her to Verona to escape the Duke's influence. He also hires Sparfucile to kill the Duke.

Maddalena convinces her brother not to assassinate the Duke, but instead murder the next person who enters the inn. Having not followed her father's orders, Gilda has overheard this and decides to sacrifice herself for the Duke. She enters the inn and is immediately stabbed. Sparfucile wraps her in a sack and delivers the body to Rigoletto, who crows over his victory. He stops his celebration as he hears the Duke singing from the distance. Opening the sack he finds Gilda, who dies in his arms, fulfilling Monterone's curse.

### FEATURED ARTISTS

Mark Owen Davis now specializes in the Verdi repertoire after a twenty-year career performing a wide range of

music in recital, oratorio and opera. He has directed more than thirty major oratorios, national and international choir tours.

Maestro Timothy Myers is emerging as an important young American conductor with a rapidly expanding repertoire encompassing a wide variety of symphonic works and more than 50 operas.

David Toulson is active as a freelance opera director around the country. Mr. Toulson has received critical acclaim for his direction of outreach programs and his work with young artists.



Asheville Lyric Opera and season sponsor The Grand Bohemian Hotel of Asheville present Verdi's "Rigoletto."

For tickets contact the Diana Wortham Theatre Box office

(828) 257-4530 or visit [www.dwtheatre.com](http://www.dwtheatre.com)

Price range: \$28 to \$49 (\$15 to \$30 for children/students).

## Hendersonville Chamber Music

BY ROBERT WILEY

If you think of chamber music as old-fashioned and stuffy, think again, because Hendersonville Chamber Music brings chamber music up to date and then some!

This year's concerts are sure to attract audiences who simply enjoy great music brilliantly performed. The season begins with the exciting brass group that wowed last year's audience, *Giannini Brass*, then continues with the *Parrini Piano Quartet*, a delightful performance on piano, violin, viola, and cello.

**March 15** — Giannini Brass was named after Vittorio Giannini, the founder of the North Carolina School of the Arts where they are in residence. Known for their eclectic repertoire, their concerts encompass "European Classics" by Handel and Rossini, "American Classics" from the Broadway stage, music of the Renaissance, Baroque and Romantic eras plus Dixieland, jazz, marches and swing. Their programs are always wonderful!

**March 29** — Parrini Piano Quartet Expect an exhilarating high-energy performance from four prize-winning musicians — piano, violin, viola and cello — all of whom have international reputations. Known for virtuosity and fresh insight into both standard and new repertoire, their concerts are informal, conversational, and even interactive while featuring some of the most delightful music ever written.



Hendersonville Chamber Music Concerts take place on Sunday afternoons at 3 p.m. in Patton Auditorium of Blue Ridge Community College in Flat Rock.

Tickets: \$17, available at Hendersonville Visitors Center, Opportunity House and at the door on day of performance. Students admitted free. For more information call (828) 697-0455 or (828) 890-4411.

## Need a laugh?



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# STAGE PREVIEW

## Maestro Daniel Meyer Continues to Elevate Asheville's Solid Classical Music Scene

Since his arrival as music director for the Asheville Symphony Orchestra in 2005, Maestro Daniel Meyer has become the face and personality of classical music in the Asheville area. Meyer's direction and creativity has made

local audiences excited for classical music and he has them clamoring for more. To paraphrase Richard Nixon "As goes Meyer so goes Western North Carolina."

"Meyer has changed the classical music scene here in Asheville for the better," music director of the Asheville Lyric Opera, David Starkey says. "Not only does he elevate the Symphony's status, but all classical music organizations in the area as well. Meyer is to music what Michael Jordan was to basketball. Like Jordan, he gets people excited."

The Asheville Symphony has been highly regarded for years, but with Meyer's arrival, a much needed piece to the puzzle was added, something former conductor Dr. Robert Hart Baker (1980-04) didn't offer — Meyer enthusiastically attracts younger crowds while not compromising the maturity and sophistication the symphony orchestra has long maintained.

Meyer's success is his dedication and love for classical music that transcends generations and unites music lovers through his ability to continue to always try something new. Each year he introduces another art medium into at least one concert of the season. In May 2009, there will be a modern dance company on stage with the orchestra.

The downside to having one of the best up-and-coming conductors living today in the US is the fear his talents will draw him away to larger venues. His mentor Mariss Jansons (66) the music director of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (1996-04) left for Europe where in 2006 he won a Grammy for Best Orchestral Performance.

BY DENNIS RAY

Meyer recalls Jansons' masterful ability to "...bring out the very best in any orchestra with whom he worked.

I try to infuse my own performances in Asheville with the intensity I witnessed in his conducting."

Today Meyer is also the Resident Conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Music Director of the Erie Philharmonic, and the Music Director of the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra. Meyer has worked closely with Manfred Honeck, Sir Andrew Davis, and Charles Dutoit, led the Pittsburgh Symphony on tour, and conducted performances with Pinchas Zukerman, Sarah Chang, and Marvin Hamlisch as soloists. With a talent for creative concerts and a passion for connecting with audiences, he led the



Daniel Meyer, music director for the Asheville Symphony Orchestra.

**Meyer is also an accomplished violinist, pianist, and vocalist.**

Pittsburgh Symphony's *Symphony with a Splash*, an innovative series designed for professionals, as well as a Sunday matinee series for families called *Popular Classics*.

In Asheville his Friday afternoon *Symphony Talks* held at the UNCA campus are a community staple with a dedicated and enthusiastic following. He is also an accomplished violinist, pianist, and vocalist.

He grew up near Cleveland, Ohio, where he first began playing the piano at age 6 and then at age 9 learned the violin.

"My mother saw to it that I didn't give up," Meyer says of his young childhood years. "And trust me there were times I'd rather be out playing ball than indoors with the piano. I truly loved music but she kept me focused. She never forced me to play. She let me know that I had a talent that should not be wasted."

Meyer studied at Denison University and the University of Cincinnati College-

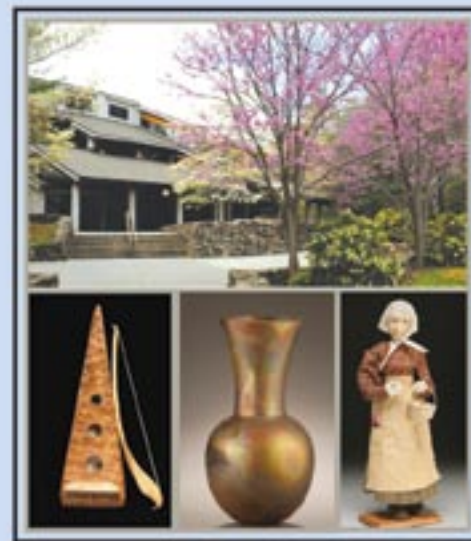
'Daniel Meyer' continued on pg. 16

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# STAGE PREVIEW

## Q&A with Bert Kreisler

The Laugh Your Asheville Off Comedy Series presents Bert Kreisler, who recently took the country by storm with his one hour Comedy Central special "Comfortably Dumb". Bert has also appeared on Comedy Central's *Premium Blend*, *Last Comic Standing 2*, *Reality Bites Back*, and *Jimmy Kimmel Live*.

**RAPID RIVER:** How do you write your material? Do you have an office? Do you sit at a computer? And how do you know when something is really funny?

**Bert Kreisler:** I usually write on stage... something about panic makes my brain think faster. The first time it comes out is always the funniest, then I spend the next couple months trying to recapture what ever happened that first time. I'm also one of those people who talks to himself, and, in an odd twist of fate, can actually make myself laugh out loud, much like a homeless person. I'm a real treat to be married to.

**RR:** Have you ever tried a joke out on an audience and then asked "What was I thinking? That really wasn't funny."

**BK:** "Never. Everything I say on stage I think is indeed funny... not to be confused with the many times I have done things then the next day, I woke up and thought "What in the hell was I thinking? That was a bad idea." One time I asked for a group of volunteers from the audience. Once they got on stage I told them we were go-

ing to re-enact the Duke Rape Scene. (This is before the boys were acquitted.) Sadly I miscalculated how awkward a "staged gang rape" would play out on stage with me being the victim. People who thought it was funny, laughed. People who found the subject matter inappropriate, in a weird twist of irony, cheered and shouted for the guys to rough me up while they "mock-raped" me. Needless to say that was the last time I tried that bit.

**RR:** Tell us about being the Number One Partier in the Nation.

**BK:** Rolling Stone Magazine wrote a six-page article about me that changed my life. In it they called me the "number one party animal in the country." Oliver Stone optioned the rights to my life, and it gave me the balls to try stand-up. 11 years later, I am married, have two little girls, and work is more important to me than partying. Having said that, I still black out twice a month for dexterity.

**RR:** How did you go from, as you said, "I knew nothing about comedy" to being what some might call one of the funniest people on stage?

**BK:** "A lot of bombing. Young comics these days are afraid to fail; they work easy premises and stay in that safe "killing" zone. When I started doing comedy in New York, even the best comics bombed, but they bombed walking the high road. I literally walked into the business knowing noth-



ing and the guys that I saw every night were Attell, Chappelle, Louis CK, Greg Giraldo, Jim Norton, etc. You wrote jokes hoping to impress these guys. I don't think I would have learned to care as much about the craft if I hadn't started in New York.

**RR:** Tell us about making it in New York. What did you do to get where you are now?

**BK:** When I moved to New York I swallowed my pride and took a job working the door at a comedy club bringing in customers off the street, "barking". It was a humiliating job, and no comics took me seriously as a comedian, but I got on stage every night, and got to learn how to make people laugh. Then one night Will Smith's Company (Overbrook Entertainment) came to a show to scout new talent. I went up, had a good set, and the next thing you know I'm going to the movies with Will Smith, moving out to Hollywood. This business is so weird. One night you are broke and wondering what is going to happen to you and the next night you are hanging out with celebrities eating popcorn shrimp (Will Smith loves popcorn shrimp).

**RR:** What happened with your own TV show "Hurt Bert?"

**BK:** I almost died, that is what happened with Hurt Bert. For the millions of you who don't know, Hurt Bert was a TV show I did where I took dangerous men's

jobs for a day. Imagine *Dirty Job's* with Mike Rowe meets *Jackass*. It was hilarious, and if you don't believe me go to YouTube and check it out for yourself. The problem was that every episode we had to up the ante, and with a name like Hurt Bert, it only pays off when "Bert" gets "Hurt". The last episode we shot I got mauled by a bull as a rodeo clown, ended up in the hospital with two broken ribs, a broken foot, and called it quits. Sadly it is some of the funniest stuff I have ever done on TV.

**RR:** Do you think stand-up comedy is having a resurgence today?

**BK:** I think so. Obviously with events like "Laugh your Asheville Off" you find people bringing great comedy to people who would have to drive an hour and a half to see it. Once you see good comedy you are hooked, and you want to get other people hooked, like heroin or church.

**RR:** What is your personal theory on why something is funny?

**BK:** My personal theory is that it has to surprise me to make me laugh. Great laughs are like great orgasms; they should come when you least expect it.



Laugh Your Asheville Off Presents Bert Kreisler on Saturday, March 7. Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack Place, 8 p.m. Tickets: \$20 before March 7, \$25 day of show. Recommended for mature audiences 18+.

## Asheville Community Theatre Events

**"Narnia" runs March 13-29.** The *Chronicles of Narnia* has become a musical! The perfect show for the entire family! Friday nights at 8 p.m., Saturday and Sunday afternoons at 2:30 p.m. Tickets \$12-\$22.

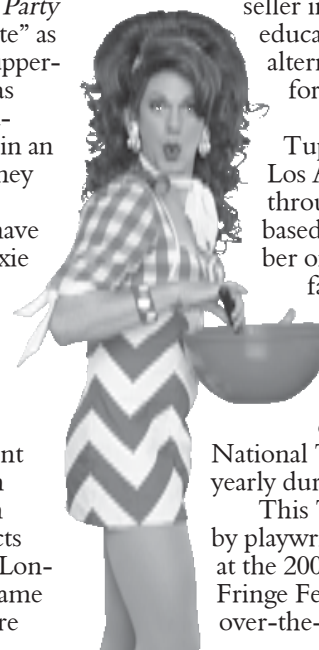
**The Autumn Players present "A Man For All Seasons,"** a brilliant portrait of Sir Thomas More's road to martyrdom during the reign of Henry VIII. Performances on Friday, March 6, and Saturday, March 7 at 2:30 p.m at 35below at Asheville Community Theatre, and Sunday, March 8 at the Reuter Center on the UNCA campus. Tickets are \$5.

For more information on these events please visit the Asheville Community Theatre web site at [www.ashevilletheatre.org](http://www.ashevilletheatre.org), or call (828) 254-2939.

## Off-Broadway Comedy Dixie's Tupperware Party

**D**ixie's Tupperware Party stars "Dixie Longate" as the fast-talking Tupperware Lady, who has packed up her catalogues and left her children in an Alabama trailer park to journey across America.

Critics and audiences have howled with laughter as Dixie throws a good ol' fashioned Tupperware Party filled with outrageously funny tales, heartfelt accounts, free giveaways, audience participation and the most fabulous assortment of Tupperware ever sold on a theater stage. Loaded with the most up-to-date products available for purchase, Ms. Longate will share how she became the number one Tupperware



seller in the U.S and Canada, as she educates her guests on the many alternative uses she has discovered for her plastic products.

Having started selling Tupperware three years ago in Los Angeles, Ms. Longate has risen through the ranks of the Orlando-based company to become the number one personal seller of the world famous bowls and plastic ware in the entire United States (and parts of Canada and Guam). For the past three years, Dixie has dominated the awards ceremonies at Jubilee, the National Tupperware Convention held yearly during the late summer.

This Tupperware-mania celebration by playwright Kris Andersson debuted at the 2004 New York International Fringe Festival, where the imaginative, over-the-top production caught the eye

BY JOHN ELLIS

of New York Theatre producers. In 2007 "Ms. Dixie Longate" appeared in the self-titled, Off-Broadway production *Dixie's Tupperware Party*, which garnered a 2008 Drama Desk Award nomination for Outstanding Solo Performance and is currently on a 20-city national tour.



The Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack Place presents seven performances of the National Off-Broadway Tour of *Dixie's Tupperware Party*, the hilarious interactive comedy starring Dixie Longate, March 31 to April 5, 2009.

To obtain more information or to purchase tickets (Regular \$25-\$35 depending on show date/time), call the theatre's box office at (828) 257-4530 or visit [www.dwttheatre.com](http://www.dwttheatre.com).



# FINE ART

## Blackbird Frame & Art Celebrates Two Anniversaries and a Dream Taking Flight

It started with a song about a blackbird. Penned in 1968 by singer/songwriter Paul McCartney, the song *Blackbird* is about “taking dreams and making them real,” says John Horrocks. To John and his wife, Pat, it was a fitting name for their own dream: BlackBird Frame & Art.

This month, the Horrocks celebrate the one-year anniversary of their store’s second location just outside downtown Asheville, and eight years at their original location near Biltmore Village. (They had already owned a successful frame shop for 12 years before moving to Asheville.)

Last March, BlackBird Frame & Art opened a second store, while transforming the original location to cater primarily to artists. At the original location, the space for framing production was enlarged since all work is done in-house.

Now, Pat can focus on designers and retail customers, while John can put his energies into serving local artists with



BY PAM J. HECHT

Edward Wright; woodcrafts by Chris Perryman; sculptures by Binna Green; and landscape photography by Doug Cavanah. For commercial and designer applica-

tions, BlackBird represents originals and prints by several other fine local artists. Customers can also choose custom-sized pieces of art with Artaisance, an online art reproduction gallery, either in the store or at the home or office.

You’ll also find some new eco-friendly and recycled framing products. The Horrocks have a strong interest in environmental issues, and also contribute regularly to area environmental organizations.

### What else makes BlackBird unique?

“We never say no,” says John. “We get a lot of interesting requests (such as prized memorabilia, cherished keepsakes as well as objects of all shapes and sizes) and we always figure out a way to get the job done.”

BlackBird Frame & Art also stands out because it’s the only framer in Western North Carolina, and among only a handful in the country, to have three employees on staff designated as Certified Picture Framers by the Professional Picture Framers Association.

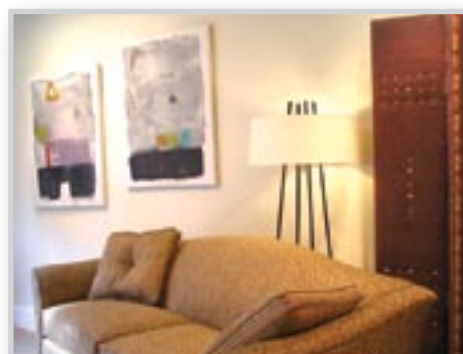
“The title signifies experience and extensive knowledge, particularly on issues of preservation framing methods, and can give clientele an added degree of confidence in their work,” John explains.

Hilda Pozner, of Asheville, recently visited the store, bringing with her a handmade piece of embroidery on silk that her brother and sister-in-law brought her from China.

“It deserves a professional framing job and I wanted to go to someone who’d do it justice,” she says, after Pat asked her a few questions about where she was going to place the work in her home.

“We help people improve their spaces, frame what’s important to them and hopefully, enhance their lives,” says John. “At the end of the day, I can step back and say I did something worthwhile.”

Services include: custom and preservation framing, in-home or in-office art and design consultation, custom shadow-box framing, in-stock selection of affordable reproductions and limited edition prints, commercial projects, delivery and installation, artist and designer accounts.



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specialized framing stock and bulk prices. At the original facility BlackBird has the capacity to handle orders like no other frame shop in Western North Carolina, says Horrocks, by accommodating unusually large pieces and volume orders, with crating and shipping services available.

Meanwhile, the newer store is not your typical frame shop: it features a variety of locally-made home accessories, artwork and furniture, as well as custom-made frames (with both low-cost and high-end choices) that you won’t find anywhere else, such as welded steel, hand-carved and gilded period frames, colorful acrylics, intricate wood inlays, arts and crafts frames, and a new line called the Biltmore Collection, with motifs taken from the Biltmore house.

A diverse array of work by local artists available in the store includes landscape painter Jon Mac Kah, who exhibits his prints exclusively at BlackBird; custom-made, portable upholstered screens by Chris Slusher; abstract paintings by Gayle Paul; welded steel furniture by Warren Perdue; handmade heirloom frames by

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## FINE ART

Doodling Around with *Rapid River's* Cartoonists

BY BRYAN PAIEMENT

There is a common thread that binds the four cartoonists, Amy Downs, Phil Juliano, Michael Cole and Phil Hawkins, who appear monthly in *Rapid River Magazine* — a love for the creative arts and their unanimous acknowledgment that *Calvin and Hobbes* was a brilliant comic strip.

**Phil Juliano's "Best in Show"** strip can also be seen online at Luchador-Enterprises.com, an independent, small press comic "microbrewery" that strives to produce the best stories in small batches.

Chocolate labs make great pets and muses. Whether sheepishly looking back at him while squatting for relief or chewing on a precious heirloom, Juliano's dog provides the backbone for "Best in Show."

"I get a lot of material from NPR. I was listening a while back and they were talking about fainting goats. These guys would chase them with umbrellas, open them and the goats would freeze and then fall over. I hear things like this and think 'what can I do with this?'"

Five years in the making, "Best in Show" has been published in newspapers across the country and Juliano was requested as a case profile for Lisa Wogan's *Dog Park Wisdom*, a book that offers advice on choosing and understanding your canine.

Aside from cartooning, Juliano is a wilderness field instructor at a therapeutic boarding school at Black Mountain. Working in shifts that begin on Thursday and end on Monday, he leads excursions into the national forest for rock-climbing, hiking and canoeing.

"I'm a lifelong cat-lover," says **Amy Downs**. "Ten years ago I drew a comic strip with cats in it and realized that's what I love drawing and thinking about." Before she did "**Callie and Cats**" she was involved with another comic strip that proved unsuccessful.

"The first strip was too broad and philosophical, so I decided to focus the theme. You have to draw what you love."

Downs has amassed enough work to produce a full-length comic book, but her

number one priority at this time is to launch her own website. Due to the increased popularity of electronic publications and the steady decline in newspaper consumption, she feels "Callie and Cats" has brighter prospects for distribution via the web.

Down's love for "Life in Hell" may come as a surprise to some of her readers. The weekly comic strip by Matt Groening delves into topics such as work and death. So, as a trained psychologist, it makes sense that Downs' interests would range far beyond that of purring kittens and a steady diet of "Garfield" strips.

There is a sense of admiration and motivation among the four cartoonists. Downs notes how "Corgi Tales" illustrator Phil Hawkins' usage of contrast with black and white has inspired her to use this technique in new ways.

The members of the southeast chapter of the National Cartoonist Society meet on the first Tuesday of every month at Frank's Roman Pizza in Asheville. **Phil Hawkins**, creator of "**Corgi Tales**" meets with other members of the NCS, which also includes Michael Cole, writer and illustrator of "Dragin." There they bounce ideas off one another, laughing, eating and talking about the world of cartooning.

Like Downs, Juliano, and Cole, Phil Hawkins realized his passion for illustrating in high school. Hawkins has degrees in language and literature and taught for a few years before he began doing technical illustrations, a skill that led to 32 years in the aerospace business.

Hawkins' talents as an illustrator have spread by word of mouth. He has worked on movie posters, book covers, comic books, magazines... the list goes on. Fifty-seven of his illustrations appeared in Richard Boyer's *The Quintessential Sherlock Holmes*.

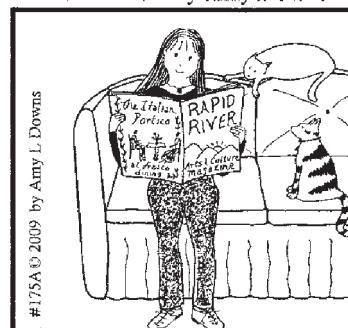
"Corgi Tales" is not surprisingly generated from Hawkins pet Corgi, but the strip's humor is related to the local art scene in Asheville.

"I try to make the strip general enough so that everyone, including people outside of Asheville, can identify with it," says Hawkins. "I want the viewer to still get the joke without having to know Asheville's art



PHIL JULIANO

Callie &amp; Cats By Amy Downs



AMY DOWNS



PHIL HAWKINS

scene." He encourages aspiring cartoonists to draw, Draw, DRAW! Cartoonists must feverishly put pen to paper in order to find their voice and develop characters. Familiarizing yourself with other cartoonists is just as important as the drawing itself. "Cartooning has to get in your blood," he says. "Look at what others have created and what it is they did that inspired you."

Hawkins cites Walt Kelley and his strip "Pogo" as a major source of his inspiration. "Walt Kelley's strips are beautifully drawn with wonderful usage of language and his draftsmanship is marvelous."

**Michael Cole** knew from a young age that he wanted to somehow be involved with art and the process of creating. The newest member of *Rapid River's* illustration team, Cole says "Calvin and Hobbes" played a large role in shaping "Dragin."

"I also look at a few online comics

'Cartooning' continued on pg. 19

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## MUSIC

## Bruce Piephoff Returns to His Roots

BY JAMES CASSARA

While hardly a household name, folk musician and poet, Bruce Piephoff's resume is as impressive as that of any North Carolina musician. His nearly twenty albums of original material – more than 400 songs – is staggering in both its quantity and consistency.

Taken individually they are replete with tuneful ruminations and acute observations of the everyday; collectively they represent the remarkable progression of a musician who is relentless in his desire for artistic growth and a tireless advocate for the arts. Folk music may be his idiom, and words his tool of choice, but one quickly gets the sense that Piephoff is equally passionate regarding all aspects of human expression.

While he has often played venues in and around town, Piephoff has been noticeably absent from Asheville itself. That situation will be rectified on March 8 when Piephoff, sharing a bill with local singer/songwriter Nikki Talley, brings his guitar, friends, and a lifetime of experience to the Grey Eagle.

**JAMES CASSARA:** First the important stuff. How are you feeling these days? Your 2007 release *Sogni D'Oro*, came at a time during which you were dealing with some health issues; themes of mortality and fear certainly crept into the songs so it was hard not to make a connection between your well being and the album.

**Bruce Piephoff:** I'm feeling good. *Sogni D'Oro* was released after a trip to the ER with blood clots in my lungs. It was a close call and happened without warning. Luckily my wife was around when I briefly passed out and she got me to the hospital in time and they put me on blood thinners. I've had no more incidents of blood clots but it certainly was a wake up call. It could have been caused by long trips sitting immobile in the car touring the country playing gigs. The clots came from my left leg. Any close call like that heightens your sense of mortality and perhaps some of the songs were darker on *Sogni D'Oro* but there were humorous tunes on there too. My work has always been a mix of happy/sad songs.

**JC:** Do the new songs mark some sort of reemergence?

**BP:** Listen, I'll be 60 in March and I'm just happy to still be in the game! My 17th CD, *Clockwork*, will be out around my birthday and I think folks will enjoy it as much as anything I've done. I'm always reemerging, and hope to do so until I die.

**JC:** You've not played the Grey Eagle in a long time. That seems strange, as it's the type of venue tailor fit for your music.

**BP:** I played The Grey Eagle when it was located in Black Mountain many

years ago but haven't played the club there in Asheville. It's been awhile for Asheville for some reason. I used to play Bele Chere a lot, but haven't been asked to do so in a long time. Played Be Here Now, a club there and some other gigs but it's been awhile.

I used to sing some with Annie Talley, Nikki Talley's mom, and have sung with Nikki a couple of times too. She's now emerging as a singer and songwriter and she asked me to play at The Grey Eagle and got me the gig. I hope some new folks will come out and hear the songs. I have friends in that area too who may be there.

**JC:** You've long been associated with the "Greensboro scene" as well as North Carolina in general. What changes have you noticed since you first ventured into full time performing? Are the challenges faced by a touring musician any different from twenty years ago?

**BP:** I am associated with Greensboro because I am a native of Greensboro and although I have lived a lot of other places, I got married and bought a house here 20 years ago. We had a son, and my in-laws moved down from N.Y., so I kind of ended up based here. I have been playing music and writing songs and poetry for 41 years now. Started when I was 19 in Chapel Hill while a student at UNC. The N.C. Visiting Artist program helped me break out in the 80s and I've just kept at it.

It's not a lot different now for an under the radar independent artist playing little coffeehouses, bars and other small venues. The money doesn't change much but you have your freedom and you meet a lot of great people and get to travel and I don't regret any of it.

**JC:** How as the internet changed the music industry for you?

**BP:** The internet and technology have changed a lot of the business aspects of playing music, but the creative process of writing songs still involves sitting down with a pencil and a guitar and making something out of nothing. The new album is almost ready and will probably be out in a month or so. Don't know if I'll have copies by the March 12 Grey Eagle gig but I will have copies of my 2008 release, *The Chestnut Tree*. It was chosen by *Yes Weekly!* Magazine as a top 10 record for '08 and was in WNCW's top 100.

I'll also have copies of a lot of my previous releases available at special recession prices. The new CD, *Clockwork*, was supposed to be recorded live but developed into a studio project because of scheduling constraints with the musicians I wanted to play on it. Scott Manring, Sam Frazier, Martha Bassett, Pat Lawrence and saxophonist Scott Adair all are

backing me up on the songs.

There are nine new songs and five spoken word pieces with upright bass and sax accompaniment. There are story songs, poem songs and blues and a little more poetry pieces since I am having my second book of poetry, *Fiddler and Mid- dlers*, published this year by Yonno Press.

It is folk and blues and poetry and mostly acoustic with a little Sam Frazier electric guitar and tenor and soprano sax. It's what I love to do, and as long as I'm ticking I'll keep doing it.

IF YOU GO

Who, when, what: Nikki Talley with *The Honeycutters* and Bruce Piephoff at the Grey Eagle, Thursday, March 12. Seated show begins at 8pm.

## March 2009 Mainstage Performances

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## SPINNING DISCS:

## March CD Reviews by James Cassara

We're back again with the sort of eclectic mix that should appeal to Rapid River's discriminating readers. Anything mentioned here is worth a listen, especially if purchased at one of our many independent minded record stores.

### Duncan Sheik Whisper House RCA Victor

His time spent working on Broadway, during which he won a Tony for his Spring Awakening score, has clearly been good for Duncan Sheik. The challenge of new artistic adventures has refocused and re-energized the man, giving him a much needed break from the annual grind of record making while allowing him to explore creative possibilities beyond his well deserved association as a singer/songwriter par excellence. With Whisper House, his first album since 2006's White Limousine Sheik successfully straddles a delicate line between the pragmatic-observer-of-love-in-all-its-convoluted-permutations and the more grandiose social commentator; while it ostensibly sounds like another Duncan Sheik record (which is certainly not a bad thing) its themes—both large and small—are among the most ambitious he's yet tackled. The album's opener and thematic lynchpin is "It's Better to Be Dead," a quietly grandiose stunner that would fit nicely aside Captain Fantastic era Elton John while the duets with singer/songwriter Holly Brook play out like quiet narratives, words from a Raymond Chandler story set to delicately tuneful and beautifully orchestrated pop. Sheik's gift—beside his obvious ability to concoct staggeringly lovely melodies—is in the way his best works can be taken on multiple levels. Whisper House is imminently enjoyable as straight ahead pop, yet it works just as well as a series of interconnected narratives that demand and deserve the listener's strict attention. It easily ranks among his finest records yet; reasserting the artist as the very definition of alternative singer/writer. \*\*\*\*

### Robyn Hitchcock and the Venus Three

#### Goodnight, Oslo Yep Roc

It's not hard to see why more than three decades into his stellar career Robyn Hitchcock reputation as one of England's most persuasive and multifaceted songwriters



has not only endured, but grown. Not a one of his peers, be it Elvis Costello, Joe Jackson, or even Sir Paul, manages to so compellingly and consistently create records that intrigue, exhilarate, and bristle with good cheer. Even when singing of the sheer lunacy of middle age relations, which he does with insight and aplomb in the delightful Up to Our Necks (In Love),

Hitchcock can still elicit a chuckle or two. Backed by his sometime comrades the Venus Three—Peter Buck on guitar, Scott McCaughey on bass, and Bill Rieflin on drums, Hitchcock delivers a strong set of songs with conviction, precision, and just the proper dash of Mersey Beat verve. Nothing on Goodnight Oslo is particularly revelatory, and it's unlikely at this stage in his career Hitchcock is going to amass new converts, but song for song it compares favorably with the vast majority of pop records made over the past few years. That in itself might just be the fate Hitchcock must endure: His adoring fans have such high expectations of his work—along with his ability to meet those expectations—that even an album as good as this one might raise nary an eyebrow. \*\*\*1/2

### MV + EE

#### Drone Trailer DiChristina Records

Having previously released nearly a dozen albums and numerous EPs and other assorted projects, the New York based independent duo of Matt Valentine and Erika Elder, known collectively as MV + EE, have lately begun to go somewhat mainstream. Well, as mainstream as any neo-psychedelic, ambient folk, avant-garde duo could ever be. Trying to describe the sound elicited by their records, equal parts folk, psycho pop, and acid jazz can be maddening but if one gets past the low fidelity wall of sound the duo so revels the picture becomes clearer.

That's a might big if. Imagine an even more stoned out Roxy Erickson, or Kevin Coyne tripping on a substance yet discovered, and you're in the ball park of how peculiar and challenging this record

is. The Neil Young like "Hungry Stones" is the most accessible here but even it rambles in ways that are both intriguing and bothersome. "Anyway" strives for rock anthem status trash but Erika Elder's barely discernable voice gets buried in the mix. Her steel guitar sets a nice album long groove but Valentine's lazy vocals, especially on the indolent "Weather Head" sound tired and weak. The album's unfocused nature certainly defies categorization but there's a thin line between demanding and off putting. Even with its not insignificant charms Drone Trailer too often falls on the wrong side of that equation. \*\*

### Thom Schuyler

#### Prayer of a Desperate Man TJS Records

You might not know the name of this Nashville based songwriter but if in the past three decades you've had your ear even modestly turned towards contemporary country you've heard his songs. Lacy Dalton sold over a million copies of his "16th Avenue" while other megastars, ranging from Michael Murphy to Kenny Rogers to Clint Black, have also benefited from his tuneful acumen. Still not convinced? How about "Point of Light" for Randy Travis, or "Trains Make Me Lonesome" for George Strait? Add in The Judds, Levon Helm, pop songstress Lisa Loeb, and country/rockabilly legend Conway Twitty and you get some sense of what a powerhouse song writer Schuyler is: And if that's not enough he's been a respected exec at RCA Records — one long known for champion creative rights and giving the artist a fair deal — as well as the Chairman of the Country Music Association. Still, if asked in which role does he take the greatest pride and Schuyler will not hesitate to answer: He's a songwriter, dammit.

So why, given his impeccable credentials and numerous awards, is Schuyler not signed to a major label? Quite simply he prefers the freedom to call his own shots rather than being constrained by the dictates of the suits that see music as product and units sold. Schuyler fifth solo effort, Prayer of a Desperate Man straddles a fine line between Nashville

'CD's' continued on next pg.



# WHAT'S HAPPENING

## The Artistry of Bill Frisell

BY JAMES CASSARA

In a Herculean career spanning nearly three decades and an astounding 150 albums, including twenty five of his own, the artistry of Bill Frisell has always been defined by his sound. Among jazz guitarists Frisell is unique in his exploitation of timbre and resonance, utilizing a sound that expands and breathes.

In many ways Frisell has a sound reminiscent of a pedal steel guitar (in fact Frisell will be joined for this show by steel guitar genius Greg Leisz); and while his work is steeped in jazz it has always included characteristics of rock, country, and bluegrass, among other styles. Such diversity explains his willingness to expand his tonal palette beyond that of the typical jazz guitarist.

His ability as an original, lyrical player of melody combines with a unique – and frequently imitated but never matched – style that makes him one of the most singular musicians of his time.

Frisell grew up in Denver in a “musically encouraging family”, initially playing the clarinet before taking up guitar. He continued with the clarinet, playing in school concerts and marching bands and “briefly considered playing classical clarinet as a professional.” He played guitar in rock and R&B bands as a teenager – an early band featured

future members of the funk ensemble Earth, Wind & Fire – then discovered jazz in the music of Wes Montgomery. “From there on that was all I cared about” he tells me via our brief phone conversation.

Frisell decided to make guitar his primary instrument. He moved to Boston in 1971 to attend the Berklee School of Music. While there Frisell connected with other like-minded players, including class mate Pat Metheny. “At that point I began moving away from pure bebop, which dominated my tastes, and started bringing in other musical interests. I figured out that using a guitar with a flexible neck I could play around with the intonation.” That combination of experimental techniques, along with a heavy dose of reverb gave Frisell a sound unlike anyone else.

For the next decade Frisell would record and perform with a huge variety of artists, not all of them jazz musicians. Collaborators would include rock and pop musicians (drummer Ginger Baker, singers Marianne Faithfull and



Bill Frisell

established himself as a visionary presence in American music.

Asheville music lovers will be fortunate to see this joy and precise virtuosity first hand: it is a show not to be missed, one which again declares our city as a vibrant musical center that other towns could only hope to equal.

IF  
YOU  
GO

Bill Frisell and Greg Leisz  
at The Grey Eagle, Friday,  
March 20 at 8 p.m. \$22  
advance/\$25 day of show.  
Advance tickets are available  
online and at local outlets.  
This will be a fully seated show.

## Guitarist Jamie McLean at Jack of the Wood

BY JAMES CASSARA

Jamie McLean may have made his reputation as guitarist for the acclaimed Dirty Dozen Brass Band but his post Brass career has clearly put him where he wants to be. Following a late February show at The Rocket Club in West Asheville, McLean and his band headed for Europe, playing a show in Scotland before returning to the states.

McLean has played from Madison Square Garden too Boonnaroo, from the New Orleans Jazz Fest to Japan's Fuji Rock, playing alongside such names as Elvis Costello, Wide-spread Panic, and Dave Matthews.

In the studio he's added his six string acumen to records by everyone from Norah Jones to Chuck D, proving he is the quintessential workingman's guitarist.

“I grew up listening to the Stones, Tom Petty, Black Crowes, you name it,” says McLean. All of those influences come crashing together with his newly assembled band. “I feel like the group is really firing on all cylinders right now. We are amazingly productive with songwriting, singing and touring and look forward to releasing and performing as much of this great music as possible.”

With a new album, *American Heartache*, recently released (look for a review in next month's Rapid River) McLean continues to cultivate what he calls “that heavy classic rock sound I've always loved.” Supplementing his twang ridden southern rock infused guitar passages is a commanding voice packed with “New Orleans soul and New York City swagger.”

As part of an extensive southeastern tour McLean brings some of that swagger to our area with his March 6 show at Jack of the Woods. Prepare yourself for a late night of high octane blues, rock, and soul. I imagine Jamie McLean wouldn't want it any other way!

IF  
YOU  
GO

Jamie McLean Band  
at Jack of the Wood,  
Friday, March 6 in  
downtown Asheville.  
Showtime is at 9:30 p.m.  
with limited seating.

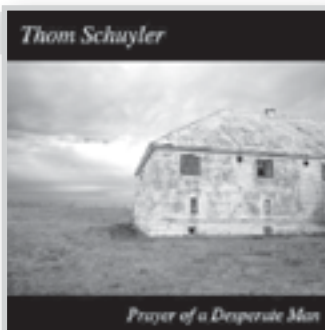
For additional information go to  
[www.jamiemclean.com](http://www.jamiemclean.com)

### 'CD's' continued

slick and country honk rebellion. In much the same way as Waylon did three decades past Schuyler focuses his anger and acid tongue at those who most deserve it, but are (unfortunately) least likely to listen. The acerbic “Who Needs A Hummer?” rightly angles towards

those whose manhood is measured in fuel consumption while “This Is America”-far from being your typical jingoistic nod to the red, white, and blue-is that rarest of birds: A genuinely affection tribute to the ideals that have made this country great that is neither indolent nor simplistic.

But Schuyler's stylistic bread and butter have always been songs of love and loss. Nowhere does he detail the exhilaration of new love than the heart wrenching “When She Danced With Me.” And few songwriters are able to take the basic premise of “Talk to My Old Man”, in which the singer asks God to recon-



nect him with his died too young father and make it sound as convincing as can Schuyler. As a songwriter he instinctively knows the difference between grieved sentimentality and mawkish expression. “Feed the Devil” aims squarely at such fear mongers as Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity while understanding that

there is a little bit of fear in all of us.

But all is not heartache, disillusion, and loss. There are some nice light touches to the disc, most notably the country swing of “(Ain't Nothin' Wrong With a) Kit Kat” that takes a simple tale of longing for a chocolate bar and makes it a universal plea for the good things. Such easygoing delivery is remindful of Kinky Friedman and like Kinky Schuyler understands that too much of a good thing is still too much. It's what makes this disc such a refreshing listen, and one that only gets better with repetition. \*\*\*\*

## Arizona, March 15



Best described as ‘heavy mellow’, Arizona's unique brand of indie rock and creative instrumentation has earned them a strong buzz. From infectious, well-orchestrated pop songs to creepy ballads about ghosts, Arizona is a sonic adventure.

Arizona, performing with Electric Owls and Bishop Allen on Sunday, March 15 at The Rocket Club, 401 Haywood Road in Asheville. Details (828) 505-2494.



## NOTEWORTHY

Haywood Arts Regional Theatre  
to Stage "Proof"

The Haywood Arts Regional Theatre has announced a change in its 2009 season.

The previously announced production of "The Drawer Boy," a Canadian play scheduled to open in early April, has been canceled. In its place HART will present the Tony Award Winning Best Play, and winner of the Pulitzer Prize, "Proof."

The decision was made to drop "The Drawer Boy" after problems arose over the rights and royalties connected with the play.

"Proof," which had a highly successful Broadway run, tells the story of Catherine, a troubled young woman, on the eve of her twenty-fifth birthday. She has spent years caring

for her brilliant but unstable father, a famous mathematician. Over a long weekend the discovery of a mysterious notebook with a mathematical proof, that appears on the surface to be a work of genius, leads to romance, conflict, and self discovery.

"Proof" will be directed by Steven Lloyd and will run April 3-12, 2009.

IF  
YOU  
GO

To make reservations contact the HART Box Office at (828) 456-6322. Box Office hours are Monday through Saturday from 1-5 p.m.

Reservations can also be made on-line by visiting the HART web site at [www.harttheatre.com](http://www.harttheatre.com).

'Daniel Meyer' continued from pg. 9

Conservatory of Music. He composed and conducted works for ensembles at both schools, including a Stabat Mater for soprano, chorus and orchestra. He did doctoral work at Boston University, where he had also received the Orchestral Conducting Honors Award. As a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar he studied conducting at the Hochschule für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Vienna.

On March 14, at 8 p.m. the Asheville Symphony Orchestra presents "Czech this out" an evening filled with the wonders and beauty of Czech music with a Bohemian theme.

"Bohemia, now part of the modern-day Czech Republic, continues to this day to be a hotbed of musical excellence, with an impressive array of performers and composers who have left a lasting mark on our musical heritage," Meyer wrote on the ASO website. "All three of our works in March celebrate these Bohemian roots. Mozart's regal and vibrant Prague Symphony was dedicated to the citizens who adopted him as their own. We will also continue to honor our talented musicians from within the ranks of the ASO with our principal oboist, Alicia Chapman, performing Martinu's inventive and surprising Oboe Concerto. The evening culminates in three evocative tone poems based on Bohemia's beauty



Maestro Daniel Meyer



and mystery. The high castle overlooking Prague<sup>1</sup>, the beautiful Danube River, and a Bohemian legend are all parts of Smetana's<sup>2</sup> proud musical testament to his homeland, *Má Vlast*."

<sup>1</sup>Prague is the capital and the largest city of the Czech Republic. Situated on the river is the world's largest castle, the Prague Castle. The Czech Republic is heart of Europe surrounded by Poland, Germany, Austria and Slovakia.

<sup>2</sup>Smetana's greatest achievement in this genre became his set of six symphonic poems under the general title *Má Vlast* composed between 1872 and 1879. The cycle presents selected episodes and ideas from Czech history while embodying its composer's personal belief in the greatness of the Czech nation. Two recurrent themes are used to unify the entire cycle. One represents Vysehrad, the fortress over the river Vltava whose course provides the subject matter for the second (and best-known) work in the cycle.

IF  
YOU  
GO

Asheville Symphony Orchestra performing Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Symphony No. 38 in D Major "Prague." Bohuslav Martinu, Concerto for Oboe and

Orchestra; Alicia Chapman, oboe; Bedrich Smetana, 3 Tone Poems.

March 14, 8 p.m. at the Thomas Wolfe Auditorium.

Tickets: (828) 254-7046 or visit [www.Tick-etMaster.com](http://www.Tick-etMaster.com)

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## Paradigm at the Emerald Lounge

The band Paradigm, based out of Louisville, KY, will be joined by Asheville locals East Coast Dirt for a show at the Emerald Lounge. Paradigm's music has been described as groove-oriented jazz, with elements of progressive rock and electro.

Their latest studio album, *Melodies for Uncertain Robots*, is available nationwide on the famous Philly label Ropeadope Records (Benevento/Russo Duo, Charlie Hunter, Mike Gordon of Phish, DJ Logic) and the Homegrown Music Network. In fact, the album spent over a month as Ropeadope's top-selling digital album earlier this year.



IF  
YOU  
GO

Paradigm with East Coast Dirt on March 12, 8 p.m. at the Emerald Lounge, 112 N. Lexington Ave. in Asheville.

[www.paradigmgroove.com](http://www.paradigmgroove.com)



# RESTAURANTS & WINE

## Necessary Excess

### A Need Called Affordable Luxury

#### Wine Drinkers March

On Sunday, February 22, the Asheville Mardi Gras Parade marched cold streets in downtown Asheville. This was the parade's third year (the first was a simple sidewalk march with 300 people). It has come a long way in a short time — and we saw the addition of some new krewes. A krewe, by definition, is actually a social club that puts on a parade and/or a ball for the Carnival season. The reason behind the spelling is unexplained.

This year emerged the wine drinkers' krewe, called Grand Krewe, a name inspired by the French wine classification "Grand Cru." Those of us who understood the play on words spent much of the day explaining the concept to others, not an easy task. Understandably, not everyone knew about the French label methods, and in addition to that, the French word "Cru" does not have a direct match in English.

In France, they have centuries of experience in viticulture and therefore know their very best lands for growing grapes and especially which varieties grow best in specific places. The term *cru* implies place of growth, and is most commonly read on the labels of top wines from Bordeaux, Burgundy, Alsace, and Champagne. Naturally, with *Grand Cru*, come higher prices.

The Krewe Kaptain, yours truly, considered the name "Krewe Bourgeois" but would not risk being outranked by some future krewe taking the name "Grand."

#### What Recession?

The numbers are in, and wine consumption is up in America. As retailers across the country suffer from a huge in-

crease in customer frugality, as hardware stores find countless packages opened by shoplifters stealing simple cheap drill bits, wine retailers are inserting dividers between a lot more glass bottles.

Of course, this means a lot more work for the sellers. Sales are up due to discounting. That means more shipping and heavy lifting for less profit. In fact, it would not be surprising if the sellers see a dip in income over last year in spite of the country's run on wine and their increased workload.

Inside this is an irony. French wine sales are dropping. Guess what? In spite of the global financial crisis, French wine prices have seen an increase. A weak dollar does have some part in this, but if I were a retailer facing more labor for less money, I would be breaking my sweat on non-French wines.

Still, the overall sales increase also underscores the level of priority that wine enjoys in people's lives. If they had to choose, they would probably buy wine before they would buy new clothes. It's the psychology of wine and good food. The hyper-availability of both has not made them boring. They are both there to comfort us in hard times, and are simply the affordable simple luxury of our lives.

It makes sense that such news would follow the excesses of Carnival season, so here are some recession-friendly wine picks:

#### Pink

Muga, Rioja Rosato, Spain 2007 (\$10) Usually, rosés are fermented in steel tanks, but this one is fermented in oak. That surely gives it its touch of vanilla. Besides that, red berry fruit and even a little thirst-quenching citrus are in there.

BY MICHAEL PARKER

Château de Campuget, Rosé, Costières de Nîmes, France 2007 (\$10) The winemakers at Campuget really know what they are doing. This, a blend of syrah and Grenache, shows strawberry-like nuances and offers a little black pepper in there as well.

#### White

Montpellier, Viognier, California 2007 (\$8) A recent glass of locally-made, flower-powered honey mead reignited my old thirst for real white wine with floral qualities. This viognier smells like honeysuckles, and the fruit is lush.

Ceviche, Sauvignon Blanc, Monterey County, California 2006 (\$10) A crisp and medium bodied white, and especially loaded with citrus notes, even a little touch of tangerine — wow! It is very aptly named Ceviche. I was very impressed with the complexity here, as there are even some tropical fruit nuances.

#### Red

Casa Castillo, Monastrell, Jumilla, Spain 2007 (\$10) Excellent! This dark red offers layers of blue and black berry fruit. Low-yielding old vines have produced awesome grapes. Estate grown and bottled, French and American oak barrels, almost full-bodied. A bargain.

The Consultant, Shiraz, California (\$8) Big value! 80% Paso Robles syrah and 20% Napa cabernet sauvignon. Ripe, with the right dose of oak due to half the wine having been oak-aged.

#### Events at the Weinhaus

Reservations are required for these events, please call the Weinhaus at (828) 254-6453.

#### Friday, March 6

Come to the Highland Brewery VIP Brewery Tour, enjoy beer from this famous local brewery and mouth watering BBQ provided by the Greenwood Café. It will be held at the Highland Brewery. Time is 6:30 p.m. Cost is \$35 all inclusive.

#### Wednesday, March 11

Zambra's and the Weinhaus will host a wine dinner with a Mediterranean theme featuring the fine tapas that Zambra's serves along with wines to match. The time is 7 p.m. The cost is \$60 all inclusive.

#### Tuesday, March 24

Vincenzo's Restaurant with it's Italian inspired food and fine chef Kendall Thompson will serve a five course meal paired with wines from the Weinhaus. The time is 7 p.m. The cost is \$60 all inclusive.

#### Friday, March 27

Friday night flight tasting at the Weinhaus, featuring "Any Port in a Storm." Accompanied by Stilton cheese and walnuts it's a bargain at \$10 for a tasting. From 5 to 7 p.m. at the Weinhaus, 86 Patton, Ave. in Asheville.

#### The Weinhaus

86 Patton Ave., in Asheville  
(828) 254-6453

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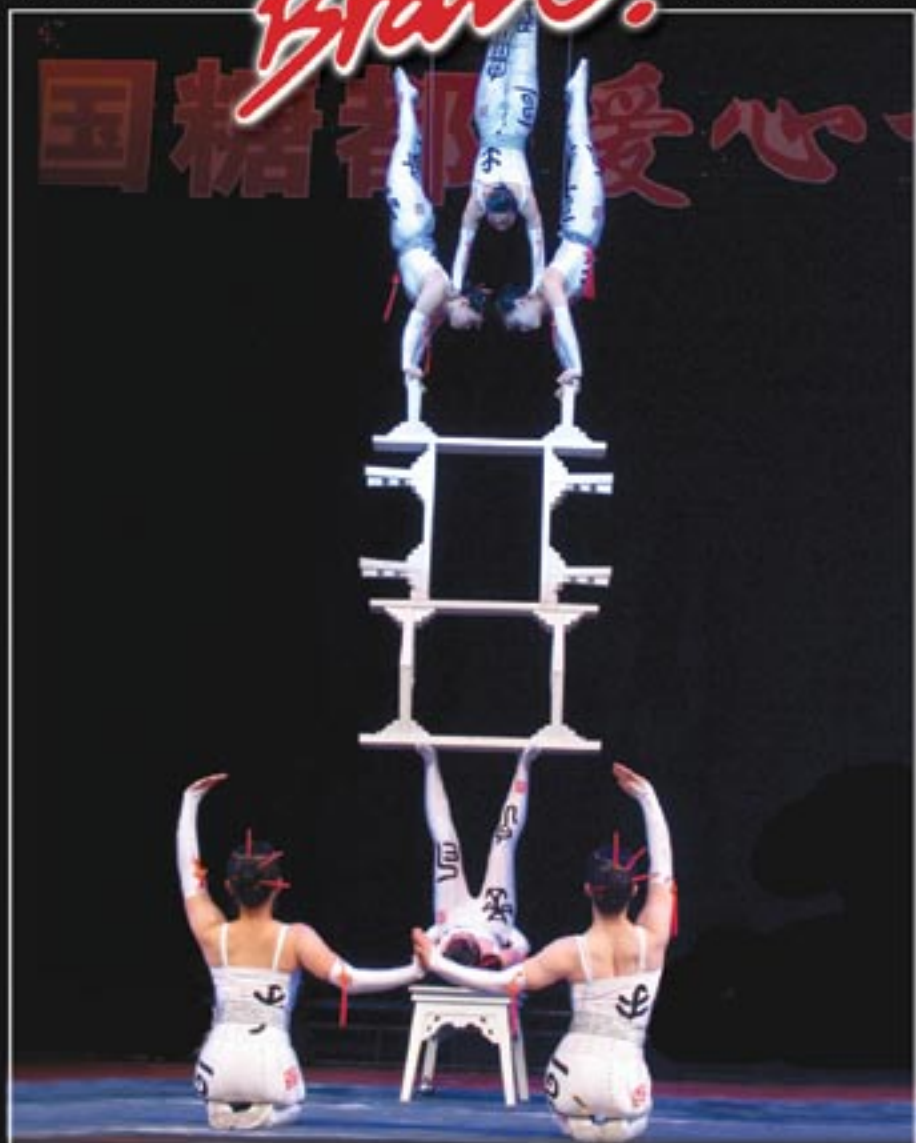
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ASHEVILLE CONCERTS

Bravo!



## NATIONAL Acrobats OF CHINA

One of the premiere acrobatic troupes in the world, the National Acrobats of China undertake astounding feats ranging from gravity-defying balancing acts and spine-bending contortions to stunts such as foot juggling, chair stacking and plate spinning.

Friday, April 3, 7:30 pm } Thomas Wolfe Auditorium

Student tickets 1/2 price • Tickets available at the Civic Center Box Office, [ticketmaster.com](http://ticketmaster.com) or **828.225.5887** • [ashevillebravoconcerts.org](http://ashevillebravoconcerts.org)

## STAGE PREVIEW

### North Carolina Stage Company Remounts "Stones in His Pockets"

BY AMANDA LESLIE

Charlie Flynn-McIver and Scott Treadway reprise their roles in the two-man comedy *Stones In His Pockets* by Irish playwright Marie Jones. When NC Stage Company first produced *Stones* in 2006, it became one of the most successful productions in the theatre's history, selling out all 16 performances.

A big budget Hollywood movie is filming in rural Ireland, bringing with it dreams of wealth and stardom. But for the inhabitants of a sleepy village in County Kerry, their brush with fame also brings heartbreak. Charlie Flynn-McIver



and Scott Treadway play Jake and Charlie, two locals working as extras on the film – as well as a flighty American movie star, a stuffy English director and a host of eccentric Irish townsfolk and cell phone-toting production assistants. Poignant and hilarious, this play won a British Olivier award for Best Comedy in 2000.

*Stones In His Pockets* ran in 2006 in NC Stage's 99-

seat venue in downtown Asheville. The production completely sold out all 16

'Stones' continued on next pg.

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# FINE ART

## Turning to the Future: A Fresh Look at Wood Art

Beginning in March, Grovewood Gallery has the prestigious honor of hosting a show for the American Association of Woodturners — an international, non-profit society dedicated to the advancement of woodturning.

This juried exhibition, titled “Turning to the Future: A Fresh Look at Wood Art,” will feature the works of 29 nationally recognized artists from around the country. An array of turned and carved wood, as well as wall mounted pieces and free standing sculptural forms, will be on display in Grovewood’s Spotlight Gallery.

The exhibit will coincide with the visit of the Collectors of Wood Art to Asheville, which is comprised of collec-

BY ASHLEY VAN MATRE

tors, artists, educators, art critics, art galleries and museums interested in the field of studio wood art.

IF  
YOU  
GO

“Turning to the Future”  
March 20 - May 11, 2009 at  
Grovewood Gallery

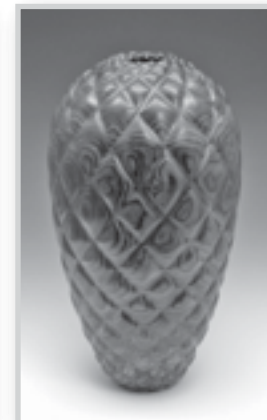
Admission is free, so come and experience a unique showcase of inspired design and technical expertise. Grovewood Gallery is located next to The Grove Park Inn Resort & Spa in Asheville. Visit [www.grovewood.com](http://www.grovewood.com) for more information or call (828) 253-7651.



Jim Keller “Bugatti” -  
Evolution of the Wheel



Binh Pho  
- Autumn Night



Edward Koenig  
- In Another Life II

### DRAGIN



‘Cartooning’ continued from pg. 12

about gaming that inspired me, such as Penny Arcade, Player Versus Player, and VG Cats. I definitely wanted to do a comic about friends living together and dealing with life in their own way. Living with roommates and growing up with my brother and sister were also inspiring for “Dragin.”

Cole has found fellow writers and illustrators to workshop each others’ strips.

### MICHAEL COLE’S “DRAGIN”

“I think 60% of my improvement came in the last two years because of that. I also work in Photoshop with a pen tablet which has helped a lot.”

Although cartooning is a hobby for Cole now, he hopes in time it will blossom into a lucrative career and that “Dragin” will one day have its own website. “I’m still figuring things out as I go and I can’t wait to see where it goes.”

Carolina has courted the film industry, offering up its beautiful scenery and generous tax breaks. The story seems even more relevant in 2009, with economic prospects dim across the country. Despite the hilariously over-the-top characters, *Stones In His Pockets* is grounded in reality, and audiences will be able to identify with Jake and Charlie’s dreams of escaping to Hollywood.

IF  
YOU  
GO

“Stones In His Pockets” runs  
March 11-15. Wednesdays -  
Saturday at 8 p.m., Sunday at  
2 p.m. at the Diana Wortham  
Theatre, 2 South Pack Square  
in Asheville.

Tickets are \$25, contact the Diana Wortham Theatre at (828) 257-4500 or visit [www.dwththeatre.com](http://www.dwththeatre.com).

‘Stones’ continued from pg. 18

performances, and *The Asheville Citizen-Times* wrote, “The performances are just superb...could be N.C. Stage’s best production to date.”

The professional theatre company usually produces in its own space, a 99-seat Off Broadway-style theatre just a block off Haywood Street. When the company decided to remount *Stones In His Pockets* for the 08-09 Season, it chose to produce in the Diana Wortham Theatre, which combines an intimate experience with larger seating capacity.

In 2006, when NC Stage first presented *Stones In His Pockets*, the play seemed to have special resonance for Asheville audiences. Much like Marie Jones’ fictional Irish town, Western North

## The Folk Art Center Celebrates National Quilting Day

To celebrate National Quilting Day on Saturday, March 21, the Folk Art Center will be hosting demonstrations and an exhibition of traditional and contemporary quilts.

Connie Brown and Janice Maddox, who are members of the Asheville Quilt Guild, will show visitors how to hand quilt on a small floor frame and how to piece fabric together on a sewing machine. They will have samples of their own work as well as an assortment of friendship quilts on display.

For visitors who would like to bring in their own quilts, Connie Brown will provide evaluations, helping to identify patterns and time periods. She will also have an “eye spy” quilting activity for children. Helpful information about how to care for quilts and how to



“Transformation” by  
Valerie McGaughey of  
Asheville, NC.

BY APRIL NANCE

learn more about the process will be provided.

Allanstand Craft Shop will feature a variety of traditional and handmade quilts made by members of the Southern Highland Craft Guild. The Guild represents craftspeople living in the Appalachian mountains. To become a member of the organization, artists’ work has to pass a rigorous jury process, ensuring the work displayed is always the highest quality.

IF  
YOU  
GO

For more information  
about the Folk Art Center’s  
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[www.craftguild.org](http://www.craftguild.org).

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Mark Owen Davis

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**Details** – The restaurant fills up fast any night of the week so call for reservations. The Bistro is California casual in style and offers live music seven nights a week. The upstairs restaurant is smoke free. You can smoke in the Bistro after 9 p.m. Appetizers: \$8 to \$11; Entrées: \$11 to \$33.

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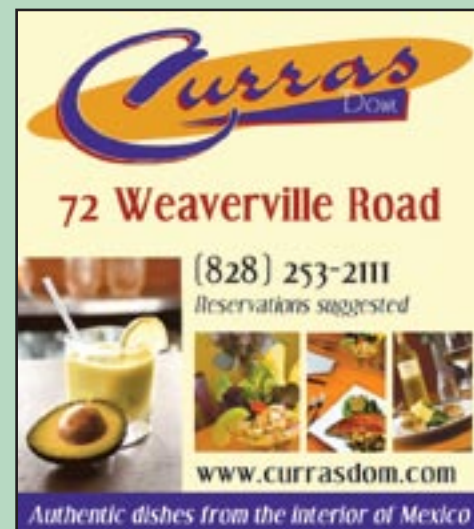
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# ant Guide



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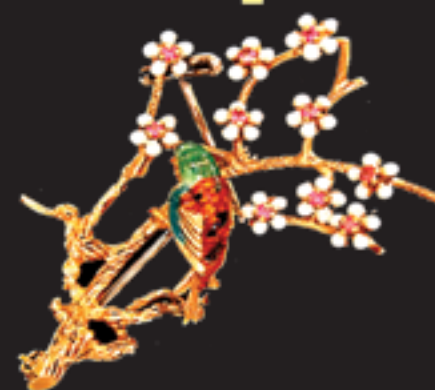
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## MARCH 2009

Friday, March 6, 7 p.m.

Coleman Barks presents *Winter Sky: New and Selected Poems 1968-2008*.

Sunday, March 8, 3 p.m.

Shelley Lieber, author of *4Ps to Publishing Success*, will conduct a seminar.

Friday, March 13, 7 p.m.

Kathryn Stockett will read from and sign her debut novel, *The Help*, a story of three extraordinary women who defy the barriers of small-town life.

Friday, March 20, 7 p.m.

Acclaimed author Achy Obejas presents her latest novel, *Ruins*, a moving portrait of one man's struggle between his love for his family and the ideals of his past.

Sunday, March 22, 3 p.m.

Dr. Bud Harris presents and signs his latest book, *Resurrecting the Unicorn: Masculinity in the 21st Century*.

Saturday, March 28, 7 p.m.

Julie Landsman will read from and sign her latest book, *Growing Up White: A Veteran Teacher Reflects on Racism*.

Sunday, March 29, 3 p.m.

Natalie Goldberg will read and discuss her most recent book, *Old Friend From Far Away: The Practice of Writing Memoir*. A wine and cheese reception will follow the event!  
\*This event is ticketed, please call first.

Tuesday, March 31, 7 p.m.

Author Julian Padowicz presents *Mother and Me*, a memoir of Padowicz and his mother's escape from wartime Poland to Soviet-occupied Ukraine and finally to Hungary.

Wednesday, April 1, 7 p.m.

*Zen Wrapped in Karma Dipped in Chocolate: A Trip Through Death, Sex, Divorce, and Spiritual Celebrity in Search of the True Dharma*. In one year Zen teacher Brad Warner lost his job, his mother died, and his marriage fell apart. The author mixes his real-life adventures with Buddhist philosophy, and provides a practical and rational way to deal with life.

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## BOOKS

# Women Writing About Stuff

## Two Frenchwomen and a Ballard

BY H. BYRON BALLARD (NO RELATION)

I like March. The whole “in like a lion, out like a lamb” thing appeals to my sense of drama. My birthday also happens to be in March and this is Women’s History Month.

I’ve picked three books to talk about this month because I want to devote some space to resources about and for the study of mostly-invisible women writers. My choices this month are two Frenchwomen whose writing was a college-era favorite and a plucky early American named Martha Ballard.

A cursory look at the canon of western literature (often presented as a “Best of...” list) will reveal familiar names but few of them are women. Why is that? Are women simply less adept at writing than their male counterparts? Before the scholarship of the 1970’s feminist era, we may have assumed that women from earlier epochs of history were simply too busy bearing and raising of children to have much time for recording their thoughts.

We were wrong, of course. Women have been writing since the beginning of the art (Endueduanna’s hymns to Inanna are the earliest written prayers) and women write about the same things men write about. These three women — Ballard, Nin and de Beauvoir — explore history, culture, sex and politics.

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich took an 18th century diary and recreated an almost lost world. “A Midwife’s Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812” chronicles the New England world of a remarkable healer following the birth of the young Republic. Our cursory study of American history tends to leap from 1776 to 1812, from war to war to war. How was America the young Republic different from America the Colony? Did the Founders all lose their accents and start to sound like Fess Parker?

Hardly. This book is a harsh, sad, exhilarating chronicle of life on the frontier in Maine and it ends in 1812. Almost 30 years are covered here — marriage and rape and childbirth and death. You know, woman’s stuff. Wars on a different front, wars of attrition and minutiae, softened

by the birth of a healthy child, the healing of an ill neighbor. “A Midwife’s Tale” is readily available in a paperback edition

and is well worth a read, even a study. You’ll never complain about your work schedule or the weather again. And you’ll wonder which generation was “the greatest” one.

The difference between porn and erotica may be the setting and the quality of the writing. I first read Anais Nin in the flush of college life and have returned to the spicy stories in “Delta of Venus” again and again. There’s a sweet site about her life and works at [www.anaisnin.com](http://www.anaisnin.com) and her books can be found in paperback, new and used. You might also look for “Little Birds, though “Delta” is better.

Paris and the French countryside are my favorite characters but the humans are also seductively interesting. The artists and models of Montmartre, the cafes, the studios. It is evocative as well as titillating. It’s not for the meek, however — if you are looking for innuendo and roses, you won’t find it here. Ah, well, maybe the roses.

Simone de Beauvoir is not Anais Nin. De Beauvoir was a deep and profound philosopher, writer, Existentialist. She was the long-time companion of Jean-Paul Sartre and her book “The Second Sex” is an

historical treatise on the treatment of women. She posits that the notion of the “eternal feminine” along with culturally-ingrained and systematic oppression render women as “the Other” and lead to a deep sense of alienation that obliterates personal identity and accomplishment. She wrote “The Second Sex” in 1949 but it is still a fresh, fascinating read. I suspect reading it in the original French is smoother than the English translations but the breadth of her thoughts and her life are as relevant as ever.

There are several excellent resources if you want more information on the little-known women writers of yesterday. Check out the Brown University Women Writers Project ([www.wwp.brown.edu](http://www.wwp.brown.edu)), a wide-ranging study of pre-Victorian women writers. You’ll be introduced to the words and lives of

some amazing writers who happen to be women and have been nearly lost to readers for decades, even centuries.

Emory University has a similar program. ([www.chaucer.library.emory.edu/wwrp](http://www.chaucer.library.emory.edu/wwrp)) This project has both edited and unedited writings by women from the seventeenth century through the nineteenth century.

Yes, Women’s History Month is a trumped up “celebration” of half the species and, no, we haven’t achieved gender parity, not by a long shot. But I encourage my women readers (and the men who stand beside them) to claim this month in the spirit of these three amazing women writers and see how women have changed — and not changed — in the centuries in which they wrote. Check out some little known women writers from periods of history to which you’re drawn and decide for yourself. And write. A journal, a blog, the history of the Ottoman Empire. Let your voice flow through your hands and out into the world.

**Byron Ballard is a bookseller at indie Accent on Books, a writer and an organic gardener. Her writings have appeared in local and national print and electronic media. She is currently at work on a primer called “Earth Works.”**

**Byron blogs for the Asheville Citizen-Times as the Village Witch ([www.citizen-times.com/villagewitch](http://www.citizen-times.com/villagewitch)) and lives in historic West End with her husband Joe and daughter Kate.**

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Includes work by many well-known writers, including Raymond Carver’s widow, Tess Gallagher. Visit [www.thesunmagazine.org](http://www.thesunmagazine.org) for more information.





# Poetry From a Palestinian Perspective

**A**claimed poetess and editor Deema K. Shehabi offers poetry that is both sublime and painfully replete with revelations concerning the struggle of Palestinian experience.

Shehabi was born in Kuwait in 1970 and came to the United States in 1988 to attend Tufts University, where she received a BA in history and international relations. In 1993, she received an MS in Journalism from Boston University.

First introduced to Shehabi when she sent a poem titled "Requiem for Arrival" to an anthology I was compiling and editing concerning women and war, I was immediately drawn to her poignant way of reaching deep into the reader's heart. Her words touch that place inside where we are afraid to visit, but are forced to go when faced with horrible atrocities: the place of painful awareness, progressive instability, and olden hope. She states that this poem "weaves some of my own experiences with displacement and communal grief. It's also a poem about multiple generations within a family, both living and dead."

As a Palestinian, Shehabi doesn't think most audiences understand the kind of dark, despairing thoughts her people have on a daily basis regarding survival. She notes that "Palestinians have an undying spirit of resistance, or as we say in Arabic the spirit of 'su'moud' — or rooted resistance. Regardless, we are a people faced with the threat of extinction. But the tragedy of the Palestinian experience also provides a vastness and universalism of thought that rises and slays the narrowness of racism, nationalism, and patriotism; it does this by constantly affirming human values."

Shehabi considers violent and fearful tendencies within humankind as the main source of war and says, "These tendencies must be stopped. War is the most rudimentary and childishly immature act there is. War must be made obsolete. We should read each other's poetry and literature so that we can understand each other better."

I asked Shehabi why poetry? What is it that makes you write poetry? Her answer was both poignant and breathtaking: "Poetry, to me, is the most essential utterance. It is the sculpting of breath. I write poetry to immortalize the dead, to give length and breadth to the living, and to nurture the spirit." And how very fortunate are we that she does.

**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.marijomooore.com](http://www.marijomooore.com)**

## Requiem For Arrival

If I tell you that I saw her that transparent morning,  
her small frame leaning against the balcony balustrade,  
her hands migrating toward a jasmine flower,  
her fingers enfolding it  
and bringing it slowly to her freckled lips,  
you must promise never to tell that this is only a dream,  
and in this dream my mother says:  
Do not leave now that you are here —  
Stay, so the world may become itself again.

And the world is not itself, here below this mountain  
where my child's eyes attach to the moon.

In the valley, he chases birds through the lifts of hills,  
and on certain nights, I see another moonlit refugee child  
netting birds over barbed-wire fences,  
but this is nothing but a fragment or an apparition.  
And because there are grain but no bullet shortages,  
we must never measure the distance between a  
bullet and the blighted moon.

If I tell you that I have been to the Holy City at dawn,  
the ancient light scalding the mouths of fallen houses,  
the seven-year-old boy surrendering his belongings  
under a soldier's heavy breath,  
the air blazing with prayers and burial lids,  
promise never again to say that ancient is everywhere  
or that your house once belonged to doubt or to belief.

And the air still blazes with the prescience of burial lids  
even as I watch my child standing here

on a hill at the edge of  
sloping stars, as we stood  
once on the edge of  
a fresh mound,  
where a woman once  
harvested jasmine with the length of her fingers, the words on  
her tombstone  
still freshly inked like dark rain: We belong to God, and to  
Him we will return.

If I tell you that I have often arrived to the airport  
of back rooms, of interrogators humming the melodies  
of ancient blood, of brown men whose mouths throb  
with the taste of soil from their land, of long-rooted women  
gazing at their unreachable orchards beyond the glass,  
would you still say nothing of capitulation,  
or how we will wash our scars?

My child's hair is washed in the red slumber of the sun,  
and his eyes hold the same curvature of drowse  
that my mother's once held. So that the world  
may become itself again,  
will you stay awhile with me  
and plant our grief in the embers of his hair,  
and say: For every one gone into the earth,  
one hundred roots are planted?

"Requiem for Arrival" © Deema K. Shehabi  
from "Birthed From Scorched Hearts: Women Respond to War,"  
Fulcrum Publishing 2008

poetry

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



a scattering of birds...

BY MARIJO MOORE

For more of Shehabi's poetry, visit [www.drunkenboat.com/db8/panlitpoetry/shehabi](http://www.drunkenboat.com/db8/panlitpoetry/shehabi)

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## NOTEWORTHY

### Love is a Special Way of Feeling

**REVIEWED BY NICK LAWRENCE**

Local musician, Angi West has put together a haunting album of innocence lost and the mysteries of growing up with *Love is a Special Way of Feeling*. This is only her sophomore album but holds the maturity of an artist who has been making records for many many years.

Her first album titled *Orange Thread in a Blue Sea* was a strong debut but *Love* is certainly the better of the two. However, saying better isn't the right word because it alludes that the other one isn't any good, which it is.

Although her voice is soft and gentle her lyrics can be sharp and cruel as in the song "Let Them Sleep." I'll refrain from comparing her to another artist

because that's like trying to describe the taste of an apple using another fruit. I'll simply suggest that you give this album a try. When you do, don't forget to listen to the hidden track. It's a fun song with Angi and friends seemingly making up the words as they take turns singing. It is from this hidden track that the title of the album gets its name. It also in turn, sums up the album, nicely holding all the songs together. *Love*, after all is a special way of feeling. Angi's music too gives us a special way of feeling. It's a very good feeling.

**Available at [www.angiwest.com](http://www.angiwest.com)**

## Ruins

**written by Achy Obejas**

It's 1994 in Cuba. The government is letting people leave the country on anything that floats bound for the U.S. One is almost hard pressed to find people who are content to live in modern Cuba, where food is almost a luxury and people eat marinated blankets just to stay alive and things like bikes are the mode of transportation. Especially, when the poor and loyal see so many others who have friends or relatives in the states who send them good shoes and clothes it's hard not to see why they've gone. Usnavy was one of the loyal ones.

At the beginning of the novel, Usnavy (named from the battle ships his mother saw outside her home) saw nothing negative about the Cuba he lived in, but as the novel progresses, you can actually see him digressing into a lifestyle of selling the precious multicolor glass from a Tiffany lamp he has that gets his family and friends the things they need and some of the things they want instead of working his job at the bodega, mostly at the goading of his out-



of-work wife, Lida. Many of Usnavy's friends are leaving Cuba for good, and even his 14-year old disillusioned daughter wants to be

on one of the boats leaving. Obejas takes on everything from religion to sexual identity, the ruin of Cuba and what might happen to those who leave on the boats in search of a new life. *Ruin* is a very realistic and heartfelt look at what life in Cuba once was and what it is now.

It's a great read and one highly recommended for your private booklist—sure to win many awards and probably will and should be taught in many university lit and social study classes.

**Reviewed by Beth Gossett**

## In Our Next Issue



Jaileen Shepard's latest book "Moon-Bow and Meek-El" will be reviewed in the April issue of *Rapid River* magazine. Advance praise has been exceptional — this could be Asheville's next literary hit! Visit [www.tictocproductions.com](http://www.tictocproductions.com) for more information on this new book.



# Rapid River's 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Poetry Contest Winners

BY MARY BETH RAY



WE HERE AT RAPID RIVER ALWAYS LIKE TO PROVIDE A FORUM FOR OUR LOCAL POETS. THIS YEAR'S CONTEST WINNERS ARE UNIQUE, DIVERSE AND TALENTED. AS ALWAYS WE THANK EACH AND EVERY PERSON WHO SUBMITTED WORK FOR JUDGING AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO CONTINUE WRITING. WE HOPE YOU ENJOY READING THE FOLLOWING POETS AS MUCH AS WE DID.

## WINNER - 1ST PLACE

### *The Funeral*

The funeral day dawned bright  
As if poised to welcome joy.  
Leaves skittered in playful wind  
Like a recess ball. Mourners  
Gathered in laughing groups  
And Helen was among them  
In the stories she had told  
With a chuckle in her throat.  
Tears fell as cleansing showers  
Before a remembered rainbow.

Grief was understood that day,  
Its dark night, its healing way

~ LENORE MCCOMAS COBERLY



## 4TH PLACE

### *Wailing Perch*

Lone wolf riding high upon the summit  
Many seasons you've seen come and go.  
You've always shied away from company,  
They don't appreciate your wail.

It touches our homosapien species,  
Breaking indifference to creatures wild.  
It seems to place a truthful spell of reality,  
We listen with windows open on cold nights.

Your wailing we hear in our humble valley,  
We've always known that it's your destiny,  
Coming down to touch us and impart wisdom,  
Things we cannot grasp as easily as scrabble.

Why do you wail—perhaps you've never  
Contemplated the reasons though it's natural.  
Is it your hobby or maybe your pleading way to  
Get strength via the lonesome dazzle of acoustic beauty.  
When your time comes will it be forever lost,  
Or is it in your heart to finally settle and mate?  
Even at that, even if your genetic code is replicated,  
Can another ever claim your wailing perch?

~ RICH MERRITT

## 2ND PLACE

### *Never Over*

The sadness, sorrow's evident  
Puffed pink eyes from hours spent  
Recalling life then had meant  
Something else—so different.  
But this will pass as that did then  
Feeling better once again

Though trouble with these memories  
They return as they sure please  
And drawn from in to out is sent  
Feelings trying selves to vent

It doesn't seem to matter though;  
Pain or pleasure it can throw,  
Triggered by just—heaven knows,  
The psyche through a heave-and-ho.

In a moment, no notice sent;  
Another memory's come and went.  
Whether haunt or romp in clover,  
The flagrant truth: it's never over

~ E.M. FREEDMAN

## 3RD PLACE

### *The Tree*

The tree stands strong and defiant  
Against the winter sky,  
Stark and bare,  
Alone in the cold

The sun returns,  
The earth warms,  
New life slowly unfolds.

Vitality pulses through every limb.

Bright foliage victoriously abounds,  
Verdant in abundance,  
Full with rejoice.

Pride heralds from every branch.

Red, orange and gold in every hue,  
Bursts upon the scene,  
In riotous splendor that dazzles  
The world stands in awe.

Leaves depart singly and in crowds,  
Without ceremony or adieu,  
In a moment of silent finality  
the last leaf falls.  
The cycle is complete.

The tree stands strong and defiant,  
Against the winter sky.

~ GEORGE SALAZAR

## HONORABLE MENTION

### *Girls Night Out*

Gorging on the bounteous  
Details of our days,  
Drinking collective energy  
And laughter's elixir.

Served with adornment,  
Feminine, ageless,  
Age-old.

Talents, trailing morsels  
Around the table

Like Hansel and Gretel's crumbs,  
Feeding body and soul.

~ TERE PAYNE

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**MOVIE SHOW TIMES**, visit  
[www.rapidrivermagazine.com](http://www.rapidrivermagazine.com)

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



## 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](mailto:reeltakes@hotmail.com)

## Confessions of a Shopaholic

**Short Take:** Hi, I'm Rebecca Bloomwood and I'm a Shopaholic

**REEL TAKE:** I didn't have high hopes for *Confessions of Shopaholic*, but for a little extra enthusiasm I took a friend with me who adores the series of books which inspired the movie. Unfortunately she ended up being a little disappointed and I slightly tickled.

Isla Fisher (*The Wedding Crashers*) stars as Rebecca Bloomwood and aspiring fashion editor with a slight shopping problem. In her bid for fashionista stardom and enough bank to pay off her credit card debt, a screwy series of circumstances (and one green scarf) lands her a job writing for a finance magazine and working for a rather hunky young Brit (Hugh Dancy, *King Arthur*). Ironically, while a collections man is tracking down with the ferocity of a hunter who hasn't eaten in a month, Rebecca becomes a financial columnist sensation for the common man.

Constantly poised between the brink of disaster and opportunity, Rebecca always lands on her feet (er, Jimmy Choos) in great comic fashion. Fisher is a bit of



**Isla Fisher is Rebecca Bloomwood, a sweet girl with a little shopping problem in *Confessions of a Shopaholic*.**

throwback to the comedians of the 30's and 40's (such as Carole Lombard and Claudette Colbert); she's even got a little Lucille Ball in her. Fisher is in good company with Joan Cusack and John Goodman playing her parents. Kristin Scott Thomas, fresh off her turn as a convicted murderer in the very serious

drama *I've Love You So Long*, clearly has good time as an uppity, French editor in chief of a leading fashion magazine.

While it's not a great movie, there are some great moments. Fisher makes Rebecca strangely likeable, especially for someone you suspect to be just a superficial clothes horse. How she perceives fashion and shopping and how it makes you feel, makes you want to run right out of the theatre and find that perfect little black dress; unfortunately it works that way on her shopaholics therapy group too.

While utterly predictable, *Confessions of a Shopaholic* is also bright and airy, a breath of fresh air during a dull, grey season.

**Rated PG for some mild language and thematic elements.**

**Review by Michelle Keenan**

## He's Just Not That Into You



**Short Take:** A story of several twenty and thirty-somethings in the world of dating and relationships as derived from concepts from the wildly popular 'self-help' book *He's Just Not that Into You* by *Sex and the City* writer Greg Behrendt.

**REEL TAKE:** As a member of the *Sex and the City* generation and faithful follower of the HBO series, I remember the episode when our sexy gals were all gathered at some Manhattan hot spot and consoling one of the characters and she recanted her most recent dating/relationship

debacle. Suddenly one of Carrie's (SJP) beaus just blurts out, "No, that's not it ... He's just not that into you." The bluntness and stark honesty of such a comment staggered and beguiled women world wide. The episode was so successful, the *Sex and the City* writer Greg Behrendt (who had actually said this very line to some of his female co-writers) was signed to a book deal and new self-help sensation was born.

This take on the concept features several loosely interconnected stories (a la *Love Actually*) of a several twenty and thirty-somethings. Some are single, some are married, some are not single, but not married. All fret in some or another about their relationships or lack thereof.

If we're honest, we can all relate to aspects of at least one if not more of the characters; Why didn't they call? Why won't he commit? Why? What? Who? Women especially have consoled one another with ridiculous excuses and fawning to make ourselves and our friends feel better. This is what *He's Just Not that Into You* plays to.

The film features an all star cast including Ben Affleck, Jennifer Aniston, Drew Barrymore, Jennifer Connelly, Bradley Cooper, Scarlett Johansson, Gennifer Goodwin and Justin Long. The filmmakers are banking that the cast and the concept will have a broad

[albeit mostly female] appeal and it does. Some caustically clever film critics have had a lot of fun at the expense of this movie, but in truth it's better than one expects and it's exactly what it's supposed to be.

Hollywood promotes it as a great date movie. Unless you are really secure with your date, I don't think that's the best ad-



vice in the world. It's probably much more fun for women to see with their girlfriends and sisters, and Hollywood shouldn't underestimate the power of the female audience. It's light and fluffy, but there is a little something for everyone (even men), especially if you've dated extensively in the last ten to twenty years.

**Rated PG-13 for sexual content and brief strong language.**

**Review by Michelle Keenan**

## Inkheart

**Short Take:** Well made fantasy feature suffers from a tacked-on ending.

**REEL TAKE:** Having appeared in last year's *Journey to the Center of the Earth-3D* and *The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor*, Brendan Fraser returns in *Inkheart*, a film based on the bestselling children's book by German author Cornelia Funke. The film was made two years ago but was not released due to post-production tinkering, but more about that later.

The story concerns Mo Folchart (Fraser), his daughter Meggie (Eliza Bennett), and their eccentric Aunt Elinor (Helen Mirren). Mo is a "silvertongue" who has the ability to bring characters from books to life in the real world. One character, Capricorn (Andy Serkis), from a book called *Inkheart*, is brought out while Mo's wife Resa (Sienna Guilroy) goes into the book which is then destroyed. Mo keeps searching for another copy so that he can rescue his wife and send Capricorn back but Capricorn has other ideas. Aiding them is another character from the book, *Dustfinger* (Paul Bettany). They track down the book's author (Jim Broadbent) in Italy to try and find another copy.

As you can see from the above description, the characters are numerous and the plot has complexities (the book is over 600 pages). Trying to fit all this into a less than two hour movie is quite an undertaking and one that director Iain Softley (*Skeleton Key*) only partially

**'Movies' continued on pg. 27**



**Congratulations to Kevin D. McKee of Flatrock, NC for winning Rapid River's Oscar Challenge!**



# FILM REVIEWS

'Movies' continued from pg. 26

succeeds at. The performances are solid, the Italian locations are beautiful, but the characters lack depth.



Brendan Fraser stars in the fanciful *Inkheart*.

Not having read the book, I enjoyed the movie but my daughter, who had read it, did not. The biggest problem for her was the ending. Like the recent adaptation of *The Golden Compass*, the ending was significantly changed in post-production. *Inkheart* is the first book in a trilogy and the film ends with all the loose ends neatly wrapped up so that there's nowhere else to go. Considering the box office returns, there won't be a sequel, but it's as if the filmmakers didn't want one. That's too bad because the series had great potential.

**Rated PG for fantasy action, scary moments and brief language.**

Review by Chip Kaufmann

## I've Loved You So Long 1/2 (Il y a longtemps que je t'aime)

**Short Take:** The powerfully restrained story of woman released from jail after a 15 year sentence for killing her own son.

**REEL TAKE:** Although *I've Loved You So Long* may have left the Fine Arts Theatre by the time this issue is hits the newsstands, it is still worth a review. Kristin Scott Thomas plays Juliette, a tight lipped, painfully restrained woman fresh out of prison. She goes to live with her younger sister's family and is to reenter the world.

Her sister Lea (Elsa Zylberstein) was a teenager when Juliette was sent to jail for killing her own son. Lea is now married, with two children and is a professor of literature. When Lea brings Juliette home it's awkward for all involved. Lea's husband doesn't trust Juliette around their children. Lea doesn't really know what to make of her sister, nor what really happened all those years ago. She does



however want so badly to help Juliette and give her a chance. Meanwhile Juliette seems to harbor a bit of resentment towards her sister, thinking that Lea forgot her after their parents told her that Juliette was dead to them.

The story is laden with subtle emotions. They dance between avoidance and confrontation. Juliette meets social workers, applies for jobs and checks in with the police every two weeks. She barely talks and holds so much inside the audience feels on the brink of an emotional explosion just watching her. While she's mysterious and not immediately likeable, one does realize there's much more to Juliette than a murder wrap.

Juliette was a doctor with a little boy and had just gone through a divorce. She's edgy after so many years of holding everything in and so many years away, but gradually she emerges from the hardened quiet shell, drawn out partially by Lea's adopted 8 year old daughter, a precocious and delightful little girl. I thought the tightness in my chest would burst by the time all is revealed.

Kristin Scott Thomas is remarkable as Juliette. Why she was not nominated for an Academy Award, I do not know. (Perhaps like Don Cheadle as a terrorist in *Traitor*, the idea of a woman who could take the life of her own child is



Janet Gaynor

## Janet Gaynor: the First Best Actress Oscar Winner

BY CHIP KAUFMANN

are emotionally battered women whose search for love and companionship is ultimately rewarded yet they are all different in subtle ways. Keep in mind that she accomplished this without using her voice just facial expressions and body language. She had been in movies for less than two years when she won.

Her success made her one of the most popular female stars of the late 1920s and 30s culminating in her appearance in the original version of *A Star Is Born* in 1937. She retired from films in 1938 but returned to the screen once in 1957



playing Pat Boone's mother in *Bernadine*. She also handed the Oscar to Diane Keaton for *Annie Hall* at the 50th Academy Awards in 1978. In 1982 she was critically injured in an automobile accident and never really recovered. She died in 1984.

For years she has been forgotten because virtually all of her films, with the exception of *A Star Is Born*, have been unavailable for viewing until now. 20th Century Fox has just released a mammoth DVD box set, *Murnau, Borzage* & Fox that features four of her best films (*Lucky Star* is the fourth). The title of the set refers to her directors and her studio.

All of these titles are available individually from Netflix allowing us to see once again what a truly remarkable performer she really was.

hard to market.) The supporting cast is equally good and every single character conveys a loveliness and loneliness of the human experience, a humanity that requires love and understanding.

*I've Loved You So Long* is in French with English subtitles.

**Rated PG-13 for thematic material and smoking.**

Review by Michelle Keenan

## The Pink Panther 1/2

**Short Take:** A remarkably bad sequel with little to recommend it.

**REEL TAKE:** Two stars is an appropriate rating for a movie with "2" in the title. If it weren't for a fondness for the original *Pink Panther* franchise with Peter Sellers, I'd give it less. Although I didn't go in expecting much, (as I wasn't impressed with Steve Martin's first go-round as Inspector Clouseau) that film was a comedy masterpiece compared to this one.

This movie is just plain BAD! So bad that it's not even unintentionally funny which at least would have been something to redeem it.



Steve Martin is fumbles instead of bumbles in the painfully unfunny *Pink Panther 2*.

Words like lame and tired immediately come to mind and I am surprised that Steve Martin or someone didn't see or sense that during filming.

I'll admit upfront that I am not Steve Martin's greatest fan especially when he's in full attention getting mode. Here however is one time when that Martin-esque element would have helped; instead, his Clouseau is a predictable bore. Peter Sellers and even Alan Arkin (who played the role in 1968) were never boring.

Guest star turns by Andy Garcia, Alfred Molina, Jeremy Irons, and John Cleese are unable to resuscitate the unfunny, DOA script, while the usually reliable Jean Reno and the talented Emily Mortimer can't do it either, as they are given little or nothing to do.

The plot is basically a reworking of the original *Pink Panther* (1963) storyline. A master thief known as 'The Tornado' ('The Phantom' in the original) steals the precious diamond along with other treasures such as the Shroud of Turin, which Clouseau and a dream team of detectives (lifted from 1976's *Murder by Death*) must recover.

The gags include the

'Movies' continued on pg. 28



# FILM REVIEWS

'Movies' continued from pg. 27

unintentional torching of an Italian restaurant (not once, but *twice*), impersonating the Pope, and destroying the home of the principal suspect (Irons). There was great potential here but it's clumsily handled and ultimately wasted which, judging from the box office, could spell the end for this comedic cash cow.

*Rated PG for suggestive humor, mild language, and action sequences.*

Review by Chip Kaufmann



## Taken

**Short Take: A solid but rather reactionary action thriller with a good performance from Liam Neeson.**

**REEL TAKE:** *Taken* is in the mold of the no frills, action driven star vehicles like

those of Steven Seagal or Jason Statham. This time around the star is Liam Neeson and the movie fits him like a glove. Liam isn't getting any younger, but he's still lean and mean, especially mean, as *Taken* amply demonstrates.

The plot is another variation on the father seeking to recover his missing daughter scenario best exemplified in movies like *Death Wish 2* and *Hardcore*. Instead of learning the ropes like Charles Bronson and George C. Scott did, Neeson is a retired member of an unnamed government agency and he's ready to go from the moment the kidnapping begins.

To fill in the blanks, Neeson is a divorced dad whose 17 year old daughter (Maggie Grace) is kidnapped in Paris by Albanians (presumably a marginalized enough ethnic group that won't protest how they are portrayed) who specialize in sex trafficking. Using his covert operational skills, he goes there and systematically kills or maims anyone who gets in his way including a French police inspector and his wife.

Everything about *Taken* is standard stuff that we've seen many times before but somehow it works. The direction by Pierre Morel is taut, the editing is crisp and non-intrusive, and the star performance is charismatic. The film is a glorified B movie that doesn't pretend to be anything else and there's nothing wrong with that.

The biggest problem is with the script which is more than a little reactionary. All the women characters are shallow and stupid and seem to deserve what they get while the villains (there is no one central bad guy) are evil and stupid and all get their just desserts. In other words, the per-

'Movies' continued on pg. 29

## Coraline



As I left the theatre after seeing this movie, I kept wondering about those buttons...

*Coraline* is an animated 3D film about a young girl (*Dakota Fanning*) who is neglected by her parents after they move into a creepy new house. Left on her own, Coraline explores and finds a door in a wall leading to a alternate reality where her parents are perfect and everything is wonderful... except for the fact that her "other mother" (*Teri Hatcher*) turns out to be an evil child-predator-lunatic who wants to either love her or eat her (or maybe both). Oh, and did I mention "other mother" and "other father" have black buttons for eyes?

*Coraline* is based on the best-selling children's book by Neil Gaimen

**Other Father (voiced by John Hodgman), Other Mother (voiced by Teri Hatcher) and Coraline (voiced by Dakota Fanning) share a delicious breakfast**

creative, but is also dark and twisted with some really horrific elements in it, like lips being literally sewn into a smiling position, stuffed dead dogs on the wall, a creepy doppelganger doll, and thespian neighbors wearing absurdly risqué outfits.

Although it's been called a children's cartoon horror movie, it's not a film to bring young children to. Some

## TEEN REVIEW by Sierra Bicking



**Sierra Bicking is an arte aficionado extraordinaire.**

adults may also find the film disturbing. I found the plot to be a bit tedious at times (a friend of mine actually fell asleep during the show) and riveting at others.

Over all, I would say that *Coraline* is a film to be admired, but not necessarily enjoyed. If you see it, let me know what you think is the meaning is of those button eyes: "round as buttons," "cute as buttons," or perhaps dilated as in a hallucinogenic dream?

*Rated PG for thematic elements, scary images, some language and suggestive humor.*

**Chip Kaufmann's Pick:**  
*"Darby O'Gill and the Little People"*

## Darby O'Gill and the Little People

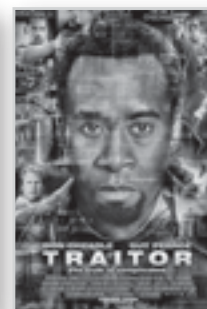
Long before former James Bond Pierce Brosnan showed off his singing "skills" in *Mamma Mia*, the original James Bond, Sean Connery, was warbling away in Walt Disney's *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*. It was 50 years ago and he acquits himself quite well. He was 29 years old at the time and had only a few films under his belt. James Bond and superstardom were still three years away.

I first saw this film at the Fox Theatre in Greenville, South Carolina when I was seven years old, and I have never forgotten certain parts of it (the scary parts involving the Banshee and the Death Coach). The story of Darby O'Gill and his encounters with the little people can still entertain even after half a century.

Walt Disney had brought the British cast to California in 1959 to shoot *Darby O'Gill* at his studio and at a residential ranch. The magical effects were created later after the live action had wrapped and a fantastical Hollywood Ireland that never was came into being.

Disney first issued the film on VHS twenty years ago but it quickly was withdrawn and they were very slow about bringing it out on DVD but at least it's now available. Perhaps a new 50th anniversary DVD/Blu-ray

## DVD Picks for March



edition is in the works. It's the least that the film deserves.

Even to a generation raised on *Star Wars* and the latest CGI extravaganzas, *Darby* still has the power to weave its magic spell because of its superb storytelling and the still impressive special effects. Let's face it, who doesn't want to believe in leprechauns and three wishes just for the asking especially during the month of March. Besides who can resist Sean Connery singing.

## Traitor

I double dipped for the February issue, selecting an Irish film for my Valentine pick, so I'm going with non-themed pick because the DVD that stayed with me the most this month deserves more attention than it has gotten. *Traitor*, an articulate and timely action/thriller starring Don Cheadle, received strong notices when it was released last year, but went by

**Michelle Keenan's Pick:**  
*"Traitor"*

largely un-noticed thanks to a distinct lack of marketing.

Cheadle plays Samir Horn, a quiet, faithful man born in Sudan to a Sudanese father and an American mother. After seeing his father die in a car bombing, Samir and his mother return to her native south side Chicago. Flash forward 30 years, Samir appears to be in collusion with Muslim terrorists and he's being watched by the feds. Whether he's aiding terrorists or the U.S. Government or is simply a holy man on his own path remains to be seen.

Unlike many topical movies of the day, *Traitor* puts a human face on martyrs, terrorists and G-men alike. This is powerful; while making no excuses for terrorists, this shows us more bonds that unite us than difference that divide us and in turn heightens the tragedy that has befallen our world.

Cheadle delivers a beautiful and reserved performance. Guy Pearce as a relentless, yet empathetic FBI agent on Samir's tail and Said Taghmaoui as Samir's muslim extremist friend are interesting bookends to Samir and the story. The supporting cast members including Neal McDonough and Jeff Daniels are equally good.

If you missed *Traitor* the first time, don't miss it now, on DVD.



# FILM REVIEWS

'Movies' continued from pg. 28

fect macho action flick that works in the dark and is forgotten in the light ...unless you happen to be a woman or an Albanian.

*Rated PG-13 for violence, sexual content, drug references and language.*

Review by Chip Kaufmann

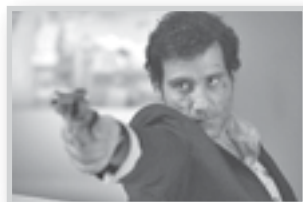
## The International 1/2

**Short Take:** An intelligent, intriguing thriller for our financial and political times, slightly undone by the convoluted web it weaves.

**REEL TAKE:** I went into a few movies this month with pretty low expectations only to be vaguely if not pleasantly surprised. Unfortunately, I think I was perhaps slightly too jazzed for smart thriller with a smart cast, including Clive [mahuminah, huminah] Owen.

*The International* is a smart and intriguing story, but it is slightly undone by the convoluted web it weaves and will not likely be a sweepingly popular movie with the masses.

In opening weeks, *The International* survived on the merit of its cast and its



Clive Owen shoots up the Guggenheim Museum in *The International*.

tightly edited trailers that made it look like an action/thriller a la Jason Bourne. The intricate story, which pits the largest bank in the world as the 'bad guy', (perfect when you think about it), and jets us from Berlin to Italy to NY and Istanbul, quickly becomes mired in details. Some eyes are sure to glaze over while they wait for the high octane action to begin.

Clive Owen is Louis Salinger, a former Scotland Yard investigator now with Interpol, has worked for years (to the point of near madness) to expose the world's largest bank for a litany of criminal activity, involving arms deals, 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries, national debts and murder (a lot of murder). At the movie's start, he teams up with a NY District Attorney (Naomi Watts) as they prepare to bring charges against the bank. Unfortunately, whenever anyone gets too close to the truth, people end up dead.

The carnage culminates in an outrageous shootout scene in the Guggenheim Museum in Manhattan. While a complete departure from the rest of the film, this scene held a certain allure for me. Fabulous museum aside, I've always thought the building induces nausea and vertigo and has long been ripe for just such a shoot. It also serves as the major action sequence in the movie.

This film has come under criticism for a supposedly ludicrous storyline. Like a couple of espionage franchises that 'experts' also said couldn't be true, perhaps it's a story that actually does come a little too close to truth and we – the masses – are not supposed to know the truth. For the things *The International* suggests, I certainly hope it's a complete fiction. Furthermore, if it is a fiction, that doesn't make it any less of a story for me.

*Rated R for some sequences of violence and language.*

Review by Michelle Keenan

## The Uninvited 1/2

**Short Take:** Nifty remake of a Korean horror film that delivers the goods.

**REEL TAKE:** The original *The Uninvited* is a classic 1944 film with Ray Milland, which has yet to make it to DVD. This film also has a ghost (more than one), but the resemblance ends there.

Anna Rydell (Emily Browning) returns home after a mental breakdown caused by the death of her critically ill mother. Her father (David Strathairn) is planning to marry the nurse (Elizabeth Banks) who took care of the mother, but Anna and her sister Alex (Arielle Kebble) think that she is responsible for their mother's death.



Emily Browning and Arielle Kebble in *The Uninvited*.

Ghostly appearances from the mother confirm this but all is not what it seems.

*The Uninvited* is another American remake of an Asian horror film, a practice which is becoming increasingly commonplace (*One Missed Call*, *Mirrors*). The original Korean film *A Tale Of Two Sisters* (2003) on which this film is based, borrows its central plot device from the 1972 American horror film *The Other* so I guess that turnabout is fair play.

For me "scary movies" fall into 2 ba-

sic categories: extroverted and introverted. The former, which is the norm and has been since Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), concentrate on a Grand Guignol approach by showing you everything in lurid detail. The latter, as exemplified by such recent offerings as *The Others* (2001) and *The Orphanage* (2007), rely on mood and atmosphere and leave more to the imagination although they deliver the goods in their own way.

*The Uninvited* incorporates both approaches. It has its share of disturbing imagery but is deliberate in its pace using the tools of the trade (sound, camerawork, lighting) to jolt the audience. Many critics and filmgoers deride these "false shocks" but for me they are the essence of what a scary movie should be for they stimulate rather than titillate. *The Uninvited* is not a great movie but it is a well crafted one that lingers in the mind after the fadeout.

*Rated PG-13 for disturbing images, thematic material, and sexual content.*

Review by Chip Kaufmann

The Asheville Art Museum Proudly Co-Sponsors the

## Jewish Film Festival

BY KIM ZDANOWICZ

### Saturday, March 21

6:00 p.m. reception at Blue Spiral 1  
7:30 p.m. screening of *Down Home*

### Sunday, March 22

1:00 p.m. *Down Home*  
7:00 p.m. *Jellyfish*

### Monday, March 23

1:00 p.m. *The Old Stores*  
7:00 p.m. *A Secret*

### Tuesday, March 24

1:00 p.m. *A Secret*  
7:00 p.m. *Adio Kerida*

### Wednesday, March 25

1:00 p.m. *Adio Kerida*  
7:00 p.m. *A Secret*

### Thursday, March 26

1:00 p.m. *Jellyfish*  
7:00 p.m. *The Old Stores*

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# THOREAU'S GARDEN

## Please Don't Eat the Clog-Weeds



illustration by  
Peter Loewer

Botanical names are always fascinating since they meld the words of the past with those of the present in combinations that leave neologists in constant delight and most etymologists happy as clams. But when it comes to common names even the hardest wordsmiths are sometimes at a loss.

Take the English names for the great burdock, a plant originally from Europe and now naturalized over most of America. Geoffrey Grigson in his book *The Englishman's Flora* (which in its next edition will probably be forced to change to *The English-person's Flora*) lists fifty-two. A few of the choicer appellations are: bachelor's buttons; butter-dock (because the large leaves were used to wrap butter); clog-weed (self explanatory); snake's rhubarb (a sly dig at the people who eat the young shoots either cooked or raw); Cuckholdy-burr-busses (I'll leave that one alone); and tuzzy-muzzy (this refers

to the original usage of being disheveled and ragged).

Now imagine what happens over the years as the spirit of education melds with the god of the mall, and people not only talk less but read less and the books all succumb to the ravages of acidic paper: In another hundred years who will know what they mean?

The botanical names are usually easier since they often rely on combining well-documented Greek or Latin words. (But even there problems of interpretation exist: Nobody knows the origin of *Clemone* other than Theophrastus, who used it in 250 B.C.; or *Lonas*, the genus of a charming little yellow annual with a name beyond anyone's ken.) In the case of the great burdock, *Arctium* is from the Greek word *arktos*, for bear, referring to the many coarse bristles and *lappa* is Latin for bur.

The common name daisy as applied first to the English daisy (*Bellis perennis*), is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *daeges-eage* indicating "eye of day," because the flower-head closes at night but opens again during broad daylight. The generic *Bellis* could be linked with the Latin *bellum*, "war," because for centuries this perky little plant has figured in herbals as a cure for wounds and various ailments. But it could equally well come from the Latin *bella*, "pretty." The specific *perennis* tells of the plant's perennial habit.

Often considered a weed by the people who love pure and perfect lawns, the plant breeders have been at work and transformed this young beauty into a painted charmer and there are now pom-poms, doubles and even flowers with white petals stained with red or crimson. But in this case I remain a purist and prefer the original wildflowers as fine additions to the wild garden and keep the cultivars for the edge of a formal border.

With the persistence of folk-names, daisy was soon used for every like member of this large family of flowers. Take the ubiquitous ox-eye or moon daisy (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*), a common weed in the view of farmers and a lovely flower for happy people to gather by the armful when walking in meadows. This is another European import and here the common names are not lost in the mists of time but merely refer to the large yellow disk. But its use in the creation of a very popular garden annual is.

**Quick, what's the derivation of Shasta daisy?**

Luther Burbank (1849-1926), America's famous horticulturist and plant breeder wished to produce a new garden



Peter examines the blossoms of early-blooming Lenten roses.

BY PETER LOEWER

daisy. He began by crossing the European moon chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum maximum*) from the Pyrenees Mountains with the ox-eye daisy. The results were better than expected but Burbank still thought the flowers could be larger so he took the new plant and

crossed it with the Japanese daisy (*C. nipponicum*) and the first Shasta daisy was born, named after Shasta, California.

Like the ox-eye daisy, dandelions have a tendency to appear where they are not wanted. Then whether by hand or chemical, they are immediately removed from lawn or flower bed. If they were rare, the handsome golden flower-heads and jagged leaves would be sought after by most gardeners. James Russell Lowell wrote in his poem "To the Dandelion":

"How like a prodigal doth nature seem  
When thou, for all thy gold,  
so common art!"

The common denomination dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) is ascribed to the French *dent de lion*, "lion's tooth," and notwithstanding that some people believe this refers to the tooth-like appearance of the flower-head or the tap root, it almost certainly alludes to the backward pointing fine-edged lobes of the somewhat bitter-tasting leaf. The French term is itself drawn from the Latin *dens* and *leo* intimating the dentate (toothed) foliage. And if you wish to grow them in the garden, choose one of the cultivars that produces larger dark green leaves both for salads and for boiled greens or blanch the leaves for an added treat.

Another and smaller feline is remembered in the plant that we call catnip (*Nepeta Cataria*) or in England, catmint. Cats adore this plant. Indeed our own garden cats have always been keen on the scent and will deliberately bruise or nip the stems to release the perfume. Certainly an ancient belief holds that cats crave this vegetation and whenever they smell or sample it, immediately turn very affectionate, sportive, and "full of fight." The plants were first discovered at Nepet in Tuscany whence *Nepeta* is derived.

So what's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. But would it? I really don't know. Yet when the name of a flower is a part of history, somehow the flower deserves more than just a passing glance.

As Edward Fitzgerald in *Omar Khayyám* wrote:

"I sometimes think  
that never blows so red  
The Rose as where some  
buried Caesar bled —"

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## ARTFUL LIVING

## MANTRA

Swami Muktananda was one of India's most famous 20th Century meditation teachers, and in the above quote, Muktananda is talking about the meditation device of mantra. He goes on to say, in his book *Meditation*, that, "according to the meditation scriptures, when one wants to still the mind, which revels in thoughts, one takes the help of one thought, the mantra... Mantra is a cosmic word or sound vibration. It is the vibration of the Self, and, when we immerse ourselves in it, it leads us to the place of the Self."

The human brain is a thought-making machine and, for modern humans, thinking is an addiction, the principle device by which the ego reconstructs itself moment-to-moment, holding sway on our psychological experience. It gives us the gift of abstract mental forming capacity, but brings the curse of personal identity experienced in separateness in form and its accompanying insecurity.

It is the purpose of meditation, in both the multiplicity of Indian traditions (Vedic, Tantric, Yogic, et al. that become linked in Western understanding into Hinduism), and in the Buddhist traditions, to break that hold and to open the practitioner to a deeper realization of the truth of who they are beyond thinking and egoic separateness.

Both traditions refer to ego as the small self, as distinguished from essential, true or original Self, that which is in union with life. The realm of small egoic self is viewed as conditioned into us by society and creates a schism between a person and the true possibilities for life, and is considered to be the source of human emotional suffering (note the use of small-case vs. upper-case "s" - the English language has inherent awkwardness in expressing these very non-Western concepts).

Hinduism names Brahman as the universal and divine Consciousness that is the source of all that is. Its practice, in which meditation plays a central role, seeks to awaken within the practitioner the realization of their true Self as Atman, the individuated aspect of Brahman Consciousness.

Buddhism, which emerged as a kind of reformation of the Hindu traditions and is much more specifically a psychology or philosophy for understanding the true nature of life, shares the belief in consciousness as the source of all that is without anthropomorphically deifying it. It seeks through meditation to awaken the realization of our Original Nature as the unconditioned consciousness that precedes the conditioned and limited egoic form of the personal self. In either

BY BILL WALZ

tradition, the first challenge is to break the addictive hold of conditioned thought patterns, and here, mantra plays a very important role. Even meditation as a purely secular psychological practice for alleviation of stress and anxiety can be enhanced through the use of mantra.

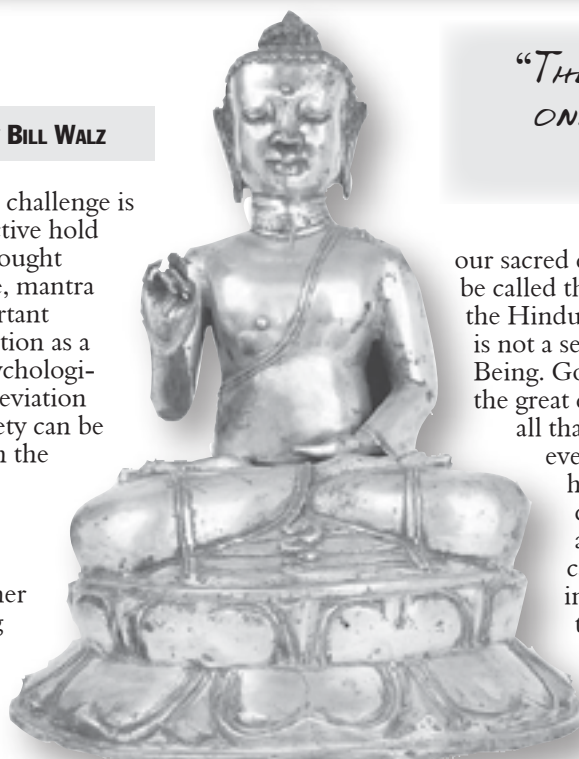
At its most basic level, mantra is an object of meditation, in other words, something for the awareness capacity of the mind to focus upon. The word meditation means concentration, and without an object of concentration, there is no meditation.

The object of meditation ultimately in both the Hindu and Buddhist traditions is the true Self, only method and the religious/psychological interpretation of true Self differs. In developing the capacity to comprehend, let alone meditate upon, the true Self, it is first necessary to train the mind's capacity for stillness with what is referred to as "single-pointed awareness", for ego exists within a perpetual motion thought stream and dissolves in sustained stillness. Mantra facilitates this mental stillness. This is the "thorn" with which to withdraw the thorniness of mental chatter.

In the Buddhist tradition, most typically (with some exceptions) the breath is the object, the touchstone, for meditation. Mantra or chanting can be additional important objects. In the Hindu traditions, breath also is a primary object of meditation, but with mantra playing a supreme role. Breath and mantra support each other, only the emphasis on which is supporting which is at issue.

Within the Buddhist tradition, it might be accurate to say the breath, in many cases, is the mantra. Breath is not only the sensation of this life-giving phenomenon, for without breath, there is no life, but it is the sound of that which gives life. To be one with the breath is to be one with life.

As Muktananda said, "Mantra is a cosmic word or sound vibration of the Self, the true speech of the Self, and, when we immerse ourselves in it, it leads us to the place of the Self." The Self is



"THE BEST WAY TO TAKE A THORN OUT OF ONE'S FOOT IS WITH ANOTHER THORN."

~ SWAMI MUKTANANDA

our sacred center. It might be called the Soul. Within the Hindu traditions, God is not a separate Supreme Being. God (Brahman) is the great consciousness of all that is, and it infuses everything. Humans have a very special capacity of self-awareness that can be awakened into realization of the consciousness of God as the source and truth of who they are. This individualized consciousness is

Atman, or Self, that links to Brahman. In example, Muktananda teaches a mantra, "So'ham", meaning, "I am That", "That" meaning Divine Consciousness. I am one with Divine Consciousness. No separation.

To use mantra is to call to and awaken this consciousness. To use mantra is to first corral the discursive, distracted, thinking egoic mind, but then, very importantly to awaken the Self, our divine Nature. Without the theological overlay of Hinduism, Buddhism believes the same, but in a more specifically psychological manner. In Buddhist meditation we are awakening to our Original Nature or Buddha (Awakened) Nature, that which is free of psychological programming, and at one with the moment and life.

Whether the mantra is "So'ham, or "OM" - the sound of all sounds, or "Ram" - a name for God in the Hindu pantheon, or the English word "One" - not the number, but the concept of unity, or the sound and sensation of life giving breath, to use mantra is to quiet the egoic mind, and to remind and awaken the truth of our union with all life, the truth of who we are, our true Self. It awakens us from the illusion of the small separate egoic self as the limits of who we are into interconnectedness with all of life, the infinite Self. This is the insight that leads not only to spiritual realization, but, very importantly, to psychological liberation from the crazy insecure world of the ego.

Try it. Sit with dignity and relaxed alertness, breathe, be aware of your breathing, and with the exhale, silently say "One", and be One - with the breath,

with the moment, with life, and most importantly, with your completely sane and possibly divine Self within, beneath the chatter.



**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. He will hold an extended meditation and discussion Satsang at the Meeting House on Saturday, March 28, 1-5 p.m. Both, by donation.**

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# JOE'S BREW NOTES

## Celebrating Saint Patrick's Day – Did Someone Say Beer?

**S**aint Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland. His religious feast day, March 17, the day of his death, has been observed by the Irish people as a religious holiday for hundreds of years by attending church in the morning and celebrating (drink, dance, food) in the afternoons.

Today people around the world join with the Irish to commemorate Saint Patrick's Day, but in a more secular way with parades, Irish food, whisky, and lots and lots of beer.

Born in Roman Britain in the 4th century, Saint Patrick was captured by Irish raiders and sold into slavery. He escaped, became a priest, and returned to Ireland to minister to the Christians already there and convert the pagan Irish to Christianity. Saint Patrick successfully brought together two very different spiritual beliefs and forged them into one tradition. He is revered by the Irish and is one of Christianity's most widely known figures.

The first Saint Patrick's Day parade took place on March 17, 1762 when Irish soldiers, who served in the English military, marched through New York City complete with bagpipes and drums. Irish immigrants continued the parades and, over time, began to show their Irish pride by using the color green for all things Irish. With the growth in popularity of the celebratory aspect of Saint Patrick's Day, it has become a world-wide event.

### Saint Patrick: Myths and Legends

Saint Patrick's success in converting the Irish to Christianity was based on his ability to incorporate his teachings into the Irish multi-god, nature-based, pagan beliefs.

The Shamrock is a green three-leaf plant sacred because it signified the rebirth of spring. Saint Patrick used it to explain the Trinity (God the father, son, spirit) and encouraged his followers to wear it as a sign of their belief; the wearing of the green.

A Leprechan is a type of male Irish fairy feared because he hid from sight and played tricks, but revered for his wealth. Saint Patrick adopted the leprechaun as a symbol of God who remains hidden from view, is to be feared, and also has great riches for those who can find Him.

Saint Patrick was said to have banished the snakes from Ireland. There were no snakes in Ireland. This story was thought to be a metaphor for converting the Irish to Christianity.

BY JOE ZINICH

Drinking beer, green or not, is definitely part of the tradition of this holiday. More beer is consumed in Ireland on St. Patrick's Day than any other day of the year. This could be because of St. Patrick's Pagan-based practice of honoring Brigid (Celtic goddess of fire) with "poteen" an Irish moonshine (now illegal).

For those who would like to help the Irish celebrate this holiday, a visit to an Irish pub could be in order and Asheville has three.



Welcome to Jack of the Wood.

**Jack of the Wood:** The festivities start when the doors open at 1 p.m. with a special menu of Irish food which includes traditional corn beef and cabbage. The Irish music jam will continue until 8 p.m. when local Celtic band The Red Wellies take over (bring your dancing shoes). To add to the spirit, party favors of hats, beads, shamrocks are provided. They'll also be serving those tasty Green Man Ales – including a special Irish stout (dry with a roasted malt flavor, silky smooth) that will make you forget Guinness. Look for drink specials and special drinks (Black and Tan and Black Velvet – Guinness and Champagne).

**Hannah Flanagan's:** there will be a special Irish food menu of corn beef and cabbage, Irish stew, and more. As of this writing, musical entertainment had not been chosen but in past years they've had bagpipes. Look for a great selection of Irish whiskey and beers including Guinness and Murphy's stout and a terrific selection of local beers from Highland and Pisgah. They are planning drink specials and special drinks (for example a Car Bomb – ½ Guinness and ½ mixtures of Irish whiskey and Baileys).

### Tolliver's Crossing:

this new pub opened about a year ago in West Asheville by Scotch-Irishman Chuck Tolliver Brown. Tolliver's will open at 8 a.m. for a special Irish breakfast (be sure you



Chuck Brown owner of Tolliver's Crossing.

arrive hungry) served until 11 p.m. The menu is also filled with traditional Irish food and special pub-grub. Live Celtic music is scheduled but will be interrupted occasionally for a trivia contest with prizes. Party favors will be provided and the back deck

and adjacent parking lot will be available for socializing.

Tolliver's has an excellent selection of Irish beer including Guinness, Harp, Smithwick's (pronounced Smith-icks) and Murphy's as well as a selection of local brews. Before you leave you must try the Young's Double Chocolate Stout, an



Hannah Flanagan's Irish Pub.

excellent English dry stout with a distinctive chocolate aroma and flavor; absolutely scrumptious.

If a party at one of the pubs is not what you had in mind, both the Wedge and Pisgah Breweries will have special celebrations in their tasting rooms. The Wedge will provide corn beef and cabbage

free while it lasts and beer specials. Pisgah will feature Celtic music and beer specials.

Wherever you choose to enjoy Saint Patrick's Day remember the Irish have a passion for their language, their history, and their traditions. Put on some green and enjoy being Irish for a day. Salinte!

### Jack of the Wood

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



# PERFORMANCE

## Latino and Afro-Caribbean Influenced Luna Negra Dance Theater

**L**una Negra Dance Theater performs electrifying and inspiring contemporary dance with Latino and Afro-Caribbean flavor and rhythms.

Since it was founded in 1999, the company has served as a springboard for Latino contemporary choreographers to give expression to their stories and bring new life to the cultures of their communities. Steering away from stereotypes and folkloric representations, Luna Negra presents modern Latino expressions with energy, power and passion, reflecting via dance the immense cultural shift that is shaping America in the 21st century.

Luna Negra Dance Theater's distinctive style blends the discipline of ballet with the dynamic movements of contemporary dance, infused with the explosive energy of Latin and Afro-Caribbean dance forms.

For its March 20-21 performances, Luna Negra Dance Theater presents three works. *There is a Time*, first performed in 1956 at the Juilliard School of Music, is choreographed by José Limón. The accompanying music was originally commissioned by the Juilliard Music Foundation and its Festival of American Music for the José Limón Dance Company. The entire work is, both choreographically and musically, a theme with variations.

The second piece, *Sugar in the Raw*, is an exploration of the complexities and subtleties of identities and a portrait of the beautiful imperfections of humanity, by Luna Negra Rehearsal Director and choreographer Michelle Manzanales. And the final piece, *CUGAT!*, is choreographer Eduardo Vilario's whimsical tribute to Xavier Cugat, the King of Mambo and one of the greatest Latin musicians of all time.

In 1999, dancer, choreographer and educator Eduardo Vilario founded Luna Negra Dance Theater. The vision for the company has its seeds in Vilario's personal history and experiences. Born in Havana, Cuba, he immigrated to New York City and grew up in the Bronx. After extensive dance training, Vilario received a BFA in 1988 and a Master's degree in 1999. He was a principal dancer with the nationally

BY JOHN ELLIS

acclaimed Ballet Hispanico of New York where he taught and performed for nine years. His passion for his heritage and dance led him to establish Luna Negra Dance Theater.

Vilario's work with Luna Negra is devoted to capturing the spiritual, sensual and historical essence of Latino culture. He creates work that explores Latino



Photo by  
Kristie Kahns

culture's racial and ethnic diversity through contemporary dance, as well as through the music of Latin and Caribbean countries, in fresh ways that speak to modern audiences.

Sid Smith of the *Chicago Tribune* says, "Artistic director Eduardo Vilario and his beguiling dancers are an established, respected and treasured troupe on our arts landscape." In just ten years, Vilario has established Luna Negra Dance Theater as a significant and vital component, and export, of Chicago's arts and cultural community.

Luna Negra Dance Theater performs each year in Chicago at its home venue, the Harris Theater for Music and Dance, and tours extensively nationally and internationally. Past seasons include regular performances at Ravinia Festival, Symphony Center, The Dance Center of Columbia College, Dance Chicago, the Ruth Page Dance Series, and tours of Panama and Mexico. In addition to performing, Luna Negra conducts extensive education and outreach programs, serving over 10,000 students in the Chicago area.

### Pre-Performance Discussions

To enhance patrons' understanding and enjoyment of Luna Negra Dance

Theatre's Asheville performances, pre-show discussions led by Amy Dowling, Instructor of Dance in the Department of Stage and Screen at Western Carolina University, are presented in The Forum at Pack Place at 7 p.m. prior to each performance. Free for ticket holders.

In addition to its evening performances, Luna Negra Dance Theater will give a presentation for students and teachers as part of the Diana Wortham

Theatre Young Audience Series, 10 a.m. on Friday, March 20.

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The Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack Place presents Luna Negra Dance Theater at 8 p.m. March 20-21.

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# MUSIC

## Town Mountain & Woody Wood Perform

Imagine a band that occupies the common ground between traditional bluegrass, outlaw country, and pure old time mountain music. A group that harnesses the frantic energy of the modern punk string band, yet still remains respectfully rooted in the tradition of Bill Monroe. Imagine a band with one foot proudly planted in the path of traditional bluegrass, and one foot stepping out into the unknown forefront of American string music.

Meet Town Mountain, the exciting new band born out of the all night jam sessions and fertile picking scene of Western North Carolina. Great original, tight vocal harmonies, a charismatic stage presence, and instrumental expertise place this group in the upper tier of contemporary acoustic bands.

It's hard to pinpoint exactly what it is that gives Town Mountain its unique, contagious energy. It could be the visual performance that accompanies their great music. The guys bob and weave around each other, to and from the microphones, in order to facilitate their surprisingly sophisticated vocal and instrumental arrangements. The result is a natural choreography, an exciting visual performance that makes the band almost as fun



Town Mountain

BY ERIN SCHOLZE

to watch as it is to listen to.

Almost. Town Mountain is monumentally fun to listen to. This is the hard-driving, no nonsense, slammin' bluegrass that makes you whoop and holler and stomp your feet. Yet it's mixed with just enough slow country crooning to keep it balanced. Just enough outlaw swagger to give it a honkytonk edge. Just enough contemporary elements to make it equally appealing to non-bluegrass fans. And it's mostly original music. Robert Greer, Jesse Langlais, and Phil Barker have all proven themselves to be prominent American songwriters worth keeping an eye on.

Go see this band. Buy their music. Come out and enjoy a group that manages to bring a unique, irresistibly infectious energy that rivals that of any modern rock and roll band... and don't be afraid to buy the guys a shot. Visit [www.townmountain.net](http://www.townmountain.net) for more information.

IF  
YOU  
GO

Town Mountain with  
Woody Wood, Friday, March  
28 at the Grey Eagle, 185  
Clingman Ave. in Asheville.

9 p.m. all ages show, \$8  
advance/\$10 day of. Call (828)  
232-5800, or visit [www.thegreyeagle.com](http://www.thegreyeagle.com).

## Local Songstress to Play Baha'i Center

Mary Davis, a longtime member of the Asheville music scene, will be performing at The Baha'i Center on Ravenscroft Dr. in downtown Asheville, on Saturday, March 28 at 7:30 p.m.

The show will coincide with the release of her fifth CD, *Life Moves*. Joining Davis on stage will be members of the group Anam Cara; Ed Entmacher, John Paul McNeil, Meredith Holladay, and Linda Kendell-Fields. Also accompanying her for this event will be percussionist River Guerguerian, singer/songwriter Chris Rosser, and Davis' daughter Emma Burton.

Asheville music mainstay Christine Kane has said of Davis "there's a clarity and purity in both her voice and music that is quite simply mesmerizing. She is all at once a singer, writer, musician, and healer."

BY JAMES CASSARA

Davis is a familiar face and voice in the Asheville singer/songwriter circle, having performed in the area for the last 22 years. Her albums can be found at Karmasonics in downtown Asheville, and at Barnes and Noble on Tunnel Road.

As Davis herself says, "Come feed your senses, hearts, minds, and souls with my friends and me at the Baha'i Center. I look forward to your being there."

IF  
YOU  
GO

Mary Davis and Friends at  
the Baha'i Center in down-  
town Asheville. Saturday,  
March 28, at 7:30 p.m. Admis-  
sion: \$12 adults, \$10 seniors.

For more information call  
Mary Davis at (828) 777-6268.

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# WHAT TO DO GUIDE™

**Sunday, March 1**

## Opera Arias Concert

There will be a concert of operatic arias and English Art Songs at 3:00 p.m. at St. Matthias Church by singers with the Asheville Lyric Opera. The singers include: Amanda Horton, soprano; Timothy Wilds, baritone; and Simone Vigilante, soprano. They will be accompanied by Karen Sams on the piano.

Donations will be taken for the ensemble and for the restoration of the historic church. The church is located in Asheville just off South Charlotte Street at Max Street on the hill across from the Asheville Public Works Building (1 Dundee St.).

**Thursday, March 5**

## Haywood Community Band Rehearsals

The Haywood Community Band will resume rehearsals on Thursdays at 7 p.m. at Grace Episcopal Church, 394 N. Haywood Street in Waynesville. All interested concert band musicians are welcome to attend.

### 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.

Monthly concerts start on the third Sunday of May and end with a concert on the third Sunday of October. All concerts are FREE and take place at 6:30 p.m. at the Maggie Valley Town Pavilion. The band will participate in Memorial Day observances, July 4th Celebrations, and Veterans Day observances.

For information, call John Barrett at (828) 452-5553, or Bob Hill at (828) 452-7530.



## Tuesday, March 10 Pastel Demonstration

At this month's meeting of the Blue Ridge Watermedia Society, Peggy Duncan Nelson, professional artist for more than 30 years, and member of the Appalachian Pastel Society, will hold a pastel demonstration using an acrylic under painting technique.

Join us for this informative demonstration and refreshments. At the First Baptist Church, 100 South Main Street, Waynesville, at 6:45 p.m. For membership information, contact Sandi Riggs at (828) 627-9666.

**Tuesday, March 10**

## Recital/Lunch Series

Asheville Lyric Opera Guild Second Tuesday Recital/Lunch Series featuring Timothy Wilds, baritone and Karen Sams, piano. Recital 12:00-12:30, Asheville First Baptist Church (Crouch Chapel). Lunch 12:30-1:00, Asheville First Baptist Church (Fellowship Hall). Concert is free, lunch is \$9. Call Bob Neil at (828) 669-1991 for reservations.

**Sunday, March 15**

## Opening Reception

"Road to Freedom: Portraits of People with Disabilities." Nationally traveling photo exhibit on loan from Family Diversity Project. UNC Asheville's Karpen Hall Lobby, 3 to 5 p.m., free. Call (828) 232-5024 for more information.

**Wednesday, March 18 & Thursday, March 19**

## When the Levees Broke

Screening at 7 p.m. UNC Asheville's Humanities Lecture

## Planet Earth, Inc.

**Saturday, March 14**

The Asheville Puppetry Alliance is pleased to announce the third performance in its 2008-9 Young Audience Series. Planet Earth, Inc. is a fun and fact-filled show combining hand puppets, magic tricks, and original songs. It addresses environmental concerns such as recycling, water waste, air pollution, and rainforest preservation.

Atlanta-based puppeteer, Lee Bryan or "That Puppet Guy" is a nationally recognized touring artist who combines live vocal characterizations and songs with innovative puppet designs for wholesome family entertainment.

The performance is at the Diana Wortham Theatre, at 11:00 a.m. For reservations call (828) 257-4530 or go to www.dwtheatre.com. Tickets are \$8 for adults, \$5 for students and seniors. More information available at www.ashevillepuppetry.org.

Hall, free. Call (828) 251-6991 for more information.

**Saturday, March 21**

## Piano Discoveries

Meeting of the Asheville Area Piano Forum with Fred Flaxman presenting a live version of his radio show *Compact Discoveries*. Free and open to the public, 9:30 a.m. - 12 noon, at Asheville Music and Art, 697-C Haywood Rd. (828) 669-4869 for details.

**Tuesday, March 24**

## Family Night at Asheville Community Theatre

From 6:30-7:30 p.m. A great opportunity to learn about youth programming at Asheville Community Theatre. The program will include information on camps and classes, performances by current and former students, and a tour of the theatre. Those attending will receive a 10% off coupon good for tuition for the 2009 Break Into Showbiz! Spring Break Camp.

Visit [www.ashevilletheatre.org](http://www.ashevilletheatre.org) for a full schedule of upcoming classes and events. Asheville Community Theatre is currently taking registrations for Spring Break camp and all Summer camps. To register, or for more information, please contact Jenny Bunn at (828) 254-2939 x21.

**Sunday, March 29**

## "Live to Tell" Benefit Concert

This concert will benefit the Donin family who were recently the victims of a horrific and senseless landslide. Come and learn about the dire need for WNC to pass a Safe Slope Law. Let's turn rocks into ROCK 'n ROLL! All Star Lineup: Chuck Brodsky, Mary Gordon Hall, Chris Rosser, Dana & Sue Robinson & a few surprises! Raffles, guest speakers, beer and wine, yummy food.

White Horse in Black Mountain, 4 p.m. Tickets: \$12 in advance, \$15 at door, kids 10 and under 5 in advance, \$6 at the door. For more info, please visit [www.projectsafeslopes.org](http://www.projectsafeslopes.org) or e-mail [nbondrox@yahoo.com](mailto:nbondrox@yahoo.com).

**Wednesday, April 1**

## The Great Secret: Rediscovering Our Sacred Roots

Internationally acclaimed scholar Peter Kingsley invites us back to our Source – the sacred wisdom of Pythagoras, Empedocles, and others who consciously and deliberately created the world we live in. Their remarkable teachings and practices still have the power to awaken the wisdom buried in our culture and in our souls. Jubilee Community, 46 Wall Street, Asheville, 7-9 p.m. Love offering. For more information visit [www.peterkingsley.org](http://www.peterkingsley.org), email [contact@peterkingsley.org](mailto:contact@peterkingsley.org), or call (828) 505-4888.

**Saturday, April 18**

## Spring Arts and Crafts Festival

Fifth annual "Trillium-a Festival of Follies and Flings" from 8:30 a.m. to 3 pm-rain or shine at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Black Mountain, 500 Montreat Rd. Free admission. (828) 669-8050, [admin@uusv.org](mailto:admin@uusv.org), [www.uusv.org](http://www.uusv.org)

## Call for Artists

The Downtown Hickory Art Crawl Series is looking for artists to place in participating businesses during 2009's June 18 and September 17 Art Crawls.

The Crawls will be from 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. There is no fee involved and artists may keep all monies made from any sales. Demonstrations are strongly encouraged. Please attach a short bio, description of work and a photo of artwork.

The Art Crawl is also looking for musicians to play during the event. This is a non-paying venue, but CD sales are permitted during the hours of the Art Crawl. Please send a short bio and a link to your music or a demo tape.

Deadline for the June Crawl is May 15. Contact Barbara at [info@artintheshop.net](mailto:info@artintheshop.net) or Connie at [info@downtownhickory.com](mailto:info@downtownhickory.com) if interested.

If you or your business is interested in sponsoring the Art Crawl series, please contact the Hickory Downtown Development Association at (828) 322-1121, or email [info@downtownhickory.com](mailto:info@downtownhickory.com).

[www.downtownhickory.com](http://www.downtownhickory.com)

## Events at Osondu

**Saturday March 7, 11-2**

Workshop with author Gloria Houston and 95th birthday party for Ruthie Houston.

**Saturday March 14**

Meet Angela Dove, author of No Room for Doubt. 11 a.m.

**Saturday, March 21**

Workshop with artist Suzanne Gernandt. Create a handmade book or a paper box. \$35 includes materials. 1 to 4 p.m.

**Osondu Booksellers**

184 N. Main, Waynesville

(828) 456-8062

[osondubooksellers.com](http://osondubooksellers.com)

# MARCH EVENTS ~ ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ CLASSIFIEDS







# FINE ART

## Springtime Plein Air Workshop

This oil painting workshop with Richard Oversmith is designed for beginners and intermediate and advanced students to improve their plein air oil painting skills.

Students will explore painting from life in plein air in an Alla Prima fashion. Working on canvases (9x12, 11x14, 12x16) with large brushes will help students focus on the bigger shapes of a composition. Emphasis will be put on values, edges, and color, and simplifying a composition to create paintings that have unity.

- Instructor demonstrations daily
- Individual instruction and critique
- Easel necessary

The workshop will take place in the Asheville area Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, April 23 - 25 from 9 a.m.



"Spring Vista" Richard Oversmith

to 4 p.m. Tuition: \$300. Maximum number of students: 12.

For more information and a supply list please contact Richard Oversmith at richardoversmith@gmail.com, or by phone at (828) 299-1066.

## Local Artist Rachel Clearfield

BY SCOTT TIDE



Rachel Clearfield



"Dawn Flowers" 30" x 40"  
oil on canvas by Rachel Clearfield



"Like Flowers for Tea," 24" x 30"  
oil on canvas by Rachel Clearfield

Born in England on July 27, 1946, Rachel Clearfield was a self-taught child prodigy. As a young girl, she composed poetry and illustrated her poems with beautiful paintings. After completing high school she decided on a career in art and was educated at the Newcastle College of Art and also the Manchester College of Art.

In the late 1960s Ms. Clearfield moved to Amsterdam and rural Holland. During this time her work became well established and was subsequently published in many European magazines. She was awarded a prestigious grant from the Contra Prestatie and her paintings were purchased by the Dutch government as well as by collectors in London, Paris and Belgium.

In 1976, Rachel relocated to the United States living in Hawaii, California and Florida before settling in Asheville. When she moved to Florida in the late '70s Ms. Clearfield successfully established her own private gallery by the ocean on Miami Beach. She made numerous television appearances and appeared frequently in the Miami Herald.

The artist calls her present mode of painting "classical visionary" inspired by the legendary masters of the Renaissance. Although the roots of her technique reflect the classics, her messages are contemporary.

Since moving to Asheville in 1990, she has exhibited in the Blue Spiral Gallery, the Broadhurst Gallery, the Merimon Gallery and most recently in the Discovery Gallery in Washington, DC. Rachel is an avid flower gardener and paints directly from the beauty which



"Clearfield House," 16" x 20" oil on canvas by Rachel Clearfield

surrounds her home in the mountains of Western North Carolina.

Art critic Sylvia Penn was inspired to write of her work, "The diversity of details, the patterns, the intricate rhythms, presented in a visionary style, add up to haunting landscapes of inner experiences, not soon forgotten."

Rachel Clearfield's studio is a short drive from Asheville. Call (828) 777-4125 or email clearfieldstudios@earthlink.net for directions. By appointment only.

For more information visit  
[www.rachelclearfield.com](http://www.rachelclearfield.com)

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The Washington Post - September 25, 2007  
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# HEALTHY LIVING

## A Re-Evaluation

BY MAX HAMMONDS, MD

**H**ello, Susan. Come in. Sit down. I've been expecting you." Dr. Robbins came from behind his desk, motioning to a leather arm chair.

"Good afternoon, Dr. Robbins," Susan responded. "Yes, mother's heart attack got my attention." She perched on the edge of the chair, tightly clutching the bone handles of her purse.

"I suspect it did," he mused aloud, leaning against the edge of his desk. "But we had our conversations about her condition at the hospital – so I suspect that this visit isn't about her."

"No, it's not." Susan looked up at him. "It's about me." She paused, searching his eyes for hope. "What are my chances of having the same thing? You know that my father died of congestive heart failure just two years ago. He was only seventy."

"Yes, I remember."

"He wasn't that old. Seventy isn't that old," she hurried on, "and mother is only sixty-eight. What's wrong with us?"

Not responding to her anxiety, Dr. Robbins paused and decided to grasp the teachable moment. "What do you know about heart disease, Susan?"

"Mostly what I see on television – you know – those commercials during the news. I don't read the articles in the women's magazines. They scare me." When Dr. Robbins wrinkled his forehead into a frown, she quickly added, "I know – I know that it happens to older people and that it runs in families."

"Okay, that's good for a start." Dr. Robbins nodded approvingly. "Actually the heart researchers at the Framingham Institute use those as two of their six test questions to see if people are at risk for heart disease. For you, at age fifty-one, that's a good mark in your favor, but having both parents with heart disease suggests that genetics is not on your side." When she squirmed in her seat, he

smiled. "We can't change your genetics or your age, but we can address the other risk factors and see if we can modify those first two."

He stood up and moved behind his desk, reaching for her medical chart. "From my examination two months ago. Blood pressure – 135/75," he said as he sat down while scanning the pages. "Pre-hypertension we call it. Not bad, except we've got it down there with medications." He looked up. "Those are the next two questions. Do you have high systolic blood pressure and do you take medications for it? Yes to both for you."

"I don't like to take medicines," Susan said, frowning. "They have side effects."

"Yes, they do," he agreed. "We probably use medicines way to much." Looking up, he pierced her with his gaze. "But it's because people won't make the life style changes that we recommend – life style changes that are probably more effective than the medicines." He smiled quickly and looked at the chart again. "Which brings us to the last two questions: your total cholesterol – um, 272, and your HDL cholesterol – the good cholesterol – 52." He looked up at her again. "I would have expected a woman of your age to have a higher HDL cholesterol – at least 65 or more. A high HDL cholesterol is one of the most helpful ways of preventing heart disease. It offsets a multitude of other bad markers, including your very high total cholesterol."

"Okay," Susan said, rising to the challenge, "how do I raise my HDL?"

"Good for you, Susan," he immediately encouraged. "Take charge of what you can do." Looking at the chart, he remarked, "I see that your weight is 185 pounds. – and your body mass index is 33.8. That puts you in the overweight category."

"It's been a stressful two years – first Daddy and now Mother," she murmured.

"And your weight has suffered as a result – and your cholesterol, too, no doubt," he deduced. "Some doctors are suggesting that the body mass index is as good a measure of heart risk as the cholesterol – and I think they are right. Okay, one more new marker – which we didn't check on you is C-reactive protein – a protein in the blood that indicates a high degree of inflammation. But given your inflammatory bowel disease and your arthritis, I will guess that you probably have a high inflammatory state in your body." He closed the chart. "So what can we do about this? It's actually easier than you think – if you're willing to make some changes."

"I am," she said, nodding vigorously.

"Okay," he said, reaching for his prescription pad. "I'm going to make an appointment with a dietician to talk about foods that increase inflammation – like trans fats and high glycemic index foods." When she looked puzzled, he asked, "Do you read labels on the foods you buy? No? You will learn."

"But I'm a vegetarian," she replied.

"That's good. Meats can be highly inflammatory. But vegetarians frequently make poor choices in substituting for animal products." He quickly scribbled

several more lines on his pad and tore it off. "And now a prescription for an exercise program," he said, writing again.

"Do I have to start running?" she worried.

"No, at your weight and blood pressure, I wouldn't advise it," he said, looking up. "But there are easier ways to increase your metabolism – swimming or water aerobics or walking. None of those will get you in trouble and will be easy on your arthritis." He finished writing and tore off the second page. "This will introduce you to a personal trainer I know," he said, handing her the page. "He will get you started." He sat back in his chair, considering. "The exercise and the change in diet will probably decrease your total cholesterol, increase your HDL, and decrease your weight – and lower your stress level. I expect to see improvements in all categories within six weeks. But only if you do it." He eyed her carefully. "Will you?"

"I will, Doctor."

"Good for you. Let's have you check back in six weeks and see how you are doing. Then we'll talk some more about how to keep the good changes going. Okay?"

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## Farm to Hospital Pilot Launched

Hospitals have the potential not only to treat the sick and injured, but to serve as community role models for healthy choices. Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) is launching a program that will enable hospitals to feature fresh local foods and offer food and farm related educational programming.

Farm to Hospital aims to both improve public health and sustain local farms. The program will include distributing Local Food Guides to hospitals and support in sourcing local products for cafeterias. ASAP will also consult on educational programs such as cooking classes and field trips, wellness programs, and marketing and promotions.

**For more information contact Program Coordinator Molly Nicholie at [molly@asapconnections.org](mailto:molly@asapconnections.org) or (828) 236-1282.**





Painting by Jack Stern

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