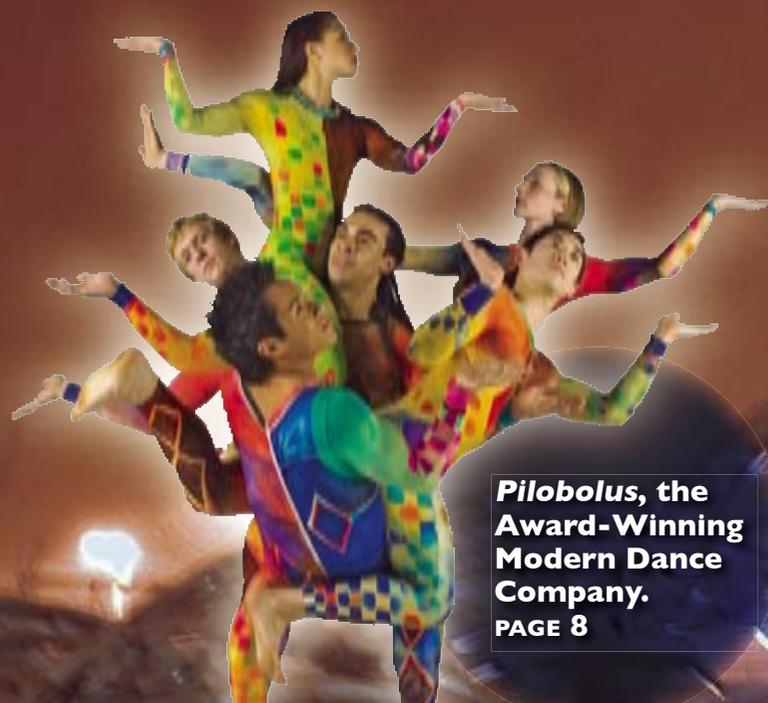


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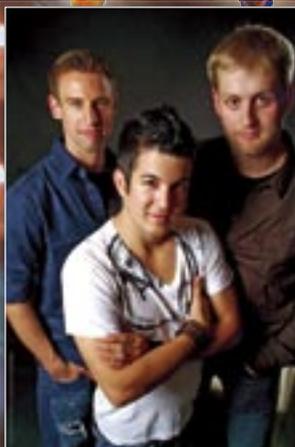
January 2011 • Vol. 14 No. 5

Arts & Culture

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Performances
for a
Brand New
Year*



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Susan Marie Designs
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R A P I D R I V E R A R T S

stage preview

The Magnetic Theatre presents

When Jekyll Met Hyde



John Crutchfield as Dr. Jekyll. Photo: Peter Brezny.

BY STEVEN SAMUELS

The Magnetic Theatre in The Magnetic Field proudly presents the world premiere of *When Jekyll Met Hyde*, “a gleefully ridiculous take on the classic tale of passion,” written and directed by Magnetic Theatre Artistic Director Steven Samuels.

Drawing on every written, dramatized, and filmed version of the Robert Louis Stevenson classic imaginable, *When Jekyll Met Hyde* features an unusual feminist twist and a surprise ending.

To double the fun, and to honor the split personality at the heart of the story, The Magnetic Theatre is mounting two different productions simultaneously, one set in the 1950s, the other in the 1960s, with two different casts, in alternating repertory: in the 1950s version, Mondy Carter, Tracey Johnston-Crum, John Crutchfield, Darren Marshall, and Alphie Hyorth; in the 1960s version, John Crutchfield, Kathryn Temple, Julian Vorus, Steph Anie, and Petery Brezny.

“Says Bacchus to Venus,” music and lyrics by Steven Samuels, arrangement by Brian Claflin and Steven Samuels, realization by Brian Claflin. Set design: Leslie Klingner and Kevin Smith. Lighting design: Ryan Madden. Costume design: Xanath Espina. Sound design: Brian Claflin. Stage manager: Katie Anne Towner.

The Magnetic Field, a brand-new café-bar-performance house, is located in the River Arts District's Glen Rock Depot, at 372 Depot Street.

IF YOU GO Previews begin January 13. Performances Thursday-Saturday at 7:30 p.m., and Friday-Saturday at 10 p.m. Details and ticket sales available at www.themagneticfield.com. Reservations: (828) 668-2154.

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Best Wishes for a Happy New Year
from Rapid River Magazine



stage preview

The Hot Comedy "Boeing-Boeing"

AT NORTH CAROLINA STAGE COMPANY

Popular local actors Charlie Flynn-McIver and Scott Treadway team up again for the hilarious farce *Boeing-Boeing*, opening February 16 and running through March 13. Tickets are on sale now, and if the past is any indication, this comedy will sell out quickly.

Boeing-Boeing is a frothy 1960s farce about three airline stewardesses, two French bachelors, and a brand new Boeing jet.



Scott Treadway and Charlie Flynn-McIver star in the NC Stage production of *Boeing-Boeing*.

Bernard's love life is a perfect balancing act: when one of his stewardess girlfriends touches down, the next one is already in the air. What could possibly go wrong?

Scott Treadway and Charlie Flynn-McIver star as the beleaguered bachelors, and they'll be joined by four actresses to be cast this month. Beginning in 2004, with *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)*, Scott and Charlie have starred in some of NC Stage's most popular productions, including *Stones In His Pockets*, *Moonlight and Magnolias*, and *True West*.

Now they've been recognized nationally, with a profile in *American Theatre Magazine*. UNC-Asheville professor Scott Walters writes about their unique comic chemistry: "Like Bob Hope and Bing Crosby, Charlie Flynn-McIver and Scott Treadway have taken to the road together. And while the road between Flat Rock and Asheville in North Carolina may not be as far-flung as the road to Morocco, the aes-

BY AMANDA LESLIE

Deliciously, deliriously innocent.

thetic distance may be nearly as great."

The show opens February 16, but you can catch Scott and Charlie in NC Stage's

(For)Play Series Sunday, January 23 at 2 p.m. at the Reuter Center on the campus of UNC-Asheville.

They'll be doing a cold reading of the script, and taking questions from the audience. The (For)Play Series is designed to give patrons a glimpse of how a play evolves from the first rehearsal to opening night.

Boeing-Boeing was written by French playwright Marc Camoletti, and made its English-language debut in London's West End in 1962, translated by Beverley Cross and Francis Evans. The play proved so popular it ran in London for seven years. It was also adapted into a 1965 film starring Tony Curtis, but contem-

porary audiences will probably know it best from a recent Broadway revival.

Of the revival, the *New York Times* wrote, "You see, the appeal of 'Boeing Boeing' is the very opposite of what you might expect. It's not smutty at all. It's deliciously, deliriously innocent. I haven't felt so much like a child, while watching a sex comedy, since I was, well, a very young child, taken by his mother to the Billy Wilder movie 'Some Like It Hot.'"

IF YOU GO

Boeing-Boeing runs February 16 – March 13, 2011. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:30 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets

range from \$16 - \$28, with a *Pay What You Can Night* scheduled for Wednesday, February 16. Tickets are available at www.ncstage.org or phone (828) 239-0263.

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stage preview

**S/He Loves Me,
S/He Loves Me Not...**

BY KATHY MEYERS

Love is in the air...or not. It is something that moves us, which stirs us and something we all yearn for; men and women, young and old, traditional and non-traditional.

In this upcoming production, dance and song merge in a visceral, intriguing journey through the best and worst of love.

Begun by the chance match.com meeting of a choreographer and a songwriter, (Kathy Meyers and Tom Leiner) the natural desire to find joy and comfort in the presence of another finds expression in "S/He Loves Me..." Following several social gatherings with the collective network of talent, the two artists were prompted to the obvious match of music and dance and asked their professional



songwriter/musician friends if they had the desire to collaborate with dancers in this project. And so...

The event will begin upon entering the historic Masonic Temple building at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, February 14. Performances by Cilla Vee-Life Arts and Julie Gillum greet pre-show, decadent desserts tempt at intermission, and the incorporation of art by Shelley Pereda will culminate.

Within the 8 p.m. show, diverse and talented musicians River Guerguerian, Kat Williams,

Joe Ebel, Annie Lalley, Crystal Bray and Tom Leiner, along with dancers of Moving Women, (Kathy Meyers, Jenni Cockrell, Erin Braasch) and guests Kathleen Hahn, Holly Mason, and Erik Moellering will create an atmosphere as comical, passionate and heart stirring as any relationship. The perfect evening to share with a Valentines' date, friend, or...

Tickets are available in advance and range from \$10-20 per person and \$15-\$35 per couple depending on orchestra or balcony seating. For more information or tickets please contact (828) 215-2410, or Kathy@arts2people.org.

Grounded in modern dance, *Moving Women's* projects have aimed to explore the cathartic experience of movement and the inspiration offered by collaboration with other artists to create original works. Visit www.movingwomen.org for more information.

Moving Women is a project of Arts2People, a local non-profit, dedicated to promoting the arts as an integral part of our culture, www.arts2people.org.

IF YOU GO *S/He Loves Me... an exploration of the many facets of romance and love, set to original music and dance. Monday, February 14 (Valentine's Day). Performance begins at 8 p.m. Doors open at 7:30 p.m.*

Asheville Masonic Temple Theatre, 80 Broadway, Downtown Asheville. \$10-\$20/per person, or \$15-\$35/per couple. Contact Kathy Meyers, Kathy@arts2people.org, (828) 215-2410 for more information.

Image credits: Photos by Joe Karpen. Design by Jim Julien.

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Please help us reach our goal for Pack Square Park!

Join the Friends of Pack Square Park.

Our new park is a place to celebrate! The Friends of Pack Square Park Program is a community of people who care about the park and want to enjoy it together. The thermometer represents the amount of money that is needed to complete the costs of creating this special park.

By joining, you will help support a rich variety of programming and performances presented by Pack Square Conservancy that keep the park active and vibrant year-round. Your tax-deductible contribution goes to protect and improve the spectacular park landscape—gardens, trees, lawns, public art, and performance spaces—so they will be beautiful for years to come.



In addition, the Friends program helps build an endowment, and the earnings will provide funding for future improvements and long-term maintenance of the art, landscape, and park infrastructure.



Enjoy and take pride in preserving Pack Square Park as a dynamic, artistic, and social gem in the center of Asheville's downtown.

For more information about how to become a Friend of Pack Square Park please call us at 828-252-2300, or visit our web site at www.packsquarepark.org.



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GOAL
\$17,981,922

*pack square park**Pack Square Conservancy in High Gear for 2011*

Photo by Alan Hantz, courtesy of Pack Square Conservancy.

With a bird's eye view of Pack Square Park — well, not the entire park, but some key features such as the beautiful new fountain in Pack Square near the historic Vance Monument — the Pack Square Conservancy staff keeps an eye on things.

The Biltmore Building blocks the view of the rest of the park, so Pack Square Conservancy's Executive Director, Gary V. Giniat will hike down regularly to check on the progress of the long awaited visitor center in Reuter Terrace near the corner of Market and College streets when construction begins this spring.

"Our role as a conservancy is to enhance and protect Pack Square Park through a variety of means," explained Giniat. "We have an obligation to our donors and the public to ensure the high maintenance and design standards are adhered to and to make sure the park is an active, useable space for everyone."

One way to enhance the park and provide something the public has been clamoring for at the same time is to build a 1,300 square foot visitor center off College Street between Market and Spruce Streets. Over half of the single story building will be devoted to public restrooms. The ground breaking is planned for spring 2011, and the center should be open by mid-summer.

Those who have joined Giniat for an insider's walking tour of the park are buoyed up from his enthusiastic tours of the park. Now that the park is finished, compliments such as "Beautiful!" and "Stunning!" abound. Long time residents tell him the park is used more than ever before and they like seeing the diverse mix of people of all ages out in the park both day and night.

Right now Giniat sees the Conservancy's role as three-fold:

- Build a visitor's center and public restrooms with a grant received from the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA), earmarked exclusively for that purpose. Once completed, the visitor's center will be staffed with volunteers from the Chamber of Commerce.
- Continue fundraising to pay off the construction debt to the City. Despite some media reports, the working relationship between the Conservancy and the City of Asheville continues smoothly. Giniat says,



Conservancy leader, Gary V. Giniat, plans for 2011.

"We are working diligently and strategically with a plan to pay back the City. At the same time, we are building up our endowment in order to have future capital to invest in the park as necessary."

- Offer programs in the park that supplement existing events and festivals. It is a major goal of the Conservancy to provide a rich variety of multi-cultural programs that are free to the public. In order to accomplish this, the Conservancy relies on corporate and individual sponsorships to help defray costs.

The Conservancy's small two person office at the west end of the park was a bevy of activity last year. Of the 57 permits granted by the City of Asheville to people or organizations wanting to use Pack Square Park, a third were requested by the Conservancy. Events it hosted ranging from free concerts, live art performances, and storytelling to Tai Chi. To the Conservancy's delight, more people attended every event it sponsored last year than they expected.

The walls of Giniat's office are covered with colorful bits of paper with potential ideas scrawled neatly on them. Those notes are also how this upbeat Chicago transplant with a "we can do it" attitude keeps track of the many projects he's working on. His successful Friends of Pack Square Park program, launched at the Labor Day Symphony concert, has brought in donations from many new contributors, plus many faithful donors.

"The Conservancy isn't going anywhere," Giniat said. "We're here for the long haul."

To join the Friends of Pack Square Park program, make a donation, find out about sponsorship opportunities or for more information please contact Pack Square Conservancy at (828) 252-2300 or check out their website www.packsquarepark.org.

Brundibár

“We’ve won a victory,
since we were not fearful, since we were not tearful,
because we marched along singing our happy song.”

Photo is courtesy of Opera Omaha and Dawn Sumrell.

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we love this place

The **Asheville Living Treasures Committee** announces that it is now accepting nominations for the spring 2011 Asheville Living Treasures Ceremony to be held in May. Letters are needed by **March 1, 2011**. The mission of **Asheville Living Treasures** is to honor the elders of Asheville, and Buncombe County, who have devoted their lives to making our communities a better place to live. These elders will be publicly honored, and their achievements and stories recorded for future generations.

Who is an Asheville Living Treasure? Our treasures represent our best values. They are fine role models for all generations, providing inspiration with their good deeds and with their hope, heart and wisdom. We believe it is important to express gratitude to those who benefit our communities and to bring their stories to the public's attention.



Who is eligible? Any senior in Asheville and Buncombe County aged 70 and above. Include in your Letter of Nomination: How has their service benefited the community and how have they inspired other people? Do the treasures embody the qualities of kindness, courage, wisdom, grace, authenticity, humor, respectfulness and generosity of spirit?

How to nominate a Living Treasure: Simply submit your letter of nomination by email to ashevillelivingtreasures@gmail.com or by mail to: Carol Kessler, Asheville Living Treasures, 152 Edwin Place, Asheville, NC 28801. For more information phone Carol Kessler at (828) 505-7259 or Marnie Walsh at (828) 298-2231.

The Blue Ridge Rollergirls, Asheville's skater owned and skater run nonprofit women's flat track roller derby league, needs a dedicated training and meeting space in Asheville. The facility should include a smooth, hard skating surface such as wood, concrete, sport court, or other similar material, with an overall size of at least 120 feet x 80 feet, a minimum of 10,000 square feet. Heat and good ventilation are critical. We also need room outside the track for equipment and prep space. A space large enough to accommodate multiple teams and small event crowds is ideal.

We currently lose valuable training time while paying gas and rink rental costs since we travel 60 miles round trip to Hendersonville three times a week to practice. We want to safely advance the skills of our skaters by doubling practice time. This will develop our league to compete in WFTDA rankings and regional/national championships.

A training facility will allow us to host skating bootcamps, fundraisers, and other events that empower sustainable growth while building a strong foundation in sportswomanship, camaraderie, and service to our local Asheville community. During our home bouts we attracted more than 2,000 rabid fans, with more than 3,000 fans at our final November bout! We are a part of the fastest growing sport in the nation!

For further information, please contact Crystal Buckner (Cussed 'em Chop Her), chair of our search committee. She can be reached by email at info@blueridgerollergirls.com. Visit the Blue Ridge Rollergirls online at www.blueridgerollergirls.com.



Crystal Buckner aka Cussed 'em Chop Her

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performance

World Renowned *Pilobolus* Opens Mainstage Dance Series

BY JOHN ELLIS

The Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack Place presents the highly imaginative, award-winning modern dance company *Pilobolus* at 8 p.m. January 21-22, 2011. Chosen as the opening performances for this season's Mainstage Dance Series, *Pilobolus* is a returning favorite of Asheville audiences and is highly acclaimed for its startling mix of humor and invention.

During its last appearance at the Diana Wortham Theatre, *Pilobolus* sold out two performances. In its two evening shows for this season's Mainstage, the troupe will present a program tailored for Asheville and the Diana Wortham Theatre.

Using everything from athletic acrobatics to puppetry and shadow imagery, *Pilobolus* creates a metamorphosis on stage between physicality and illusion: "Bodies become imagery, and one image merges into another, organically, poetically, inexplicably," says *The New York Times*. And according to *Worth* magazine: "*Pilobolus* combines the laws of physics with a daring artistic eye to create sensual, gravity-defying choreography that has changed the look of modern dance."

Pre-show discussions at 7 p.m. in The Forum at Pack Place precede the *Pilobolus* performances in Asheville. Free for ticket holders, these discussions add to attendees' understanding and enjoyment of the performance by providing professional insight and background on the company, performers, and danceworks.

Born in a 1971 Dartmouth College dance class, this outsider dance company quickly became renowned throughout the world for its imaginative and athletic exploration of creative collaboration: a unique weight-sharing approach to partnering that gave the young company a non-traditional but powerful new set of skills with which to make dances.

The physical vocabularies of *Pilobolus* works are not drawn from traditions of codified dance movement but are invented, emerging from intense periods of improvisation and creative play. Now in its 40th year, *Pilobolus* has evolved into a self-sufficient organization, its members choreographing, dancing, managing, and publicizing their own programs.

Pilobolus has received a number of prestigious honors, including the Berlin Critic's Prize, the Brandeis Award, the New England Theatre

Conference Prize, and a Primetime Emmy Award for outstanding achievement in cultural programming. Most recently *Pilobolus* was honored with the 2010 *Dance Magazine* Award, given to artists who have made a lasting contribution to the field; *Pilobolus* is the first collective troupe to be honored in this award's 54 year history.

The company has also been featured, with great popularity, on broadcast media: in 2004, CBS's *60 Minutes*; in 2007, the live telecast of the 79th Academy Awards; that same year, on the Oprah Winfrey Show; twice in 2008 on the Late Show with Conan O'Brien; and sixteen times in conjunction with football games on the NFL Network. In June 2000 *Pilobolus* received the Samuel H. Scripps American Dance Festival Award for lifetime achievement in choreography.

Pilobolus' Asheville performances are made possible by Performance Sponsors Nancy Houha & William Hilson, Bill & Jerry McAninch, Tom & Brooke Nelson, and the Art Fryar Charitable Trust Fund; and by Mainstage Dance Series Sponsors Tina & John McGuire, Hedy Fischer & Randy Shull, Michael Witaszek, and BMW of Asheville; with additional support from Media Sponsor *WNC Magazine*.

The Diana Wortham Theatre's 2011 Mainstage Dance Series continues with New York's Doug Varone and Dancers, winner of 11 "Bessies" – New York Dance and Performance Awards,

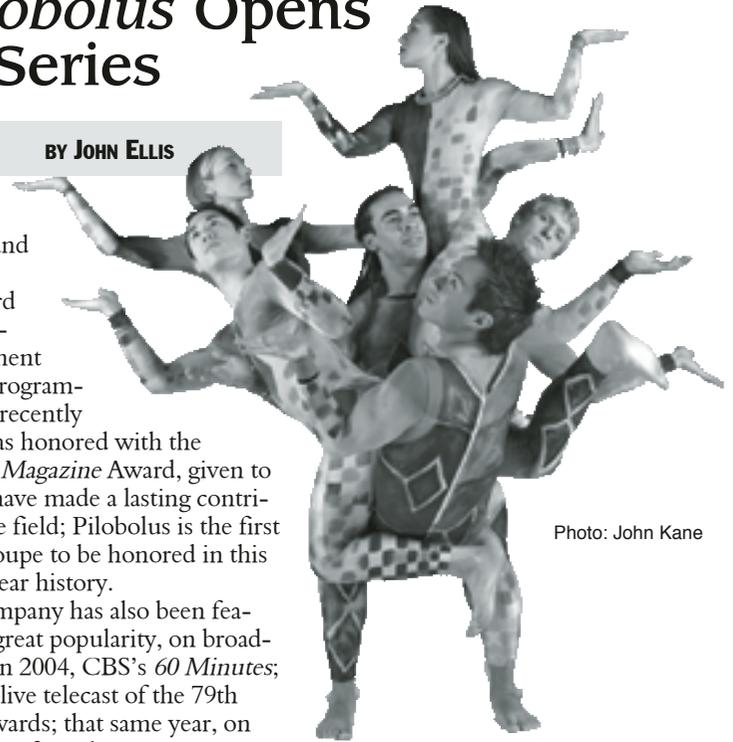


Photo: John Kane

February 9 and 10, and lively Afro-Brazilian culture in music and dance with Viver Brasil April 5 and 6.

For more information please visit www.pilobolus.com

IF YOU GO *Pilobolus*, part of the Mainstage Dance Series. Friday & Saturday, January 21 & 22, 2011 at 8 p.m. Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack Place. Tickets: Regular \$45; Seniors \$43; Students \$40. Student Rush day-of-the-show (with valid ID) \$10.

For more information or to purchase tickets call the Box Office at (828) 257-4530, or visit www.dwttheatre.com.

AERIAL SPACE WINTER STUDENT SHOWCASE

Aerial Space is excited to announce their Winter Student Showcase and One Year Anniversary Party on Saturday, January 8, 2011. Come and see some amazing aerial circus arts throughout the day and enjoy the anniversary celebration in the evening.

Aerial Space is a studio dedicated to the promotion and education of aerial movement and art — Trapeze, Lyra, Silks, Aerial Dance, and Aerial Yoga.



They offer a variety of classes for all ages and skill levels.

The Winter Student Showcase will be held from 1-5 p.m. and features techniques that the students have learned in classes over

the past year. Some of the students performing are Craig Lewis, Waverly Jones, 6 year old Eli on Silks and Sling, Alex Berkow on Silks, Jessica Hill on

'Aerial Space' continued on page 9

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performance

Character Unlimited AN IMPROVISATIONAL SURPRISE

When Asheville Playback Theatre was founded in 1995, I showed up at one of the first rehearsals. Acting out real-life stories sounded cool, and having just arrived in the area, I was looking for my creative niche. Squeezing up the narrow steps of an old house on Grove Street, I emerged into a tiny room with a very low ceiling, and about 8 other people.

BY MOUNTAINE MORT JONAS

pyramid. God. A guy with a wife and 2 kids, living in a suburban house with a 2-car garage. A house, a little girl, a dog, a lobster on Times Square, a paper cup full of pee, a dead body, you name it... As an actor, I'd learned to be more spontaneous than I could ever have imagined. And I grew to adore the local

team of actors and musicians who were also drawn to stretch like this in public.

So now it's 2011, and Asheville Playback Theatre is celebrating its sweet 16 season. Our next public shows are the annual playback marathon weekend at NC Stage January 7-9, with four shows, including one for kids. And we're thrilled to be scheduled "on

Broadway" at the Asheville Masonic Temple for four Fridays in the spring.

If you come to a show, you will not be "volunteered" — it's your choice to tell a story and see it enacted, or to relax and enjoy the stories of others. Unlike most other improv theatre, the intention of playback is to honor (not make comedy out of) the material we get from the audience. If you tell a funny story, that's fine — we'll all have fun with it. But often the stories people tell deal with parts of life that aren't so funny.

It's very powerful when an audience member trusts us with some icky moment from the past, to see what insights might be gained from having it performed. Our best



Asheville Playback Theatre presents *Life Stages* January 7-9.

We ignored the space limitations as best we could, and warmed up with theatre games. Then we were introduced to forms of improvisation which are used in playback theatre all over the world — various ways to honor personal stories. It was very stimulating, great fun, and I seemed to be a competent character actor — ideal for playing weird characters — so I started coming to regular practice sessions. But I was convinced I could never be effective playing a "normal" guy.

It was at least five years later, having played hundreds of roles in dozens of shows, that I noticed a big change. After lots of practice, I could play anything! A bored businessman. An inspired meditator on an Egyptian

'Aerial Space' continued from page 8

Silks, Hali and Bryn on Sling, Rowan and Jessica on Sling, Jennifer Cribbs on Trapeze, and Hazel on Silks.

There will be a raffle including Patagonia luggage, local gift cards and lots more beginning at 5 p.m., which also marks the beginning of the Anniversary Celebration which will go until 7 p.m! Drinks and snacks will be provided by local businesses.



Aerial Space, Saturday, January 8, 2011. Student Showcases 1-5 p.m., Raffle 5 p.m., Anniversary Party 5-7 p.m. 46 New Leicester Hwy., Suite 103, in Asheville NC.

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shows involve a huge variety of stories — romantic, metaphysical, silly, political, embarrassing, challenging, joyful — because all that and much more is experienced in human life on planet Earth, and as long as it's true, we're ready to honor it in an enactment.

Check out our season schedule at www.ashevilleplayback.org or contact Raphael Peter at (828) 779-3062 for more information. I hope to play a part in one of YOUR stories sometime this season.



Asheville Playback Theatre invites you to "Life Stages." Friday, January 7 at 8 p.m.; Saturday, January 8, kids show at 2 p.m.; Saturday, January 8 at 8 p.m.; Sunday, January 9 at 2 p.m. all woman cast. Singer/storyteller Danny Ellis opens both 8 p.m. shows. NC Stage, 15 Stage Lane. Adults \$10/ Students \$5. Visit www.ashevilleplayback.org or phone (828) 779-3062 for more information.

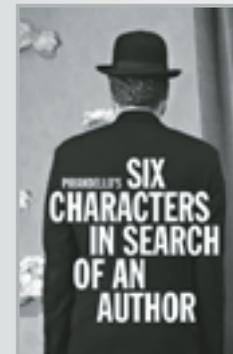
DIANA WORTHAM THEATRE at Pack Place in downtown Asheville



Photo: John Kane

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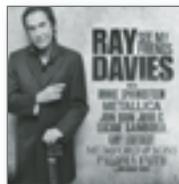
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CD Reviews

by James Cassara



Ray Davies See My Friends Decca Records

Tribute albums are often rather dubious undertakings but when the subject of adoration is himself directly involved, the potential for disaster climbs precipitously. As such *See My Friends* is a particularly strange creature; given the universal respect deservedly afforded him, Davies has no problem lining up an "A" list of artists to duet with.

That they come from different generations is both a testament to his influence and the very thing that derails this well intended but wildly inconsistent effort.

Jackson Browne and Bruce Springsteen were no doubt eager to sing with their idol but both their performances lack any real spark. Metallica lends a much needed jolt of heavy metal mania (and let's not forget The Kinks are generally considered to have invented that sound) on "You Really Got Me," while newcomers Spoon weave a bit of astral consciousness into "See My Friends."

Black Francis' take on "This Is Where I Belong" adds little to the version he recorded 16 years ago but his heart is certainly in the right place. As is that of everyone involved, but the entire record comes across as too polite, as if the old timers are just glad to be there and the new ones are terrified of screwing things up. As a result *See My Friends* is pleasant, heartfelt, but timid in a way that few Kinks songs ever were. **1/2

Mountain Man Made the Harbor Partisan Records

Few of the bands I caught at Moog Fest were as unknown to me as Mountain Man, and fewer still left me with such a strong impression as a band worth watching. The three women, Molly Erin Sarle, Alexandra Sauser-Monnig, and Amelia Randall, who make up the band capably craft a sound not unlike a rural version of The Roches.

Their on-stage interplay and vocal arrangements were nothing short of stunning, and while the studio versions of the songs (which I heard only after seeing them on stage) come a bit short of capturing that magic, they are plenty strong enough to stand on their own.

Recorded in a turn of the 20th century ice cream parlor, *Made the Harbor* has a wonderfully rustic feel, an intentionally ascetic pulse mirroring that of nature and



I'll kick off the New Year with a few releases that came my way in the waning days of 2010. Some of these even date back to mid-summer but I'm finally getting around to them. As always, anything worth reviewing in these pages – from two stars to five – is worth listening to. It's also worth buying at one of our fine independent record stores. We are fortunate to have them and they deserve our support.

the harmony found within. It also works in the album's favor that every vocal nuance, purposeful or not, is wisely left intact.

Individually all three singers are more than capable but when the voices blend together, as they best do on such effortless tunes as "Animal Tacks" and "River" the confluence of sound is breathtaking. At just over 40 minutes, *Made the Harbor* has the vibrancy of a hundred year old field recording, an old sounding record with very modern sensibilities. ***1/2



R.E.M. Live from Austin, TX (DVD) New West Records

When R.E.M. took the stage last March for their first ever appearance at Austin City

Limits, they were as far removed from the band that once helped move post punk towards alternative rock as one can imagine. Long gone was drummer Bill Berry, whose steady thump steadied the band's fluid rhythm, and with him went the commercial fortitude they had once enjoyed. They were now simply another very good group, certainly one with a history worth preserving, but only one among many.

Aided by drummer Bill Rieflin and long time touring mate Scott McCaughey on guitar and keyboards, *Live from Austin* seems a calculated attempt on the part of the band to reassert themselves as a force to still be reckoned with, even as they enter into their fourth decade together.

Relying most heavily on songs from their at the time upcoming release *Accelerate* (after all every band must tour to promote the new album), Michael Stipe and company do manage to toss in a few surprises. Reaching back as far back as 1984 for "South Central Rain", *Live in Austin* is a pretty good summation of where R.E.M. sees themselves and where they might just go.

Solid renditions of "Losing My Religion" and the elegiac "Fall on Me" might not have the multilayered textural nuance that made them famous, but Stipe, Peter Buck, and Mike Mills still know how to give the people what they want. In this case it's more than 90 minutes of what might just be the highest profile audition since the Beatles took over the rooftop of Abbey Road Studios.

When Stipe invites a pair of barely teen boys onstage, one of the boys can barely say, "You're awesome." And indeed, be it an exercise in nostalgia or a portent of things to come, *Live In Austin* proves there is still

a bit of kick left in Athens, and they're still one of Georgia's most famous exports. ****



Crowded House Intriguer Fantasy Records

Given the buzz about and anticipation for 2008's *Time on*

Earth, Crowded House's first album after a decade-long hiatus, it seems a shame that the follow up should somehow slip between the cracks.

Despite the challenges of reuniting the band and dealing with the suicide of Crowded House friend and drummer Paul Hester, front man Neil Finn seems focused on doing what he is best at: concocting four-minute pop gems that insidiously worm their way into your brain and not let go.

Nobody can write an irrepressible tune quite like Finn. His tunes are a near perfect blend of hum along and thinking man's music. *Intriguer* may be a bit subdued, which is not the band's forte – Finn isn't trying for a radio hit because no such animal still exists – but the swaying pulsation of "Saturday Sun" or the guitar driven furnace of "Inside Out" would have fit nicely between the earlier tunes.

Finn, along with original bassist Nick Seymour and new members Mark Hart and Matt Sherrod, is content to play to his strengths as a song crafter, adding up to a record that doesn't demand your attention as much as earn it.

What *Intriguer* lacks in panache it more than compensates for in sturdiness, rewarding each additional listen with its subtle pleasures and obscure charms. As such it is the ideal complement for its predecessor and yet another addendum to the band's storied legacy. ****

Robyn Hitchcock and the Venus Three Propellor Time

If at first listen *Propellor Time* doesn't sound much different than the many albums Robyn Hitchcock has made since he disbanded The Soft Boys and ventured solo, it's only because the consistency of his career has been nothing less than remarkable, both in sheer number and quality. But while some of his records (*I Often Dream of Trains*) have been immediately recognized as masterworks, others (*Eye*) have more or less crept into that category.



'CD's' continued on next page

what's happening

'CD's' continued from page 10

Propellor Time would seem to belong to that later category. It initially sounds much like the records that came immediately before but repeated listens reveal its depths. The songwriting is stronger, its themes more intriguing, and the playing even better than usual.

Begun in 2006 but for various reasons not completed until this year, it finds Hitchcock in fine form, backed by his frequent partners the Venus Three. That band, essentially three-fifths of the current R.E.M. touring unit, play with a level of precise intuition and poise that only comes from countless life shows and the willingness to allow the songs to dictate their own course.

There isn't a tremendous amount of flash to be found here, but that allows the beauty of Hitchcock's melodies to shine. The buoyancy of "Luckiness" is typical of the album, as RH and the boys playfully romp through the song with a performance so subtle it is hard to believe it was recorded live.

Former Smiths guitarist Johnny Marr adds some quietly frenetic playing to "Ordinary Millionaire" while longtime pals Nick Lowe and John Paul Jones also add a bit of sizzle and pop. For Hitchcock's part the lyrics are typically mysterious and droll, filled with his trademark bizarre imagery, and the ten songs all flow marvelously from one to the other.

Hitchcock rarely makes weak albums but it is just as uncommon when all the elements come together to make a great one. Propellor Time is one such instance, another jewel in the musical crown worn by one of this generation's most endearing and vital musicians. ★★★



Strawbs Live at the BBC Volumes 1 & 2: In Session UME Import Music

For a time the Strawbs were the tipping point where British folk moved towards a more wide ranging approach, melding together long-standing traditions with late 1960's experimentation.

Formed in 1964 as (of all things) a British bluegrass band, the Strawbs eventually moved to rock, glam, and progressive rock. It was this phase that came to mark their legacy, and while they never achieved the fame of such prime contemporaries as The Moody Blues or King Crimson it is pretty safe to say they greatly influenced the direction those bands and many others took.

These recently unearthed and cleaned up tracks, culled largely from their peak creative period of 1969-1973, charts their rise to success while presenting a fascinating look at a band in flux. The earliest sessions,

The Path of The Walkmen

BY JAMES CASSARA

Revisiting a decade ago from the ashes of Jonathan Fire*Eater and the Recoys, two respected but virtually unknown bands, the path of the Walkmen has been a lesson in perseverance and good fortune with a large dose of natural talent tossed in.

Consisting of Walter Martin (vocals, organ, etc.), Paul Maroon (guitars), Matt Barrick (drums) Hamilton Leithauser (vocals) and Peter Bauer (bass), the members grew up together in the Washington, D.C., area. Having played in many of the same bands since the fifth grade, they've forged a bond both by relation (Martin and Leithauser are cousins) and a mutual love of sound.

The band is touring in support of the newly released Lisbon (Fat Possum Records), which is already garnering them the best reviews of their career. Making a conscious attempt to evolve away from the raw, fiery garage sounds of their previous records, they have begun incorporating piano into the new material, giving them a more expansive palette to match the increasingly complex arrangements. Influenced by such diverse bands as The Pogues, Joy Division, New Order, and The Smiths, the new record bears more than a slight resemblance to 1970s new wave.

The band's history is as interesting as their records. They released a self-titled, four-song EP in 1999 through the



small Brooklyn label Startime International, followed by a vinyl-only release to be made available at concerts. In 2002, they made their proper full-length debut with *Everyone Who Pretended to Like Me Is Gone*. It was soon a favorite among indie crowds, propelling the band into their first tour outside the states.

After signing to Warner Brothers they recorded *Bows + Arrows* which was released in 2004. They were among the first bands to fully understand the potential of song placement into the small screen, marketing a number of their songs to television and even appearing in a cameo on the Fox TV series *The O.C.* The band returned to the studio in 2005, quickly recording *A Hundred Miles Off* and a song-

by-song cover of Harry Nilsson's *Pussy Cats*.

As tribute albums go it received a remarkable amount of airplay, helping to bring Nilsson's music back into the limelight. A year later they returned to the same Oxford, Mississippi, studio in which they recorded *Bows + Arrows* for 2008's *You & Me*. Throughout it all the band's membership has remained stable – a rarity in itself – while they have steadily toured and

increased their visibility.

Along with opening band, The Lower Dens, they'll be presenting material from their recently released album *Lisbon*, while no doubt covering all aspects of their career. So far it's been a pretty smooth ride and, given the band's chemistry and musical chops, there is every reason to think the Walkmen will be gifting us for years to come.



The Walkmen with the Lower Dens at The Grey Eagle on Friday, January 14 at 9pm. Tickets are \$13 in advance / \$15 day of show with standing room only.

featuring future Yes keyboardist Rick Wakeman and vocalist Sandy Denny, are the most essential.

Having worked the underground folk clubs of the 1960s, the band became an incredibly tight unit, foretelling a time when, for them, progressive rock and folk would briefly become virtually indistinguishable from one another.

Disc two, which chronicles the later sessions wherein founder Dave Cousins becomes the band's focal point, may lack the wild "anything goes" of the first disc but it is no less a pleasure. Two versions of "The Hangman and the Papist" are remarkable in their differences, while "The Winter and the Summer" is as shimmering now as it was 40 years past. As of last year the band was still going strong, with a line up that has remained remarkably stable over time. And while there are nearly as many Strawbs compilations as main albums, *Live at the BBC* is no less welcome.

As a long time fan I was amazed to discover these tracks still existed, much less in good enough condition to be released. They make an excellent "jumping on" point for those not familiar with the music while

equally satisfying those of us who have long been around for the ride. Few compilations can make that claim, which is reason enough to celebrate this release. ★★★



Esperanza Spalding Chamber Music Society Telarc Jazz

By the time she picked up the bass at age ten, Esperanza Spalding was already being hailed as a prodigy. Her self-titled 2008 debut spent an astonishing 70 weeks on Billboard's contemporary jazz chart and earned her the new artist of the year recognition. Spalding is the sort of talent who, while not easily categorized, is more than deserving of the praise heaped upon her.

For her second effort she's assembled an intriguing collection of tunes, surrounded herself with ace players (anchored by pianist Leonardo Genovese and percussionist Quintino Cinalli) and shown the type of confi-

dence typically reserved for jazz veterans.

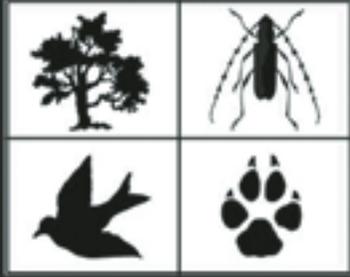
That confidence is best exemplified by the album's opener, an original composition inspired by the poetry of William Blake in which Spalding's discreet vocals whisper their way to your heart. Backed only by bass and an unobtrusive string section her approach is tantalizing and mesmeric.

"Winter Sun" is a bit more poppy but no less successful. Her melodic delivery – bordering on scat – is buoyed by twin piano and bass, a heady melding of jazz to rhythm and blues. Even when she ventures into less familiar terrain, such as the Brazilian tinged "Apple Blossom" she never loses command of her marvelous voice.

Other highlights included an inventive cover of Ned Washington's archetypal "Wild Is the Wind" (with a gorgeous cello solo) and the keyboard driven "What a Friend."

As good as her debut was, *Chamber Music Society* is a far more stylish effort, more musically diverse and soulful. It's a huge step forward for an artist who hardly needed one, pointing towards a future that is as warm and affirming as the summer days it so perfectly evinces. ★★★

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thoreau's garden

The Ox-Tongue Cactuses

Never having been licked by an ox's tongue, I can't be sure that this particular group of plants is properly named, but if ox tongues look at all like I imagine them to be, most of the plants in this group of cactuses are right on. And when dealing with these succulents, all except one of the common names in current descriptive use revolves around the tongue and include cow-tongue cactus, lawyer's-tongue (most apt in the 21st century), mother-in-law's tongue, and strangely, Dutch-wings.

The genus is *Gasteria* and is named for the Latin *gaster*, or belly, referring to the swollen base of the floral tube. Flowers look like little tubes with flared edges, often blooming on very tall stems.

There are some fifty species of these plants, all from South Africa. They are closely related to aloes but are easily recognized because of the flower form — and remember, the gasterias are not really cactuses but actually members of the lily family.

The long, fleshy, but very tough leaves usually grow in ranks of two, but a few

BY PETER LOEWER

slowly spiral, eventually becoming rosettes. Leaves truly resemble animal tongues, including the raised specks or tubercles that often cover the surface, much like ranks of taste buds. Some twenty species and some cultivars are available from nurseries and would make a fine theme for a collection of truly unusual plants.

Gasterias are also excellent plants for people on the go, since the thick leaves point to their ability to survive up to a month (sometimes more) without water. However, for healthy growth, they should be watered well during the summer months then kept almost waterless during the dormant period that occurs during the winter months.

Try to keep temperatures above 50°F. Also, protect plants from really strong sunlight because too much solar stimulation causes the leaves to turn brown and lose much of their character — so partial shade is best. A good soil mix is one-quarter each of potting soil, composted manure, peat moss, and sand. Fertilize plants at least once during the spring, summer, and fall.

A number of the gasterias are lumped under the name *Gasteria maculata*, where maculata means spotted. The leaves on these plants can grow to a length of eight inches and about an inch wide, attractively speckled with raised off-white oval spots in an abstract pattern. Tubular flowers are



Illustration by Peter Loewer

Gasterias are excellent plants for people on the go — they can survive for up to a month without water.

pink, under an inch long and bloom on long stems up to three feet high.

For indoor gardeners with limited space, look for *Gasteria nigricans marmorata* 'Varietgata'. A charming plant with short fat leaves — less than an inch long — all growing like little bow ties, each marked with dark brown and ivory stripes. Or how about *Gasteria* 'Silver Stripes', a slightly larger hybrid that bears leaves that are pebbled in green stripes on a gray-green background.

Propagation is by offsets. If these pieces have few or no roots, they should be allowed to dry before being potted.



Peter Loewer, shown here, examining the blossoms of early-blooming Lenten roses, is a well-known writer

and botanical artist who has written and illustrated more than twenty-five books on natural history over the past thirty years.

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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.

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Illustration of Michelle & Chip by Brent Brown.

BRENT BROWN is a graphic designer and illustrator. View more of his work at www.brentbrown.com.



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

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127 Hours 1/2

Short Take: The true story of Aron Ralston, the hiker who was pinned by a boulder and forced to amputate his own arm in order to survive.

REEL TAKE: I'll admit straight up that I knew *127 Hours* would critically be a good movie, but wasn't sure how palatable it would be otherwise. Early reports from test audiences claimed that people all but ran from the theatre because of some



James Franco delivers and Oscar worthy performance in *127 Hours*.

of the content. (I believe most readers will know that *127 Hours* is the story of Aron Ralston, the young mountain climber who had to amputate his own arm, after being pinned by a boulder in order to survive.) I am happy to report that not only did no one flee from the theatre, but that there was no cause for flight either. This is due to the handling of the story by writer-director Danny Boyle.

Boyle films, which span from *Trainspotting* and *28 Days Later*, to *Slumdog Millionaire* always possess a level of humanity and heart which transcend some awfully brutal situations. *127 Hours* is no different. It struck me that actor James Franco, who portrays Ralston, and Boyle took an interesting journey together on this film. *127 Hours* isn't just an adrenaline rush and a story of survival, it's a travail of reflection and awareness. As Ralston ebbs and flows through a gamut of emotions and endures physical and environmental challenges, we are drawn in and the result is quite mesmerizing.

Sequences of memories, hallucinations and delusion creatively familiarize the viewer with Aron's life before that fateful day as well as the trauma his body is now experiencing. The latter is done in a trippy way, so much so that I think I was more spooked by certain images of Scooby Doo than the events which must occur to free him from certain death. Further sequences of Ralston documenting

his experience with his camera/video camera add an uncanny honesty, reconciliation and vulnerability to his experience. Few of us have ever known the kind of despair we see when he videotapes a final goodbye to his parents, but including that definitely fortifies you for what's next.

Yes, Aron Ralston employed skills of survival that would challenge even the metal of Bear Grylls (TV's *Man vs Wild*), but how he survived isn't the point of the movie, it's that life is worth living ... well that and, always leave a note. *127*

Hours is beautifully filmed, well acted, and thoughtfully executed. No doubt, James Franco will be nominated for the award, and it would be a well deserved win. Many people will not see this film because of what Ralston's character is forced to do. (This is ironic given the amount of blood, gore and death in one hour of primetime TV, let alone mainstream cinema). If you are even remotely interested in this story, see this film. You may cringe a bit, but the rewards are worth it.

Rated R for language and some disturbing violent content/bloody images.

REVIEW BY MICHELLE KEENAN

Black Swan

Short Take: Deeply disturbing tale of a ballerina's descent into madness features an Oscar worthy performance from Natalie Portman.

REEL TAKE: *Black Swan* is a prime example of the type of film that provides a real dilemma for me as a movie critic. On one hand the film is an artistic triumph with remarkable camerawork, first class editing, a well modified use of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* score, and an Oscar deserving performance from Natalie Portman. On the other hand, I found



Natalie Portman as the ballerina slipping into madness in *Black Swan*.

the content to be deeply disturbing and unpleasant, so much so that I would hesitate to watch it again.

If you're expecting this movie to be something on the order of *The Red Shoes* or *The Turning Point*, then be warned in advance that it definitely is not. If you're looking for a movie that will keep you or your child from ever wanting to study ballet then *Black Swan* won't disappoint or surprise you. Think of *The Red Shoes* as if had been directed by Roman Polanski with most of that director's *Repulsion* and its Catherine Deneuve performance thrown in for good measure.

Director Darren Aronofsky (*Requiem for a Dream*) has taken the basic premise of *The Red Shoes* and added post-modern psychological angst and graphic sex to complement numerous shots of how punishing ballet can be on the human body. After awhile the line from a Neil Innes song "I've suffered for my music and now it's your turn" kept popping into my head. Here Aronofsky's purpose is not to make an uplifting portrait of the struggles of an aspiring ballerina but to show the downside of those aspirations when obsession and madness take over. Very operatic, very tragic, and for me, very trying.

It was nice to see 70s star Barbara Hershey back up on the screen again as Portman's over the top ballerina mother and Winona Ryder makes the most of her small part as the company's former prima ballerina whom age has caught up with. Mila Kunis finally gets to prove that she is more than a voice on *Family Guy*

with a dynamic portrayal of Portman's understudy and direct opposite. The film features great performances from all the principal actresses but not enough to overcome the film's unsavory nature.

Black Swan has already made it onto a

number of very important Top 10 lists and, while there's no question that it deserves to be there, the hard R rating and art house booking will keep a number of people from seeing it. That ultimately won't matter as it only cost \$17 million to make (cheap by today's standards) and it made half that back over one weekend in only 90 theaters.

In the end what Aronofsky achieved on the film's small budget is the most remarkable thing about *Black Swan*. If only more filmmakers and performers would attempt to work under these conditions and the studios were willing to release such films then we would have a very different moviegoing landscape. However Hollywood beckons and Aronofsky's next film is a sequel to *Wolverine*. Will he become the next Christopher Nolan (*Memento* to *Inception*) or the next Bill Condon (*Gods and Monsters* to *The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn*)? Only time will tell.

Rated R for strong sexual content, disturbing violent images, language, and drug use.

REVIEW BY CHIP KAUFMANN

The Fighter

Short Take: The true story of boxer Micky Ward who usurped the limelight from his has-been half brother and fellow boxer Dicky Ecklund.

REEL TAKE: After years in the works, Mark Wahlberg was finally able to get the biopic about boxer, "Irish" Micky Ward *The Fighter*. More specifically it's about the period in Ward's boxing career when he got out from under the shadow of his half brother and fellow boxer Dicky 'The Pride of Lowell' Ecklund and the strong arm of his mother, in order to pursue a professional boxing career. Armed with David O. Russell (*Three Kings* and *I Heart Huckabees*) at the helm and a top notch cast, it seems it was a worth the wait, as the film is being met with a lot of good buzz going into award season.

Mark Wahlberg stars as Micky. Christian Bale stars as Micky's older brother Dicky, a now a washed up has-been and crack head to boot. He is a rather manic personality with no shortage of ego. His

'Movies' continued on page 15

film reviews

'Movies' continued from page 14



Mark Wahlberg and Christian Bale give knockout performances as Micky Ward and Dicky Ecklund in *The Fighter*.

claim to fame was that he once dropped Sugar Ray Leonard in the ring (but it's actually more likely that Leonard just tripped). Now he trains Micky and their mother, Alice (Melissa Leo), manages Micky. While Alice maintains that she loves all *nine* of her children equally, the sun rises and sets on Dicky (and she just hasn't quite come to grips with the truth about Dick).

After meeting a fiery woman named Charlene (Amy Adams), Micky begins to separate himself from the influence and control of his drug addled brother and his brash, chain-smoking mother without severing family ties.

The Fighter is a solid movie, and while it is very good, it somehow never quite reaches greatness. This is too bad because its actors certainly do; the strength of the film lies squarely with the merits of its actors. Wahlberg, Bale, Adams and Leo all turn in noteworthy (perhaps award worthy) performances.

What was most interesting to me was the caliber of performances from both Bale and Wahlberg and yet their distinctly different acting styles. Bale, clearly a method actor, IS Dicky Ecklund. His performance, while repulsive, is utterly amazing. Wahlberg on the other hand is soft spoken and seems much more laid back in his performance. Perhaps it is the difference in their methods that helps depict the contrast between brothers so effectively. Melissa Leo is staggeringly spot-on as Alice. It's as if she's not even acting, and yet you couldn't find someone less like Alice Ward than Leo.

The film, shot on location in Massachusetts, is nothing if not authentic. From the neighborhood to the ring, it's the real deal. The boxing sequences are not for the faint of heart (I may have actually cringed more watching *The Fighter* than I did watching *127 Hours*). Ladies – pick this one for date night and you'll score some points ... and maybe you can get them to take you to *The King's Speech* or *Black Swan* the next time. (See reviews on this page and page 14.)

Rated R for language throughout, drug content, some violence and sexuality.

REVIEW BY MICHELLE KEENAN

The King's Speech 🍿🍿🍿 1/2

Short Take: The true story of how King George VI overcame a speech defect with the aid of a dedicated therapist (contains dynamic performances from Colin Firth and Geoffrey Rush).

REEL TAKE: That rather dry summary up above doesn't begin to tell how engaging, moving, and ultimately exciting this movie really is. Of course you need to be attuned to the *Masterpiece Theatre* mindset to begin with. Fans of action-adventure or today's typical rom-coms won't feel that way and it's their loss.

Quick history lesson. In 1936 King Edward VIII of England, on the throne for less than a year, abdicated in favor of his younger brother Albert so that he could marry an American divorcee, Wallis Warfield Simpson. Albert had a debilitating stammer. With the aid of an unorthodox Australian speech therapist, he was able to overcome it, become King George VI (father of Queen Elizabeth) and lead his country through World War II.

Anyone who has ever had a fear of public speaking for whatever reason knows what it's like to have to stand in front of a crowd and talk to people. Imagine the terror of having to speak to an entire country at a time of crisis when you can barely get through an entire sentence and you're the King of England. Colin Firth gives a magnificent portrayal of the troubled monarch. We feel his terror, cringe at his embarrassment, and see the inner strength that the real King George must have had. It is his ability to present all these sides of the King that makes his performance so compelling. He is matched every step of the way by Geoffrey Rush whose dedicated but unconventional therapist gets the future King to come out of his shell after years of being ridiculed and browbeaten.

In addition to these two fine performances, we get to see Helena Bonham Carter give up her recent eccentric portrayals and return to her roots in period drama as the future Queen Mum, fiercely supportive of her husband, yet still retaining a royal air. The film also features excellent character turns from Derek Jacobi, Timothy Spall, Guy Pearce, Michael Gambon, and Claire Bloom still going strong at 81.

As is to be expected in British historical drama, especially those that concern the Royal Family, the period recreation is impeccable. Add to this some fine camerawork



Colin Firth as the vocally challenged King George VI in the remarkable *The King's Speech*.

(including a couple of startling hand held shots), invisible editing, and a very effective use of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony and Emperor Concerto and you have a movie that will suck you in, keep you involved, and let you go only when it's over, at which point you'll be very sad that it is. Although not a film for everyone, *The King's Speech* pays huge dividends for those willing to enter its world.

Rated R for occasional harsh language.

REVIEW BY CHIP KAUFMANN



Johnny Depp, Angelina Jolie, and Venice... does it get any more beautiful than this?

The Tourist 🍿🍿🍿

Short Take: A mysterious woman on a train, a man of mistaken identity and Venice as a backdrop – can this movie really be as bad as they say?

REEL TAKE: *The Tourist* received a 20% fresh rating on the old Tomato Meter at Rotten Tomatoes – that's pretty darned rotten. Anyone out there who occasionally peruses *Reel Takes* knows that my co-reviewer and I are not afraid to differ with other critics, but it is rare that both of us would be at odds with 80% of the reviewers out there. However, in this case we couldn't disagree more with the all out critical assault on Angelina Jolie and Johnny Depp. In my humble opinion, *The Tourist* is a rather delightful throw back to another time – the kind of film that Audrey Hepburn and Cary Grant would have made or Jimmy Stewart and Grace Kelly.

I'm not likening *The Tourist* to Hitchcock films; I'm not, and it's not. But it is a luxurious escape of a movie, the kind that went out of vogue more than 40 years ago (and apparently won't come back into fashion any time soon). Johnny Depp is Frank Tupelo, a math teacher from Wisconsin and the would-be tourist in Venice. Angelina Jolie is Elise Clifton-Ward, a stupefyingly stunning and mysterious woman who deliberately crosses his path. What ensues, of course, is mistaken identity, romance and intrigue.

In our rather un-charming world today, CGI manipulated films (which are total artifice) designed for sensory overload with completely implausible action sequences, are OK, but do an old-fashioned caper drama

with a woman who is too well dressed for words and Johnny Depp as a rather mild as milk toast (not-so-Jack Sparrow) fellow, and the whole notion is ludicrous. I don't get it.

Perhaps we've all become so attuned to seeing Depp channeling his inner Keith Richards that folks don't know what to make of him playing someone slightly more subdued. Maybe people just can't connect to Jolie's affluent, aloof, perfectly mannered and calculated character. She is dressed even more exquisitely than Hepburn was by Givenchy; this level of sublime couture is also something most people can't relate to, but for me, it was part of the allure. Or maybe, director Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck (*The Lives of Others*) just gives it too European a flair for most Americans. I don't particularly care what it was that didn't work for critics – for my money the script is fun, the stars and the scenery couldn't be more beautiful and best of all, the punch line got me!

The Tourist is not a great movie, but it is good and it's an awfully fun way to while away a couple of hours. It works particularly well for people who enjoy old-school Hollywood, and who miss the likes of Cary Grant and Jimmy Stewart.

Rated PG-13 for violence and brief strong language.

REVIEW BY MICHELLE KEENAN



Lucy (Georgie Henley) and Aslan (voiced by Liam Neeson) see into the future in *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*.

The Voyage of the Dawn Treader 🍿🍿🍿

Short Take: The third installment of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, which is taken from the best book in the series, is not

as good as the first but is better than the second.

REEL TAKE: C. S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia* was probably my favorite book series in the latter years of high school and the early years of college. I preferred it over *The Lord of the Rings* as it was much less ponderous and much of the imagery it contained resonated more deeply than Tolkien did. Although I was aware of the overt Christian symbolism, it didn't keep me from enjoying it as a work of fantasy.

That very Christian symbolism is probably what kept it from being attempted in celluloid form, although the BBC once did an adaptation which left out my two favorite books: *The Magician's Nephew* (first) and *The Final Battle* (last). After the success of the *Harry Potter* series (also 7 books) and Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* adapta-

'Movies' continued on page 16

noteworthy

'Movies' continued from page 15



Jeff Bridges and Hailee Steinfeld in *True Grit*.

understand. At 61 he is exactly the same age as John Wayne was when he played the part. It's a rock solid portrayal but I never really warmed to Bridges' Rooster and as a result I didn't care about him.

Matt Damon has no trouble outshining Glen Campbell in the Texas Ranger role although I found his voice and mannerisms affected and somewhat annoying. Josh Brolin gets third billing on the poster but he has less screen time than the character did the first time around, and his role could have been played by almost anyone.

The real eye opener here is Hailee Steinfeld as Mattie Ross. A vast improvement over Kim Darby, she dominates every scene she's in, which is as it should be, since the book is really about Mattie and not Rooster Cogburn. She is totally believable as a strong willed 14 year old and had me rooting for her after her first big scene with the horse trader. In fact she was the only character in this version who kept my interest throughout.

The Coens said they wanted to make a film more faithful to the book than the '69 version and they have. Too faithful. While it's nice to see certain things restored like the Ranger's original fate and especially the bittersweet epilogue, this faithfulness slows the film down as it tries too hard to evoke the period. Although the original is 20 minutes longer, (I rented it right after seeing this one), it seemed shorter as I became more involved with the performers.

Where the first film really has this one beat is in the supporting actor category. With names like Robert Duvall, Dennis Hopper, Strother Martin, and Jeff Corey, they make the most of their individual scenes in a way the actors here do not. The Coens want ensemble performances a la Robert Altman which gives the film a realistic feel, a la *Deadwood*, but ultimately it fails to engage us because, let's face it, we go to see a Coen Brothers movie not for realism but for their creative quirkiness. *True Grit* is a pretty good movie, and looked at all together it's better than the first one. Just not as entertaining. (See *Cauley Bennett's True Grit* book review on page 26.)

Rated PG-13 for sequences of Western violence and disturbing images.

REVIEW BY CHIP KAUFMANN

Sharon Van Etten at Broadway

BY JAMES CASSARA

The name Sharon Van Etten may be a new one on the musical horizon, but over the past year she's been wowing and wooing crowds from coast to coast.

Since releasing *Epic*, her first full length album on the Ba Da Ding label, she's played the Pitchfork Music Festival and toured relentlessly across the land. She's busily preparing new material while focusing on smaller gigs. It's an environment that allows her to showcase the earnest lyrics, charmingly personal performances, and astounding voice that have earned her both praise and adoring fans all across the country.

While the dead of winter may not always be the best time to see live music, the sounds of Sharon Van Etten may be just the tonic to chase away those cold weather blues.



Sharon Van Etten at Broadway's in downtown Asheville, on Sunday, January 23. For more information and song samples go to www.myspace.com/sharonvanetten.

Red June at Black Mountain Center for the Arts

Red June, the Asheville-based acoustic Americana trio, recently released their debut album, titled *Remember Me Well*.

Funded, in part, by a grant from the Asheville Area Arts Council, *Remember Me Well* leads listeners on an emotional journey, highlighted by the band's thoughtful and innovative songwriting, heartfelt vocals, tasteful instrumental work and soaring harmonies.

Red June is made up of three talented, veteran musicians, singers and songwriters: Will Straughan (formerly of the Emma Gibbs Band), John Cloyd Miller (formerly of Lo-Fi Breakdown) and Natalya Weinstein (of Polecat Creek and Lo-Fi Breakdown). The Red June sound is as versatile as the musicians themselves; they touch on bluegrass, roots rock, old-time and traditional country music.

Recently invited to the International Folk Alliance Conference in Memphis TN where they will perform in mid-February, Red June will then return home for an intimate show at the Black



Red June features Natalya Weinstein on fiddle, Will Straughan on dobro, and John Cloyd Miller on guitar.



For more information about the band or to purchase/listen to *Remember Me Well*, please visit www.redjunemusic.com. For information about the Black Mountain Center for the Arts, visit www.blackmountainarts.org or call (828) 669-0930.

Mountain Center for the Arts, located at 225 W. State Street, on Saturday, February 26. Show begins at 7:30 with no ticket reservations, admission is a suggested donation made at the door of \$10.

tion it was only natural that someone would attempt to do *Narnia*. The results have been mixed to say the least.

The Lion, the Witch, & the Wardrobe, the most popular book in the series, was a good first movie. It was well cast and had the proper mix of interesting characters and imaginative special effects. The follow-up *Prince Caspian* suffered from being too much like *Lord of the Rings*, concentrating more on epic battles than on ideas and characterization. With *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* the series has gotten caught up in the 3-D craze and it nearly sinks the whole film.

As I often do with these movies, I chose to see the regular 2-D version to see how well the film fares without the 3-D process. The first half hour of *Dawn Treader* was like a throwback to the 1950s with 3-D effects galore and very little else. The filmmakers assume you read the books or saw the first two offerings and waste no time on any kind of background. Once the three characters get to Narnia, things improve and the film follows the intriguing story fairly closely.

The *Dawn Treader* is a ship, headed up by Prince Caspian, in search of 7 lords who are scattered throughout the known Narnian world. Joining Lucy and Edmund Pevensie (no Peter or Susan this time around) is their selfish, spoiled cousin Eustace who is transformed into a dragon to learn the error of his ways. They visit 7 different locales and collect each Lord's sword before arriving at the edge of the world with the next world just beyond. Aslan the lion (voiced by Liam Neeson) is waiting for them with an important message.

Director Michael Apted has had a distinguished career (*Coal Miner's Daughter*, *Agatha*, *Nell*) but there's no trace of him here. Just a cop directing traffic, depending on CGI, and collecting his paycheck. Not nearly as good as *Witch* but better than *Caspian*, *Dawn Treader* fails to live up to the potential of its source material but should please most fans anyway.

Rated PG-13 for frightening images and sequences of fantasy action.

REVIEW BY CHIP KAUFMANN

True Grit 1/2

Short Take: The Coen Brothers remake of the classic John Wayne film suffers from too slow a pace and a lack of their signature quirkiness.

REEL TAKE: There are a number of people who are quite bent out of shape about the Coens' remake of the classic 1969 John Wayne film without ever having seen it. Comparing the two really isn't fair but it's unavoidable.

Jeff Bridges makes a convincing Rooster Cogburn wearing his eye patch over the right eye (Wayne wore his over the left) and speaking in an even more gravelly voice which makes him occasionally hard to

stage preview

Six Characters in Search of an Author

The Aquila Theatre Company, directed by Peter Meineck, presents back-to-back performances of Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, 8 p.m. Friday, February 4, and Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 8 p.m. Saturday, February 5 at Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack Place in downtown Asheville.

Aquila Theatre Company is one of the foremost producers of touring theater and is widely renowned for bringing a thoroughly modern sensibility to great classics throughout the United States and abroad. Its mission is to make classical works accessible to the greater public using innovative takes on strong scripts. Over the past several Mainstage Series seasons, Asheville audiences have come to know and anticipate the annual repertory offering of this creative company.

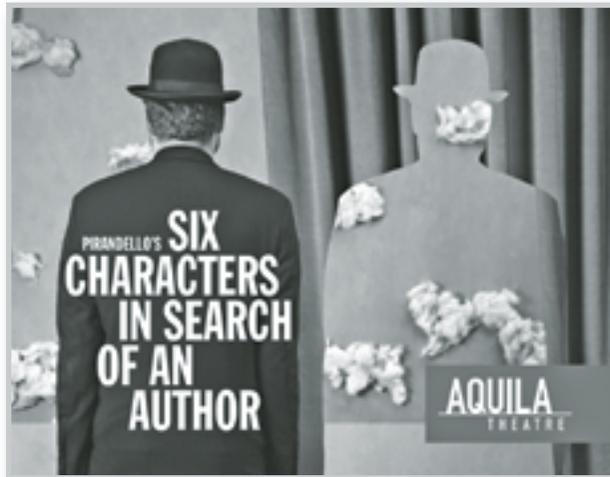
On February 4, Aquila presents an exciting new production of Nobel Laureate Luigi Pirandello's famous drama, *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. This relevant and poignant production dares to ask fundamental questions about the very nature of art and entertainment, blurring the line between reality and artifice.

Then on February 5, Aquila present an exciting new take on Shakespeare's timeless comedy, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Set against a classical Athenian backdrop, the story explores the universal theme of love

BY KATE JUSTUS

through Aquila's fresh and imaginative stage interpretation.

In addition to its evening performances, Aquila Theatre Company presents the full-length version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for students and teachers as part of the Diana Wortham Theatre Young Audience Series, 10 a.m. on Monday, February 7.



Tickets available by phoning (828) 257-4530 or visit www.dwththeatre.com. Reservations for the School Show may be made by calling Rae Geoffrey at (828) 257-4544 x307 or send an email to rae@dwtheatre.com.

Montford Park Players Seeks Directors FOR 2011 OUTDOOR SEASON

The Montford Park Players, North Carolina's longest running Shakespeare Festival, is seeking directors for its 2011 outdoor season.

Interviews will be held Saturday, January 8.

The season will include:

May 12-29: Complete Works of Wm. Shakespeare (abridged) – *The Next Generation* – The funniest show you are likely to see in your lifetime!

June 3-26: Double Falsehood/Comedy of Errors, by William Shakespeare – a “double feature” evening of great comedy, including one of the first productions in the United States of this work recently determined to be written at least partly by William Shakespeare!

July 1-3; August 5-7; September 9-18: The Asheville Shakesperience – a return engagement by our resident repertory company with all new material.

July 8-31: All's Well That Ends Well – another great Shakespeare comedy.

August 12 - September 4: Julius Caesar – the classic tragedy of the struggle between the conflicting demands of honour, patriotism, and friendship.

Applicants should download the Director Application and Director Guidelines at www.montfordparkplayers.org under the “Show Info” tab. Please email a written application to info@montfordparkplayers.org, and contact the Managing Director at (828) 254-5146 for more information.

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southern comfort

A JOURNAL OF SHORT STORIES BY JUDY AUSLEY

2011: A New Start

BY JUDY AUSLEY

only homeless people, I am talking about everyone you meet. I can always tell that the person needs someone to listen for a minute or two. Listen good and you may decide, like I often do, that others have worse situations in their lives than I do.

By now, if you read this column you are most likely saying, "Where is this going?" Or, "This is not about art!" To that I will say, it may not be what you think. This is just a little exercise in the art of people.

There are people everywhere nowadays, just in a daze. Many have that depressed, empty-glazed look in their eyes that we all can get in time of distress. The news is dismal and horrible most of the time and you

think there is really not that much to look forward to in 2011. I feel that way now and I am still searching.

People running here and there on every corner spending money on some gift that costs far too much. For what? It is like an addiction. You do it anyway even though you know in your head that you should not!

A friend came to me the other day complaining about spending too much on gifts. I said, "Well if you stay home and stay busy doing things you should be doing around home, you won't spend money." In this economy and the way things are in Washington, D.C. these days, none of us should be spending with abandonment. Because it will come back to bite us in another day.

I don't know how life will be in 2011 for me. But I do know one thing: I am a lot better off than most people I know. And, I know one true thing about me: I will continue my "people shopping" in search of someone to tell me a story about their lives, their problems and their search for happiness.

There is peace of mind and content-

There is peace of mind and contentment but you have to find it and create it.

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There is peace of mind and content-



ment but you have to find it and create it. What will I be doing in 2011? I do not have a clue at the moment, but there is one thing I intend to do and that is find a park bench someplace and talk with the next person who sits down next to me.

That person may need me as much as I need to listen to every word they say.

If I write a story about that person then I will feel good about me. It always works and that is why I am looking forward to what life brings in 2011, as simple as it may be.



Writer Judy Ausley has been a reporter with newspapers in NC for 40 years. She retired in 2005 and continues to freelance at her home in Asheville. She can be contacted by e-mail at JudyAusley@aol.com. If you know a character in Asheville who has not had a conventional life, put them in touch with Judy for an article in this column, Southern Comfort.

Call for Artists

INSTRUCTORS, DEMONSTRATORS, AND PERFORMERS

The Cultural Arts Division of City of Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department is seeking instructors, demonstrators, and performers for cultural arts programming throughout Asheville.

The Cultural Arts Division works with instructors, demonstrators and performers to provide hands-on art classes, demonstrations or performances to children, teens, adults, and seniors throughout the community.

Artists are invited to submit portfolios of their current work along with a resume, letter of interest, and references. Artists may submit as individuals or as teams.

The application deadline is Monday, February 28, 2011. All application materials must be submitted online through CaFÉ™ at www.callforentry.org. There are no fees for artists to apply or to use the CaFÉ online application system.

Art forms may include, but are not limited to, all two-dimensional art forms (drawing, painting, printmaking, photography, encaustic, etc.), all three dimensional

art forms (sculpture, metal working, wood-working, ceramics, furniture making, etc.), as well as dance, music, theater, circus arts, new media, textile arts, folk art, paper arts, bookmaking, candle making, and literary arts. All art forms are welcome.

This call is open to all artists age 18 years and older who currently live or work in Buncombe, Madison, Yancey, McDowell, Rutherford, Henderson, Transylvania, and Haywood Counties.

Artists, demonstrators and performers are invited to attend community meetings to ask questions. Current meeting dates are: Wednesday, January 12 at 2 p.m. at the Fine Arts League; Monday, January 31 at 6 p.m. at Recreation Park; Thursday, February 10 at 6 p.m. at the Fine Arts League. Additional dates will be scheduled.

For detailed information and to submit applications, visit www.callforentry.org or contact Diane Ruggiero, Superintendent of Cultural Arts at druggiero@ashevilenc.gov or (828) 259-5815.

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performance

Make Time for Three

VIRTUOSIC AND VERSATILE STRING TRIO TO ENERGIZE THE STAGE

When it comes to choosing live music in January, it's *Time For Three*. No, not three concerts, rather, three extraordinarily talented young musicians. The category-defying string trio *Time For Three* transcends traditional classification, earning a reputation for limitless enthusiasm and broken musical boundaries.

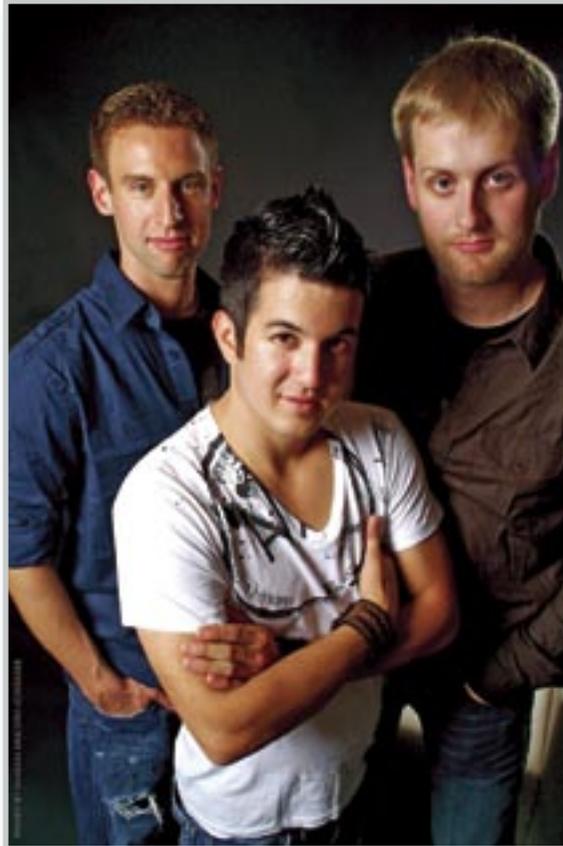


Photo: Vanessa Briceno-Scherzer

Boundless youthful curiosity.

On January 15 at 7:30 p.m. *Time For Three* presents another family-friendly offering from Asheville Bravo Concerts. The appeal of the trio spans across the generations, for their respect for the Classical repertoire and precise technique are matched by the boundless youthful curiosity with which they bend rules and integrate different musical styles into their program. Indeed, they are "on a mission to transform, reinvigorate, and grow the Classical audience," by adding elements of Blues, Gypsy, Bluegrass and Jazz into the mix. The youthful group forms a blend all their own, carrying a passion for improvisation, composing and arranging.

Violinists Zachary De Pue and Nicolas Kendall already shared a mutual love of bluegrass fiddling when bassist Ranaan Meyer introduced them to jazz and various

Transcends traditional classification.

improvisatory forms. The ensemble gained instant attention in July 2003, during a lightning-induced power failure at Philadelphia's Mann Center for the Performing Arts, when Ranaan and Zach, both performing members of The Philadelphia Orchestra, obliged with an impromptu jam session that included works as far afield from the originally scheduled symphony as "Jerusalem's Ridge," "Ragtime Annie," and "The Orange Blossom Special." The crowd went wild.

To date, the group has already performed hundreds of engagements as diverse as their music, from featured guest solos with The Philadelphia Orchestra to opening sets for K.D. Lang. They have appeared on many of the nation's important stages, including the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

Time For Three's live performances have been praised by media from the *Denver Post* ("Kinetic showmanship – fingers on fire, with power and gusto."), to the *Chicago Tribune* ("The piece de resistance... A roaring ovation!"), and the *Indianapolis Star* ("Spontaneity of expression, technical aplomb... might be matchless anywhere.")

Upcoming shows include the extraordinary string trio *Time For Three*, and Tony-Award award winner and recent Kennedy Center Honoree Bill T. Jones. For more information please visit www.ashevillebravoconcerts.org.

Curious listeners can hear *Time For Three* for themselves on YouTube and the trio's MySpace music page, www.myspace.com/timeforthree.



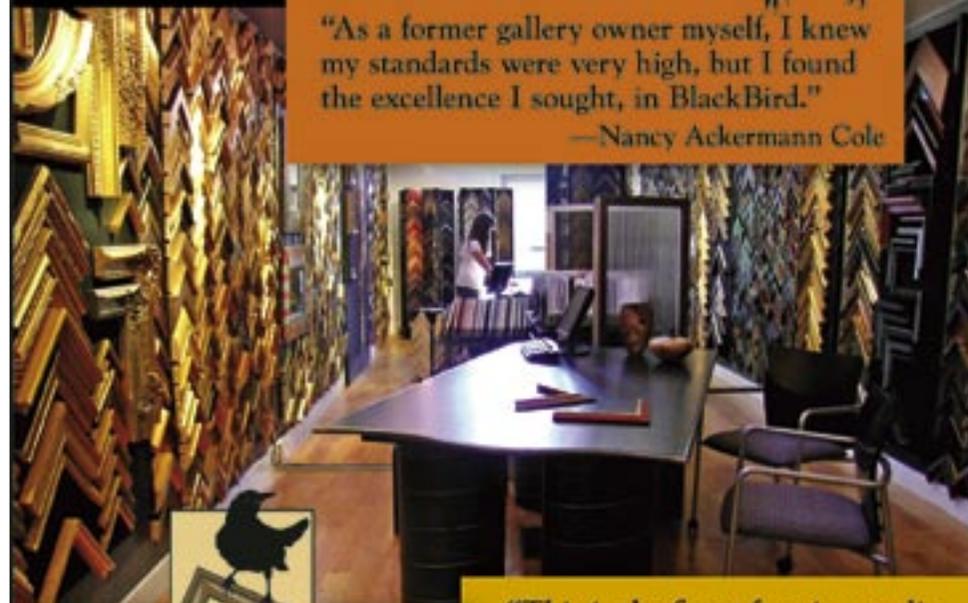
Time For Three, presented by Asheville Bravo Concerts, the area's oldest arts non-profit. At the Thomas Wolfe Auditorium. Individual

tickets range from \$20-\$60 and can be purchased by calling the Asheville Bravo Concerts office at (828) 225-5887, visiting www.ticketmaster.com, or in person at the Civic Center Box Office. Students receive half-price tickets for all Bravo concerts.

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performance

ALO Debuts World-Renowned Children's Opera

BY KATIE CHEN

The program will feature
poetry readings, and
dance by Asheville Ballet.

In celebration of its 5th anniversary, the Asheville Lyric Opera's Education Opera Project is proud to present the delightful children's opera, *Brundibár*, by the Czech composer Hans Krása.

An opera written for a cast of children, all roles will be played by local students selected by open audition, and they will be directed by Asheville Lyric Opera (ALO) company manager and the project's founder, Kristen Yarborough. In addition to the full-length production of *Brundibár*, the program will feature poetry readings, dance by Asheville Ballet, as well as string chamber works by Krása.



Photo courtesy of Opera Omaha and photographer, Dawn Sumrell.

Brundibár, the world-renowned twentieth-century opera that emerged from the darkness of Central Europe in the 1930s, portrays the classic story of good triumphing over evil through a colorful story about children overcoming a bully. A Czech Jewish man himself, Krása originally wrote the opera for an orphanage in his hometown as encouragement to the children and the community during the trying times of early World War II.

Though its debut was in Prague in 1942, the opera has become well known for the fifty-five performances by children in the concentration camp, Theresienstadt. The unique historical context in which opera was written, and both the musical and cultural significance of the opera provide a rich educational experience to all involved, an experience that the Education Opera Program always seeks to provide its audience.

At its core, the Education Opera Program is an interdisciplinary program that focuses on using opera performance as a means for enhancing curriculum taught in high school. The project began in 2006, when Asheville High School became a training ground for this unique opera production program. In collaboration with the high school educators, ALO professionals offered intensive classes to music and theatre students in voice and vocal anatomy, as well as light, sound, costume and set design. And at the end of two months, Asheville High School and the ALO pro-

fessionals presented a full production of *Amahl and the Night Visitors*.

In addition to the public performances on Asheville High School's stage, two school performances were offered to local schools free of charge as a part of the program's mission. Each year since then, the Education Opera Program has moved to other high schools in the Asheville area (including T.C. Roberson, A.C. Reynolds and North Buncombe High School) and produced a one-act opera with the students; an incredibly unique collaboration of school and opera professionals, and all in the name of education and community outreach.

ALO's debut of *Brundibár* marks the 5th anniversary celebration of the ALO Education Opera Program, and measures have been taken to ensure that this year's performance is special. This will be the first year that the education opera will be performed at the Diana Wortham Theatre, and it will also be the first time that the program works with students from multiple schools and backgrounds in the Buncombe County area, including children from private schools, public schools and home-school networks simultaneously.

In addition to the public shows, Asheville City and Buncombe County school districts will be bussing in up to 2,000 students for the four student performances offered free of charge during the school day.

performance



Photo courtesy of Opera Omaha and photographer, Dawn Sumrell.

A rich, educational experience.

The entire production is a feat that has taken much planning and cooperation from everyone involved. The production is surely an example of what can be accomplished through the collaboration, cooperation, and support of the local community.

Specifically, ALO would like to thank the program sponsor, Volvo Construction, for its financial support; Wachovia Foundation and Asheville Area Arts Council for grant support; and the Asheville City and Buncombe County school systems, the local private schools involved, and the city's home-school network for all of the cooperation and support that they have given. Without it, this extensive production would not be possible.

For more information about the production of *Brundibár*, please visit the Asheville Lyric Opera's website at www.ashevillelyric.org, or call (828) 236-0670. A lecture series will be offered about this opera at Malaprop's Bookstore, and the Jewish Community Center throughout the month of January. For more information about the lecture series, please contact those venues directly.



Performances will be on Saturday, January 29, at 3 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. at the Diana Wortham Theatre (the Saturday evening performance

has replaced the performance that was originally scheduled for Friday, January 28). To purchase tickets go to the Diana Wortham Theatre website at www.dwththeatre.com, or call their box office at (828) 257-4530.

MEET THE DIRECTORS & DESIGNERS

Meet the Directors of Asheville Lyric Opera's *Brundibár*

January 13 at 7 p.m.

Meet Dr. David Starkey, director of Asheville Lyric Opera, and Dr. Vance Reese, musical director of Asheville Lyric Opera's production of *Brundibár*, as they discuss the music of Hans Krasa and this wonderful opera!

IF YOU GO: Malaprop's Bookstore/Café, 55 Haywood Street, downtown Asheville. Call (828) 254-6734, or visit www.malaprops.com.

Meet the Designers of Asheville Lyric Opera's *Brundibár*

January 18 at 7 p.m.

Meet Kristen Yarborough and Jayne Harnett-Hargrove, as they discuss artistic design and concept as related to the Asheville Lyric Opera's production of *Brundibár*, as well as the goals of ALO's "education opera project."

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performance

The Peabody Trio to Perform

Part of Asheville Chamber Music Series

The third concert of the 58th season of the Asheville Chamber Music Series (ACMS) will be presented on Friday, January 21, 2010, featuring The Peabody Trio.

The program includes *Dancer on a Tightrope*, Sofia Gubaidulina composer, Johannes Brahms, *Trio No. 2 in C major Op. 87 Stille Musik*, Alfred Schnittke and *Trio No. 1 in D minor Op. 49* by Felix Mendelssohn

On Thursday, January 20th a "Pre-Concert Talk" by Bill Clark, president of the Asheville Area Piano Forum will be presented at the Reuter Center at UNCA. The program will begin at 4:15 PM and is free and open to the public.

Since winning the prestigious Naumburg Chamber Music Award in 1989, The Peabody Trio, members Violaine Melançon, violin, Natasha Brofsky, cello and Seth Knopp, piano, has established itself as an important presence in the chamber music world as vivid interpreters of the classics of

BY PAMELA MILLER

the repertoire, advocates for new music, and dedicated teachers and mentors to a generation of young musicians.

They bring to their music making what *The Washington Post* calls "the romantic fervor of the 20th century greats." The members' extreme focus, lack of ego and purity of sound testify to their commitment to serving the music first. Their performances "effervesce, take flight, and soar... all three players seem fused as one, their voices gentle, sincere, and heartfelt," says *The Strad.*, June 2009.

For more information call (828) 259-3626 or go to www.main.nc.us/ashevillechambermusic



The concert will take place at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Asheville, located 1 Edwin Pl. at Charlotte Street, at 8 p.m. Tickets are available for \$35 at the door on a first come, first served basis. Students under 25 are admitted free of charge (space permitting). To pre-order tickets call (828) 259-3626.

Asheville Playback Theatre invites you to "Life Stages"

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Saturday, January 8 at 8 PM

Sunday, January 9 at 2 PM
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2011 Hendersonville Chamber Music Schedule

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!

Featuring five quite different performing groups, this year's performance schedule is sure to attract audiences who simply enjoy great music, both classical and, for the first time, jazz, brilliantly performed.

The series leads off with a brilliant trio that features Brevard Music Center's Artistic Director pianist Bruce Murray performing with BMC's violinist Jason Posnock and flutist Dilshad Posnock.

2011 PERFORMANCES

February 27 – Brevard Music Center Piano Trio

Enjoy an afternoon of delicious music with BMC Artistic Director Bruce Murray at the piano; Dilshad Posnock, former Director of the Artist Diploma Program at Carnegie Mellon, on flute and Brevard's Associate Artistic Administrator Jason Posnock, violin.

March 20 – EastWind Quintet

This resident faculty quintet at UNC-Greensboro, delights worldwide audiences with its savory Baroque to modern repertoire! Mary Ashley Barret, oboe; Anthony Taylor, clarinet; Steven Stusek, saxophone; Kelly Burke, bass clarinet; and Michael Burns, bassoon.

April 17 – Parrini Piano Trio

North Greenville University's Fabio Parrini has won numerous prizes both in his native Italy and the U.S. Violinist Naho Tsutsui Parrini is an active recitalist in the New York Metropolitan area, and a member of the Hyperion String Quartet. Cellist Alberto Parrini regularly performs with the American Chamber Players. A rare family visit allows all three to perform for us!

May 1 – Bill Gerhardt Trio with Sharon LaMotte

A modern jazz icon, pianist and arranger, and Down Beat Magazine award winner pianist Bill Gerhardt performs in New York and Europe but now resides mostly in Asheville. The group has Zack Page on bass



Chicago's prize-winning Kontras Quartet.

BY ROBERT WILEY

and Sonny Thornton on drums. Now add the pure, unembellished voice of Sharon LaMotte and you have the perfect recipe for smooth and mellow listening!

May 22 — Kontras String Quartet

Founded by members of Chicago's Civic Orchestra, Kontras is the 2010 winner of Western Piedmont Symphony's highly coveted three-year residency program. The quartet mixes and blends a sumptuous international flavor. Violinists Dmitri Pogorelov is Russian and Francois Henkins, South African; violist Ai Ishida is Japanese and cellist Jean Hatmaker, American.



Hendersonville Chamber Music Concerts, at the First Congregational Church in Hendersonville. Performances are on Sunday and begin at 3 p.m. Subscriptions for all five concerts are \$70. Mail a check or money order payable to HFCM to Hendersonville Chamber Music, PO Box 271 Hendersonville, NC 28793.

Individual tickets at \$17 are also available at Hendersonville Visitors Center with a dollar per ticket surcharge, and at the door on day of performance. More information at (828) 697-0455 or (828) 890-4411 or visit www.hendersonvillechambermusic.org.

noteworthy

{Re}HAPPENING 2011

at the Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center

The Media Arts Project (MAP) and the Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center (BMCM+AC) will host the second annual {Re}HAPPENING, on Saturday, April 9 in the original dining hall of the former Black Mountain College, now Camp Rockmont. A kick-off event showcased video of the performances and installation art from last year's event, held at Bobo Gallery on December 14.

Inspired by our idea of what a typical Saturday night at Black Mountain College might have been like, the {Re}HAPPENING begins with a meal – with tastes from over a dozen different local restaurants and farms – surrounded by art. Various performances happen around the seated audience. During the second half of the evening the dining hall becomes the main performance space, while music, multimedia art and more takes place across the rest of the campus into the night.

Nearly 400 people attended the inaugural event in 2010. For a detailed look at the 2010 {Re}HAPPENING, please visit www.rehappening.com to view photos and video from the show.

"The BMC campus will be transformed into site-specific art spaces where everything from sculptural video installation, to interactive sculpture, to multimedia-based performance takes place," said Gene Felice, a board member of both organizations and the artist coordinating the event. "The idea is that art is 'happening' all around us simultaneously. It's up to the

viewer to choose to see or experience in the moment, possibly missing something going on in another space, but knowing that they are part of the creative process that is transpiring around them."

In partnership with the MAP, this BMCM+AC event pays tribute to Black Mountain College by bringing its dynamic energy into the present day. The project has developed as an innovative fundraising and art-based collaboration between the two non-profits, balancing the history, innovation and experience of BMCM+AC, with the forward-thinking and media-based collective of artists that defines the MAP.

The April 9, 2011 event will begin with a cocktail social, leading into a seated "family style" dinner. The second part of the evening will include drinks, light appetizers and an extended evening of art, performance & dancing. Tickets for the entire evening including dinner are \$50 (\$40 for BMCM+AC and MAP members). For the second half only, the ticket price is \$15 (\$10 for members).

Vinnie's Neighborhood Italian will again provide the main course, and dozens of local restaurants will contribute. The 2011 artist lineup will be announced soon. Visit www.rehappening.com for updates.



Celebrate Innovation & Collaboration in the Arts

and www.themap.org, a dynamic portfolio and networking site.

About The Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center

The Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center (BMCM+AC) preserves and continues the unique legacy of educational and artistic innovation of Black Mountain College. We achieve our mission through collection, conservation, and educational activities including exhibitions, publications, and public programs.

IF YOU GO Contact us or stop by for more info or to purchase tickets for the event: Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center, 56 Broadway, Asheville. Phone (828) 350-8484 or email bmcmac@bellsouth.net for more details.

About the Media Arts Project

The Media Arts Project (MAP) cultivates innovative arts and technology in western North Carolina. Because the media arts are integral to the vibrant cultural and economic life of the region, the MAP provides ways for media artists to connect with resources, professional opportunities, and one another through events, grant programs,

Asheville Symphony 50th Anniversary Commemorative Book and DVD

For their 50th anniversary, the Asheville Symphony Orchestra cracked open the archives and created a wonderful book celebrating their past 50 years. Learn about their history, see who's performed with them, and follow their journey as they become one of Western North Carolina's largest non-profit arts providers.

The book has a great timeline and even comes with a DVD of music director Daniel Meyer telling the ASO's story, along with interviews from some of the Asheville Symphony Orchestra's VIPs.

Purchase this set now for \$20 through the Asheville Symphony Orchestra office by



Daniel Meyer, Music Director of the Asheville Symphony. Photo: Michael Morel

calling (828) 254-7046 or visit www.ashevillemusic.org. Asheville Symphony, PO Box 2852, Asheville, NC.

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The Washington Post - September 25, 2007
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poetry & poets

Jim Clark: Appalachia's "Renaissance Man"

The label "Renaissance Man" is bandied about these days with no particular regard for its history or connotations. An on-line web-source defines a "Renaissance Man" as "A man who has broad intellectual interests and is accomplished in areas of both the arts and the sciences."

Granted the gender-bias implicit in this definition, clearly our world's emphasis on specialization lessens the likelihood that any one person — regardless of his or her gender or "intelligence" — will amass a sufficient range of abilities and accomplishments so as to be tagged with such an all-encompassing term. I'm not a big fan of labels — they are more problematic than helpful. That said, "Renaissance Man" is an apt way of describing Jim Clark.

A native of Tennessee's Cumberland Plateau, and presently a professor of Southern literature and creative writing at Barton College, in Wilson, North Carolina, Clark is a widely respected and multi-talented man of letters, having produced his own writings in several genres — poems, short stories, plays, creative nonfiction pieces, academic essays — and having edited journals and books compiling other authors' creative writings.

Complementing his literary and scholarly talents, Clark composes original songs, and he is a skilled performer of his own type of "Americana" music, singing with a distinctive voice and playing several acoustic instruments.

While he likely wouldn't consider himself a "Renaissance Man" — he is humble, even self-deprecating when speaking about his range of talents (in his "collected writings" volume entitled *Notions: A Jim Clark Miscellany* [2007], he calls himself "an amateur dilettante") — Clark recognizes that an artist needs support in order for art to survive and to flourish; hence, he maintains a website dedicated to his work, viewable at www.jimclarkpoet.com

Notions contains a generous sampling of Clark's prose works (memorable short stories and insightful personal and scholarly essays), his play *The Girl with the Faraway Eye*, as well as nine new poems (Clark published two earlier poetry collections, *Dancing on Canaan's Ruins* [1983] and *Handiwork* [1998]).

These new poems impressively

explore great events (the Civil War) and special occasions (Barton College's centennial and a friend's 50th birthday). A sample poem (below) from *Notions* is Clark's elegiac quatrain upon the death of rock musician Warren Zevon, "Play That Dead Man's Song":

Alas for the quick, alas for the dead,
The skeleton fool who jingled grim cheer
Ascends the carriage whose horses' heads
Incline toward Eternity. His ride's here.



Jim Clark

poem "Song after Harvest":

Now we are done with the last bundle
Of rye and wheat.
What was green in the fields of spring
And bronze in summer's
Is now meal in the barrel
Or bread to eat.

This was no labor of love
But sweat will sweeten
The bread from the salted brow;
When the snows come
We will give grave thanks for the bread, eaten
To the last crumb.

In addition to his writing and his music, Clark is known for his role in bringing to a wider readership the poems of Byron Herbert Reece (1917-1958), an underappreciated author from the hills of north Georgia.

A 2002 book edited by Clark, *Fable in the Blood: The Selected Poems of Byron Herbert Reece*, features a thorough overview of Reece's poetry along with Clark's introductory essay, which conveys with clarity and compassion the personal and aesthetic struggles in Reece's tragic life.

In Clark's assessment, Reece was forgotten after his death by suicide because he was "a rustic folk poet" whose "direct, unassuming, organic appropriation of his traditional sources went against modernist orthodoxy."

Discovered by Appalachian "farmer-poet" Jesse Stuart, Reece went against the grain of his times because he wrote about what he knew, and what he knew was farming. As Reece said to a journalist, "Once when I was writing my first novel, I happened to remark to a correspondent that I had been plowing potatoes. She wrote that I should concentrate on the book. 'Anybody can plow potatoes,' she said. 'Anybody can plow potatoes,' I wrote in return, 'but nobody is willing to plow mine but me.'"

Reece possessed writing talent and secured a supportive arrangement with a major publisher (E.P. Dutton), yet, despite forays to lowland schools and bookstores for literary events, he always returned to his family farm, in part to tend the crops and in part to take care of his tubercular parents (he himself eventually contracted that disease).

Crafted in simple language and

BY TED OLSON

traditional poetic forms, Reece's poems about life in the hills are subtly lyrical while evoking universal themes; and, quite commendably, his poems are anything but sentimental. For instance, the

As a logical outgrowth of his love for music and his respect for Reece's work, Clark in November 2010 released *The Service of Song*, a CD showcasing his memorable performances of twelve songs that feature lyrics by Reece set to Clark's musical arrangements. (Clark's first CD, *Buried Land* [2003], juxtaposed his recitations of some of his own poems interspersed with his performances of Appalachian folk songs.)

Expertly blending Clark's progressive musicianship with Reece's timeless lyrics, *The Service of Song* honors Appalachia from the perspectives of two of Appalachia's most compelling voices.



Ted Olson is the author of such books as *Breathing in Darkness: Poems* (Wind Publications, 2006) and *Blue Ridge Folklife* (University Press of Mississippi, 1998) and he is the editor of numerous books, including *CrossRoads: A Southern Culture Annual* (Mercer University Press, 2009). His experiences as a poet and musician are discussed on www.windpub.com/books/breathingindarkness.htm.

Poets who would like for their poetry to be considered for a future column may send their books and manuscripts to Ted Olson, ETSU, Box 70400, Johnson City, TN 37614. Please include contact information and a SASE with submissions.

authors ~ books ~ readings

Incontinent on the Continent:

My Mother, Her Walker, and Our Grand Tour of Italy – written by Jane Christmas

I picked up *Incontinent on the Continent* (Greystone Books, 2009) because of its hilarious title. It hinted at a humorous, heart-warming travel memoir about a nice, middle-aged daughter and her sweet little old lady mother during their female bonding experience in beautiful Italy. Well, not quite.

For some insane reason, Canadian author Jane Christmas (*What the Psychic Told the Pilgrim*) thinks a 6-week tour of Italy with her mother — just the two of them — would bandage 50 years of incessant disharmony. No one thought about taking a hassle-free Cosmo bus tour, or a shorter tour, say three weeks, or even a try-out trip closer to home. Being women, they were counting their tourist pennies so they went in the off-season — when almost everything was closed, including all the decent restaurants in the country.

Jane insists on driving through Italy in a rental car and staying in hotels she knows

only from guide books. She barely factors her mother's walker into the plans. Nor her arthritis, or incontinence, or her fragile handle on the truth of her aging body. Every day in Italy, Mom's travel ambitions

exceed her abilities.

Often she just wants to spend the day in bed instead of sightseeing.

Refusing to abandon her childish anger,

Jane won't see that Mom is failing, not faking. For example, Jane leaves Mom unattended in a shopping plaza while she goes museum-hopping. When Jane returns, her panic-stricken mother is screaming for help in a crowd of passersby. Instead of sympathizing with an old woman's fear of being alone, Jane is angry at what she thinks is her mother's Drama Queen pretensions. Unbelievably, Jane does the same thing a few days later, with the same horrific results. Like many other adult children, Jane is a slow learner where her mother is concerned.

Her daughter "won't see that Mom is failing, not faking."



REVIEWS BY CAULEY BENNETT

On its few good days, the trip was fun and the book includes wonderful memories of Americans seeing Italy for the first time. Miles of gorgeous seaside scenery, twisting mountain roads, ancient villas, incredible art everywhere and unforgettable last days in Venice. These scenes make you

want to call your travel agent immediately.

But mostly — because Jane is clueless and Mom is declining — the trip is a disappointment. Not a happy or funny story. But a great one. Thanks to Jane's clear, fearless prose, readers feel as if they're passengers on the trip with them. As painful as the book might be, it's also an eye-opener and I recommend it to adult daughters everywhere.

The best part of *Incontinent on the Continent* was the tentative reconciliation the women made upon their return. The worst part of the tale is the pathetic fact that in the entire six weeks, they didn't have even one good meal! A lesson to everyone who wants to eat their way through Italy on the off-season.

Selected Shorts: Even More Laughs

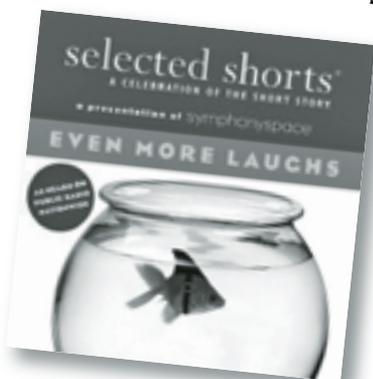
Produced by Symphony Space

If you like to listen to laugh-out loud stories, you'll love *Even More Laughs*, the latest in the *Selected Shorts* series from Symphony Space.

Selected Shorts is a series of live readings, produced by the famed Symphony Space multimedia center in upper west side New York. The short stories, of all genres, are written by classic authors such as Eudora Welty and Hemingway, and the best contemporary authors, including Philip Roth and Amy Tan. Stars of stage and screen vie with one another to perform the stories.

Even More Laughs consists of three hours of stories. The first is by T. Coraghessan Boyle and performed by comedian Stephen Colbert (*The Colbert Report*). *The Lie* is a side-splitting tale of a hapless young husband, who uses a small lie to play hooky from work, and then gets drawn deeper and deeper into a tangled web of deceit. It's a masterpiece of comic dread and Colbert's deadpan delivery makes it even more uproarious.

Miranda July's *The Swim Team* is about a young woman, stuck in a desert



town without a pool, who gives the local exercise-challenged senior citizens private swimming lessons on the floor in her apartment. It's narrated by Parker Posey, who, known as the 'Queen of the Indies' for starring in over 30 independent movies, has a few funny stories to tell herself.

The most popular comic tale in the history of the *Selected Shorts* series

is also included. It's *Ima Dream*, Thomas Meehan's wacky fantasy of a cocktail party whose guests have two-syllable names — think Ida, Una, Anna, Oona, Idi, Eli, Willy, etc. — who all have to be introduced as each new guest arrives. Christine Baranski (TV's *The Good Wife*) recreates the rapid fire, tongue-twisting introductions, keeping everyone in stitches. There's no laugh track on these recordings, it's the real sound of the audience in New York having a great time.

One-hour taped versions of *Selected Shorts* are played every week on National Public Radio stations across the country. In Asheville, the program airs on Saturday mornings from 7 to 8 a.m. on WCQS, 88.1 FM.

The Buncombe County Library system has eight editions of these programs, which you can order online. If you're new to library online services, you're really missing out on one of our region's greatest entertainment centers. Visit your local library for help getting started.

First Thrills:

High-Octane Stories from the Hottest Thriller Authors

This short story collection consists of 25 different thriller tales written by novelists and appearing in print here for the first time. Mostly Americans, the authors range from well-known veterans such as Jeffrey Deaver to newbies who are just beginning to build up name recognition. The editor is Lee Child, author of the phenomenally successful Jack Reacher series (*61 Hours*, Delacorte, 2010).

First Thrills (A Forge Book, 2010) proves the increasing role of women writers

'First Thrills' continued on page 26



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JANUARY We host numerous Readings, Bookclubs, as well as Poetry! More events posted online.
PARTIAL LISTING

January 7 at 4:30 p.m. Freelance Friday with JOE D'AGNESE and DENISE KIERNAN.

January 7 at 7 p.m. Political Cartooning with DAVID COHEN, editor of *The Best Editorial Cartoons of the Year*.

January 8 at 3 p.m. JAMES and KENT LOY authors of *Emma Darwin: A Victorian Life*.

January 8 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Fastest Readings in the World featuring Warren Wilson College's MFA Faculty.

January 9 at 3 p.m. APRIL MOON presents her cookbook, *Breakfast & Beyond: Comfort Food from Dawn to Dark*.

January 12 at 7 p.m. LITERARY TRIVIA hosted by booksellers Lauren, Seth and Stella Harr – wonderful prizes!

January 15 at 3 p.m. LOUISA SHAFIA author of *Lucid Food: Cooking for an Eco-Conscious Life*.

January 16 at 3 p.m. WRITERS AT HOME presented by UNC-A's TOMMY HAYS.

January 17 at 7 p.m. COMIX BOOKCLUB – *Duncan The Wonder Dog* by Adam Hines.

January 21 at 7 p.m. KAREN ABBOTT, author of *American Rose: the Life and Times of Gypsy Rose Lee*.

January 23 at 3 p.m. BUD HARRIS Ph.d, and MASSIMILLA HARRIS Ph.d, authors of *The Art of Love, The Craft of Relationship: a Practical Guide for Creating the Loving Relationships We Want*.

January 29 at 3 p.m. HEATHER NEWTON author of *Under the Mercy Trees*.

January 30 at 3 p.m. LOU DISCHLER author of *My Only Sunshine*.

February 4 at 7 p.m. HANNAH PITTARD author of *The Fates Will Find Their Way*.

February 5 at 3 p.m. ELIZABETH GILBERT, author of *Committed: A Love Story*. Ticketed event held at UNCA's Lipinsky Auditorium. \$22.24 includes book.

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authors ~ books ~ readings

True Grit

Written by Charles Portis.
Narrated by Donna Tartt



One of the best movies of this season is the Coen Brothers production of *True Grit*, starring Jeff Bridges, Matt Damon, and Hailee Steinfeld. The main reason it's such a good movie is because it's based on one of the best American novels of the last century.

Published by reclusive author Charles Portis in 1968, and the basis of the John Wayne movie in 1969, *True Grit* is set in Arkansas of the 1870s. Fourteen-year-old Mattie Ross, "no bigger'n a corn muffin," is a Bible-thumping financial wizard in pigtailed. Convinced that "the wicked flee when none pursueth," she is determined to track down her father's killer and "avenge his blood." The good man was shot by his former hired hand, Tom Chaney, who then robbed him of his money, including two gold pieces from California, and escaped into Indian Territory.

One of the best American novels of the last century.

While *True Grit* is a pleasure to read on the page, it's awesome in an audio version where you can hear the hypnotic beauty of its language. The story is told from Mattie's point of view, when she is an old woman looking back on the adventure of a lifetime. Her voice — clear, lyrical, sometimes hilarious — rings with old-fashioned southern lushness, full of Biblical references and mythical allusions.

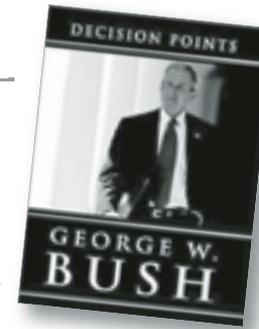
Her knight in muddy armor is boozing, one-eyed U.S. Marshal Rooster Cogburn, whom Mattie chooses because, supposedly, he has 'true grit.' Accompanying them is a young Texas Ranger named LaBouef, who wants big reward money for capturing Chaney.

Like their previous film, *No Country For Old Men*, based on Cormac McCarthy's novel, the Coen Brothers' version of *True Grit* relies heavily on its source material. Almost every line of unforgettable dialogue in the film comes directly from the pen of Charles Portis.

The audio version of the book (Recorded Books, 2006, 6-1/2 hours) is a wondrous entertainment, narrated flawlessly by author Donna Tartt (*The Secret History*, 2004), who also contributes an informative essay at the end. If you haven't read *True Grit* yet, now is a time to do so, and enhance your enjoyment of it with its terrific film adaptation.

Decision Points

Written and read by George W. Bush



REVIEWS BY CAULEY BENNETT

Many years ago I intensely disliked Nancy Reagan. I'd never met her, I just disliked her on principle because she was married to Ronald Reagan whose politics I opposed at the time.

On a whim, I read a book on tape that she had written and narrated. When I finished the book, to my amazement, I discovered that the very personal tale Mrs. Reagan told, combined with the sound of her voice, completely transformed my opinion of her. She had become a real person in the hours I had been listening to her. I've been an ardent Nancy Reagan fan ever since.

Through the years, I repeated this experiment several times with other political celebrities, including Anne Coulter, Bill O'Reilly, Al Franken, Rush Limbaugh, Glenn Beck, and Sarah Palin. Alas, by the time I'd finished a book by one of these authors, my opinion either remained the same, or worsened.

As a vociferous opponent of the war in Iraq, I was curious how I would react to listening to President George W. Bush's autobiography (*Decision Points*, abridged, 7 hours, 6 CDs, Random House Audio).

In the first chapter, Mr. Bush explains the unique structure of his book. Instead of writing a comprehensive literary memoir, he chose to focus on key decisions he'd made in his life. In other words his autobiography is like a bulleted Power Point presentation on audio. Since Mr. Bush is not by nature introspective, this compartmentalized structure was a good idea. He could give

information without going deeply into the thought process behind his decisions. Mr. Bush, like Sarah Palin, has never made pretension that he likes to read much, or travel outside the U.S., or learn about history except as it applies to the United States. I accepted those parameters in order to judge the effectiveness of his story.

First, Mr. Bush's personal life. I've always thought his wife Laura was the best thing about Mr. Bush, and it was enjoyable to hear him talk affectionately about her and their early family life. I have a hard time liking a male politician who does not have a happy family life (witness the tragic Nixon marriage). Mr. Bush comes off as extremely likeable when he talks about his years before The White House.

The details of Mr. Bush's emotional reaction to 9/11 brought back the whole horror of the event and the fear and confusion of the days following. He makes clear what some Americans have forgotten — that he and his administration were obsessed with the terrorist attacks and determined to never allow them to happen again. Mr. Bush does not apologize for taking steps that many disagreed with, including torture techniques, and his insistence is understandable in light of his personal reaction to 9/11.

What still remains unconvincing, however, is Mr. Bush blaming "bad intelligence" for the failure to find WMD and the subsequent invasion of Iraq. Not good timing for Mr. Bush's book promotion tour was the release of the excellent movie, *Fair Game*, starring Naomi Watts as CIA Agent Victoria Plame. The movie clearly shows that the CIA tried to convince the administration

that no WMD existed.

It was interesting to find out what Mr. Bush considered the greatest disappointment of his tenure — the failure to get social security reform. It was an effort that seemed to go under everyone's radar, including mine. A topic that surprised

me was how personally devastated he was by (bogus) charges that race played a role in the federal government's assistance after Hurricane Katrina.

I enjoyed hearing Mr. Bush's complaints about Democrats interspersed throughout because they gave me a different view of what was going on during his administration from what I gleaned from news shows I watched at the time.

Because Mr. Bush came off so well in the beginning of his book, I reacted more positively to the later chapters than I had expected. *Decision Points* proved the double-edged sword of books read by the author. The author's voice, for so many hours, creates a feeling of false intimacy in the reader — that's why it's such a good device for public personalities to read their own work. On the other hand, a writer's attitude and inconsistencies become more memorable when heard on audio than seen on the page.

If you're a Bush supporter, you'll enjoy *Decision Points* without qualification. My reaction — and I think it would be shared by other liberals who are at least open enough to read the book — is that being involved for so many hours with Mr. Bush's voice did create a certain human connection. That doesn't mean I wasn't able to detect patterns in his decisions — I still don't like him. On the other hand, I don't fall victim now to attempts by other people to demonize him. In these divisive times, that's no mean accomplishment for any book.

...I enjoyed hearing Mr. Bush's complaints about Democrats...

'First Thrills' continued from page 25

in the once all-male enclave. There are 11 women as authors or co-authors. Included is Atlanta bestselling novelist Karin Slaughter. *Cold, Cold Heart* is her chilling tale of cryogenics and marital vengeance. C.J. Lyons, whose day job is a pediatric ER doctor, is a rising star in the medical thriller field. In *Scutwork* she reveals the employment challenges of body snatchers working in a hospital morgue.

Another story that might make you queasy about going to the hospital is *The Dead Club*, by Dr. Michael Palmer and his son Daniel James Palmer. A greedy general practitioner joins a doctors-only betting club that gambles



on when unidentified patients will die. At first the doctor proves his diagnostic talent and makes a lot of money. But then... he has to seriously worry who will next be on the gurney rushing down the hospital hallway.

The Thief, by novelist/screenwriter/professor

Gregg Hurwitz has the most memorable voice. It's told by a mentally challenged boy who steals things — and in a heart-warming twist ending makes the police very happy.

Most of the yarns are contemporary, with a few distinctive exceptions. In Stephen Coonts' *Savage Planet*, a deep sea salvage allows an extraterrestrial pilot to escape the

confines of Earth. *When Johnny Comes Marching Home* is a truly horrifying post-Civil War tale, written by southern Florida writer Heather Graham, who has more than 100 novels to her credit.

First Thrills was produced with the sponsorship of ITW, the International Thriller Writers association which was founded in 2005. If you're interested in thrillers, you'll appreciate the group's informative website: www.thrillerwriters.org.



Rapid River Book Editor Cauley Bennett is an Asheville writer. You can reach her by e-mailing books@cauleybennett.com

Buddhist Ethics

"The practice of Zen is forgetting the self in the act of uniting with Life."

~ ROSHI KOUN YAMADA
(1907-1989)

Ethics is at the heart of Buddhism because the issue of human suffering is the starting point of Buddhism. A young prince, Siddhartha Gautama, left his sheltered life in northern India in the 5th Century BCE, deeply disheartened by the amount of suffering he saw in the world, determined to realize the nature and the origin of human suffering and how to find the path to salvation from it.

He first became an ascetic, rejecting everything that was worldly, and mastered the most profound dimensions of meditation, but in a severely weakened physical state from the deprivations of self-starvation, he realized that rejection of Life was not the path, rather, it was better to live a balanced life, a life of neither material opulence nor deprivation. He realized it was important to be neither mired in social convention nor isolated in hermitage and asceticism, rather to live a life of engaged, aware, enlightened, compassionate community. This became known as "The Middle Way."

Determined to discover the nature of and transcendence from suffering, he sat in what was reputed to be forty-nine days of deep meditation, at the end of which he had seen into the nature of existence and realized complete enlightenment. He became known as "The Buddha, The Awakened One." He arose from his meditation and began to teach what became known as "The Four Noble Truths" concerning the nature of and the path to salvation from human suffering.

With a modern psychological interpretation, The Four Noble Truths are:

~ To be Human is to experience a unique and subjective form of suffering.

~ The cause of this suffering is attachment to ego with its sense of separateness for identity and all its insatiable cravings that seek to alleviate the ego's insecurity and experience of insufficiency through grasping after a solid and lasting identity in possessions and personal significance, to attribute happiness and unhappiness to circumstances outside of oneself that one tries to manipulate toward their advantage.

~ There is a path that liberates us from suffering

"Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive."

~ THE DALAI LAMA

~ It is to release ego as our identity, and restore it to its appropriate balanced place and role as a mental faculty only, and to realize the truth of our existence as the awareness within which impermanent and conditional form arises, all within one interconnected and interdependent Universe, sharing our condition with all sentient Beings. To realize that happiness, or more accurately, well being, is our inherent nature, not reliant on external conditions.

It is important to be neither mired in social convention nor isolated in hermitage and asceticism.

With this teaching, Buddhist ethics is born. The fourth Truth is also taught with the inclusion of what is known as "The Noble Eight-fold Path." This is essentially a description of what an enlightened life is like, leading to a profoundly ethical life, one that realizes our own inherent well being and its connection to the well-being of others.

These eight qualities are: "right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration." The "right" in the Eightfold Path is not about commandments issued from an externalized deity or authority, but realizations and qualities that naturally arise within a human being who is "awakened."

The Buddha was quite explicit that he was not bringing forth a new religious understanding, and there is nothing in his teaching that was metaphysical or theological. His was not a divinely inspired revelation, but the realization of truths that are inherent to all human beings; that within us all is the capacity for a perfect life, free from suffering, realizing ourselves as a balanced, aware, wise and compassionate expression of the Universe. As the Dalai Lama is known to teach: "These are not religious subjects. They are about basic human good qualities and values."

Enlightenment, then, is any moment that this reality is felt and realized (not intel-

lectualized). This "awakened" life is called the life of *bodhicitta*, (awakened heart or consciousness) and is the path of the *Bodhisattva* (an awakened being).

To be awakened, to be a Bodhisattva, is to live within the experience of the interconnectedness and interdependence that underpins all of life, and to fully realize interconnectedness and interdependence is also to see *Karma*, the principle of cause and effect, that determines our unfolding experience of the world.

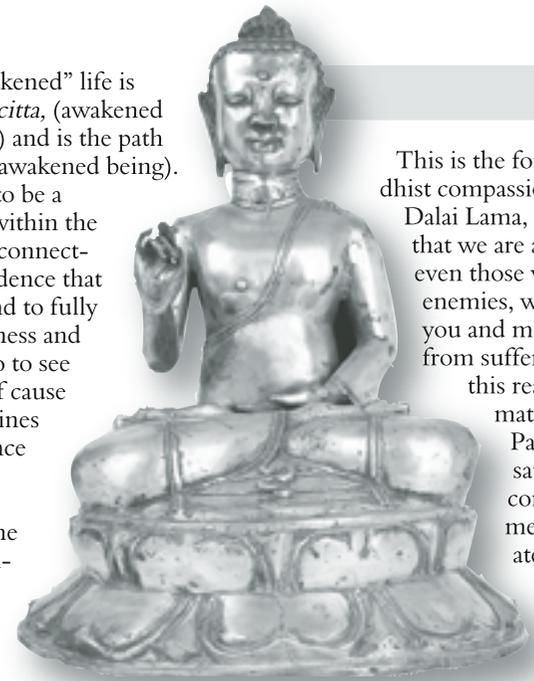
When a person lives in realization of the principles of Karma, interconnectedness and interdependence that underpin existence, this will naturally also give rise to an ethical sense of view and conduct. This ethical perspective is codified in Buddhism as the Five Precepts, deliberately vowed to as one's intention and meditation, and practiced to the best of one's ability by those who take on the Buddhist lifestyle, and these are, in their most elemental expression: commitments to abstain from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and intoxication.

In a broader, and more psychological expression, the precepts are to abstain from willful physical harm to others, willful exploitation and material harm to others, willful exploitation that arises out of misuse of sexual, romantic or seductive behavior, willful exploitation through misleading and false action or language, and to be free of addictive behaviors that lead to an unconscious or unawakened life.

The quality of my existence is inextricable from the quality of all beings' existence.

This last precept is not only about chemical addictions, but all behaviors, beliefs and conditioning that lead to an ego-centric life, that which is the source of the other four affronts to the dignity, worth and right to freedom from suffering in others and ourselves.

It is also inherent with the realization of the connectedness and interdependence with all Beings and the realization of the universality of the Four Noble Truths that a sense of kinship with all Beings arises. There develops an identification with their suffering, and a deep understanding of its cause as delusional egoic perspective and conditioning.



BY BILL WALZ

This is the foundation of Buddhist compassion. To quote the Dalai Lama, it is to "realize that we are all human beings, even those who would be our enemies, who are just like you and me, seeking freedom from suffering." And with this realization, ultimately one is led to the Path of the Bodhisattva, in a sense, a contract and commitment for compassionate living that says:

I vow to save all sentient beings.

I vow to overcome delusion.

I vow to deepen understanding of The Path to the cessation of suffering.

I vow to attain Awakening into the truth of existence.

In effect, we are our brothers' keeper. The quality of my existence is inextricable from the quality of all beings' existence. This then is Buddhist ethics. It is not a system of laws, rules or commandments from an outside authority.

It is presented as a system of realizations available to any person who is determined, just as was Siddhartha Gautama, to understand and overcome the suffering that humans experience and bring into the world. It is available to any person because it is inherent in our own deepest human and universal nature, and it can be realized when a person, as did Siddhartha, stops living out their conventional life and meditates on the human condition.

Continued on page 28

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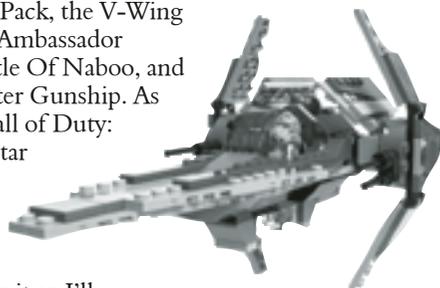
JOSEPH RATHBONE RECOMMENDS

BY JOSEPH RATHBONE, AGE 12



This month several things cool have come out, like new Lego® sets and games. So, with out further ado I will get on with the review. First I want to say that Xbox Live is 100% completely worth the fifty dollars for the year of gold membership. You also get a FREE one month membership just for signing up. Anyway with a gold membership for Xbox Live you can get free demo downloads and, of course, you can play against people all around the world.

Now as far as Lego sets go, some really cool new sets have come out, such as the Mandalorian Battle Pack, the Clone Battle Pack, the V-Wing Fighter, the Jedi Ambassador Shuttle, The Battle Of Naboo, and the Bounty Hunter Gunship. As for the games, Call of Duty: Black Ops, and Star Wars The Force Unleashed 2 are still at the top of my list. Well I guess that's it so I'll see you next month.



Lego's V-Wing Fighter

WHAT TO DO WITH THE KIDS?

They're home, you're home. What now? Asheville's Health Adventure has a few ideas to help you cope with the winter doldrums.

Preschool Play Date

Thursday, January 6, 2011

It's all about the little ones! Join us for interactive fun just for preschoolers led by museum facilitators. Your preschooler will have a blast in this special program!

Super Science Saturday

Saturday, January 8, 2011

Experiment with science during Super Science Saturdays! Featuring hands-on activities led by our museum facilitators, these programs are sure to be fun for all ages!

IF YOU GO: *The Health Adventure, Pack Place, 2 South Pack Square in Asheville. For specific activity descriptions or for updated information, please visit www.thehealthadventure.org or call (828) 254-6373.*



Drawing by 13-year-old Cara Levy. Cara loves drawing and tries her best to draw anime/manga, a complex Japanese art form. She is also really into music. Cara wants to be an artist or be in a band when she grows up, but she's still not sure. She is an 8th grader at Evergreen Community Charter School in Asheville.



Lego® Construction Contest

The Haywood County Public Library will hold its first ever Lego® construction contest on Saturday, January 29, 2011, beginning at 9 a.m. in the downstairs auditorium of the Waynesville branch.

Youth Services Librarian Carole Dennis had the idea for a Lego contest partly based on her own children's interest in the popular building block toys, and partly from reading about other libraries holding Lego competitions. Another consideration was to have something for kids to do after the Christmas holidays during the winter days when other activities might be limited.

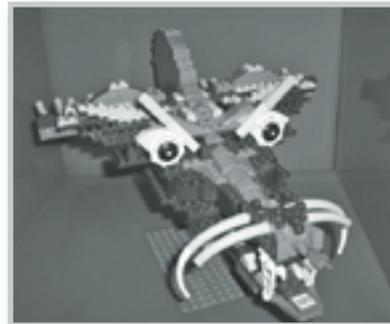
"There's sometimes a letdown after the holidays and kids have been looking forward to Christmas so intensely all year, and then it's over. I'm hoping this will help extend the fun of the holidays a bit longer," said Dennis.

The library's Lego Extravaganza Contest will require pre-registration due to the limited amount of space available for construction and display in the library's auditorium. "According to my best estimate, we'll only have display space available for 30 projects," explained Dennis. Registration forms are available in the Children's department of the Waynesville branch of the Haywood County Library.

Rules for the contest will be posted on the library's website (www.haywoodlibrary.org). The contest is open to children between the ages of

5-18 and children can enter as individuals or as a team. "We're trying to have some relation to books and reading, so for our first contest we're asking kids to design a character, vehicle or scene from their favorite book or movie," said Dennis. "That leaves a lot of room for creativity as a character can include a real or imagined person or animal, and a vehicle could be anything from a bicycle to a space ship."

Dennis encouraged participants to plan ahead what they would make for the contest, as none of the building bricks can be assembled before the contest. "The only way that I could make sure that the kids were doing all the work themselves was to have them do all the work here during the contest. We'll give everyone two hours to build their entry here in the auditorium and then we'll break for lunch. The judges will make their decisions and we'll have the winners announced by mid-afternoon," Dennis explained.



There is still a need for volunteers to serve as judges and Carole Dennis is actively seeking donations for prizes from area businesses. "We've had a good response so far from several businesses offering incentives for all participants, but I would like to have some special gifts for the first, second and third place winners in each of our five age categories," Dennis stated. Parents, teachers and community leaders are encouraged to call Ms. Dennis at (828) 356-2511 to volunteer as judges or timekeepers.

Winners of the Lego Extravaganza Contest will also have the option of leaving their creations on display in the library's downstairs display case beginning Monday, January 31 through mid-February: "If they can stand being without their Legos that long!" laughed Dennis.

Children who have made Lego constructions at home and are unable to participate in the contest, can contact Ms. Dennis at (828) 356-2511 or cdennis@haywoodnc.net if they would like to loan their creations for display in January.

LEGO® EXTRAVAGANZA CONTEST RULES

1. Age groups are ages 5-6, ages 7-8, ages 9-10, ages 11-12, and ages 13-18. Participants may register as individuals, or as a team. Teams will be assigned to the age bracket of the oldest participant.
2. You MUST register in advance. Space for this event is limited.
3. Each contestant must bring their own LEGO's. All LEGO's are allowed. Nothing can be pre-assembled. Entire project is to be constructed of only LEGO's. No string, rubber bands, tape, glue, etc. will be allowed.
4. Contestants will have 2 hours to complete their project.
5. Projects must be a character(s), vehicle(s) or a scene from a book or movie. Participants should be prepared to give a short description of their project to the judges, a mini oral presentation.

6. Completed projects must fit within a 20" x 24" space and be no more than 36" in height.

7. Winners will be selected based on: Creativity, Oral Presentation, Design Strength/Integrity, and Degree of Difficulty for age.

8. Prizes will be given to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners and photos will be taken of winners and their designs.



Stop in the Children's Department of the Haywood County Public Library or call Carole Dennis at (828) 356-2511 to register. Registration ends

Wednesday, January 19, 2011.

LEGO® is a trademark of the LEGO Group of companies which does not sponsor, authorize or endorse this contest.

what to do guide™

Asheville Community Theatre Events

Sunday, January 9

Play Reading for Pleasure at 2:30 p.m. 35below lobby. They will be reading a *The Devil's Disciple* by George Bernard Shaw. All are welcome to join this group as they read aloud a play.

Tuesday, January 11

Volunteer Orientation at 6:30 p.m. Come and learn about the many different ways to volunteer at ACT.

Thursday, January 27

Listen to This: Sports Stories in Performance at 7:30 p.m. Hosted by Tom Chalmers in 35below. Join Asheville's number one comedian as he hosts true stories about sports in honor of the Super Bowl told by local comedians, actors and people just like you. Tickets \$10.

Full details on all ACT performances, auditions, events, and education opportunities at: www.ashevilletheatre.org, or call (828) 254-2939.

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. 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.

Sunday, January 2 Chamber Music Concert

There will be a performance by a 33-piece chamber orchestra playing a concert of Strauss waltzes and polkas, "An Afternoon in Vienna." The ensemble will be directed by Stephen Klein. This gala concert will open the 15th season of concerts at St. Matthias Church. There will be ballroom dancers as well. Concert begins at 3 p.m. at St. Matthias Church in downtown Asheville.

A free-will offering will be taken for the restoration of the beautiful and historic church. St. Matthias' Church is over 100 years old and is on the national historic register. 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.).

Tuesday, January 11 Beginning Bluegrass Classes

A new series of evening beginner bluegrass music classes will be starting at the Log Cabin Cooking & Music Center in Asheville, NC. These first-timer classes are for the total novice wanting to learn bluegrass banjo, clawhammer banjo, fiddle and mandolin.



Wayne Erbsen. Photo: Tim Barnwell

Classes will be held in a vintage log cabin at 111 Bell Road in the Haw Creek section of east Asheville, off Tunnel Road. Teaching the classes will be Wayne Erbsen, well-known for his ability to teach anyone to play a musical instrument. Wayne is the author of 28 music instruction books and host of "Country Roots," a popular traditional music radio program on Asheville's public radio station, WCQS.

For more information about classes, registration, or instruments contact the Log Cabin Cooking & Music Center: (828) 299-7031, banjo@nativeground.com, www.nativeground.com

Native Ground Books & Music, 109 Bell Road, Asheville. (828) 299-7031, www.nativeground.com

Wednesday, January 19 Calling all Mystics!

We invite you to a Free Teleconference Meditation from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. EST. "To be anointed by Spirit, baptized by the Light, and absorbed in Love, one becomes the Mystic Christ." Teleconference Information: (641) 715-3630, access code 410389#. For more

Dulcimer Workshop

January 6-9

The sixth annual Mountain Dulcimer Winter Weekend, sponsored by Western Carolina University, will be held at the Terrace Hotel at the Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center.

Longtime music educators Elaine and Larry Conger will host this year's event, which includes classes in mountain dulcimer taught by Anne Lough, Dave Haas and Joe Collins; bowed dulcimer with Ken Bloom; and – new this year – hammered dulcimer with Lough and Ruth Smith.

Instruction also will be offered in waltzes for dulcimer, Native American flute music, fast Celtic tunes, hymns and more.

Register for the event by going to dulcimer.wcu.edu. Tuition for playing participants is \$149 and includes all activities. A nonparticipant rate of \$40 also is available, which includes attendance at jams, nightly events and Sunday morning singing.

Reservations for accommodations should be made separately through the Terrace Hotel at 1-800-222-4930. Some meals are included with accommodations.

For more information, contact Bobby Hensley of WCU's Division of Educational Outreach at hensley@wcu.edu or phone (828) 227-7397.

information please contact us at (828) 338-0042. Visit our website: www.MysticHeartUniverse.com. Email us at mary@MysticHeartUniverse.com.

Saturday, January 15 Time For Three

Another family-friendly offering from Asheville Bravo Concerts. The appeal of the trio spans across the generations. Their respect for the Classical repertoire and precise technique are matched by the boundless youthful curiosity with which they bend rules and integrate different musical styles into their program. Concert begins



www.EuroContempArt.net

Original 19th and 20th century European paintings.

at 7:30 p.m. at the Thomas Wolfe Auditorium. Individual tickets range from \$20-\$60 and can be purchased by calling the Asheville Bravo Concerts office at (828) 225-5887, visiting www.ticketmaster.com, or in person at the Civic Center Box Office. Students receive half-price tickets for all Bravo concerts.



Photo: John Kane

January 21 & 22

Pilobolus Dance Company

World-renowned Pilobolus dance company brings its highly unusual and imaginative dance

to Asheville. Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack Place, 8 p.m. Tickets: Regular \$45; Seniors \$43; Students \$40; Student Rush day-of-the-show (with valid ID) \$10. Tickets/Info: (828) 257-4530 or online at www.dwtheatre.com.

Saturday, January 22 Winter Satsang

The Bodhisattva Path, 2:00-5pm - An afternoon of meditation and personal consciousness development discussion will be held by UNCA meditation and consciousness teacher and consciousness columnist Bill Walz at the Friends Meeting House, 227 Edgewood, Asheville. The session will be led off with gentle yoga warm-up and centering with Kirsten Walz, 2-2:30. Bring your questions regarding personal, psychological and spiritual development and evolution. E-mail them in advance to healing@billwalz.com. Contact at 258-3241 or e-mail. More at www.billwalz.com

Sunday, January 23 Winter Concert

Black Mountain Youth Chorale, a group of singers from grades 4-8 under the direction of Aline Carillon. Concert begins at 3 p.m. at the Black Mountain Center for the Arts, 225 W. State Street. Admission is a suggested donation at the door of \$5, or \$15 per family. (828) 669-0930, or visit www.blackmountainarts.org.

Friday & Saturday, February 4 & 5 A Midsummer Night's Dream

The Aquila Theatre Company, directed by Peter Meineck, presents



back-to-back performances. Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* takes the stage at 8 p.m. on Friday, February 4. Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will be presented on Saturday, February 5 at 8 p.m. Performances at Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack Place in downtown Asheville. Tickets available by phoning (828) 257-4530 or visit www.dwtheatre.com.

May 12-15

HART New York Theatre Trip

The 19th annual Haywood Arts Regional trip to Broadway is scheduled for May 12 through 15. Each year HART takes a group to see the newest hits, which, in the past have included some of New York's hottest tickets. The group is lead by HART Executive Director, Steve Lloyd, but most of the time is unstructured.

This year's trip will depart Greenville Spartanburg Airport on Thursday morning and return Sunday evening. Travelers must arrange their own transportation to and from the airport. The group stays at the Hotel Edison, just one block from Times Square.

The cost is \$1250 per person, based on double occupancy and includes; round trip airfare, three nights hotel, transfers to and from the airport in New York, and tickets to the two featured Broadway shows. To reserve a spot a \$500 deposit is required by March 1, with the balance due by April 1. Checks should be made payable to HART, PO Box 1024, Waynesville, NC 28786.

PAINTERS WANTED

Looking for painters to open a co-op art gallery in River Arts District or Downtown Asheville. Send email to: flowersbydaniel@gmail.com with your website or images of artwork.

what to do guide™

Dance is the New Visual Art

Saturday, January 8

An installation of multiple video pieces on the subject of dance and movement created by Cilla Vee Life Arts director Claire Elizabeth Barratt in collaboration with numerous artists from a variety of disciplines.



Photo: Matt Jamie

The videos are played simultaneously and continuously. Each piece is created specifically for camera and is a visual art piece, not documentation of a dance performance.

Opening reception Saturday, January 8 at 7 p.m. On display through January 31, 2011. Flood Gallery - Phil Mechanic Studios, in Asheville's River Arts District.

January 20 - May 5, 2011 Spring Kindermusik Classes

For children ages 1 to 7. Help develop lasting learning skills. We'll show you how music can help your little one manage the day's schedule and build a strong body and mind. Classes take place at The Music Village in Waynesville, NC. Enroll online today. Visit www.themusicvillage-nc.com for more information.

Stella Adler Studio of Acting

Adult Core Program

January 31 - April 20
Mondays and Wednesdays,
11 a.m. to 2 p.m., \$550

February 5 - April 23
Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., \$440

Teen Core Program (Age 15-18)

January 30 - April 17
Sundays, 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., \$440

Advanced Adult Program Audition required:

January 10 - January 31
Mondays, 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., \$100
Classes held in the 35below space at Asheville Community Theatre. Contact stellaadlerasheville@gmail.com with any questions or to schedule an appointment.



Daffodils & Camillias by Floyd Kemp

Floyd Kemp Opening Reception

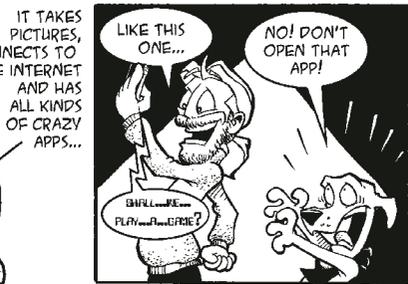
Friday, January 7

The Asheville Gallery of Art's featured artist for January will be Floyd Kemp. An opening reception for the artist will be held from 5 to 8 p.m. The public is cordially invited. The exhibit, "Still-life Studies", will feature a group of acrylic paintings presenting favorite plants and objects in the style of the artist.

The show will be on display through Sunday, January 30, 2011. The gallery is located at 16 College Street in downtown Asheville. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

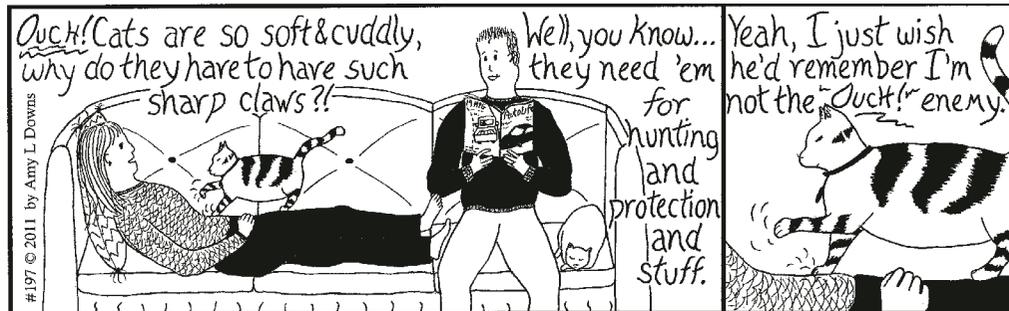
For more information, call (828) 251-5796 or visit www.ashevillegallery-of-art.com

Best in Show



by Phil Juliano

Callie & Cats



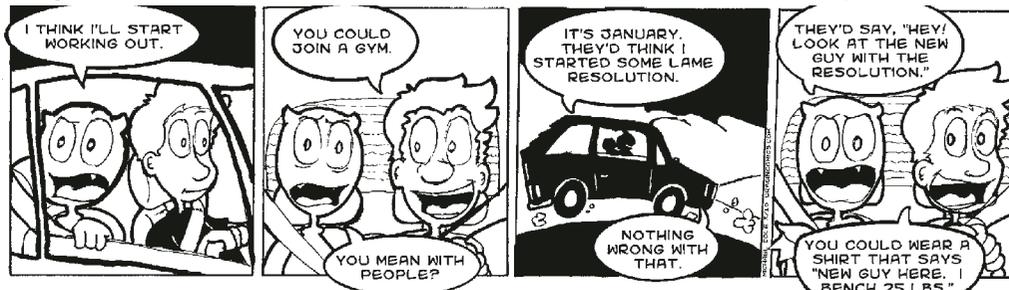
by Amy Downs

Corgi Tales



by Phil Hawkins

Dragin



by Michael Cole

Donna the Buffalo

Saturday, January 29

Rootsy folk-zydeco-rock band Donna the Buffalo is back in the area and will be performing at The Orange Peel. For more than 20 years Donna the



Buffalo has performed feel good, infectious music that often moves listeners physically and spiritually.

Donna the Buffalo's eclectic and often socially conscious music

has its base in traditional old-time mountain music and is infused with elements of Cajun/zydeco, rock, folk, reggae, and country. The group's core are vocalists Tara Nevins, who plays fiddle, guitar, accordion, and scrubboard, and guitarist Jeb Puryear. Keyboardist Dave McCracken, bassist Kyle Spark, and drummer Vic Stafford complete the ensemble.

The Roy Jay Band opens for the evening with gritty and bluesy grooves. Doors open at 8 p.m., for this 18+ show. \$18 adv/ \$20 at the door. The Orange Peel, 101 Biltmore Ave. in Asheville. Phone (828) 225-5851 or visit www.theorangepeel.net.

A Likely Yarn, located in Abingdon, VA, offers classes for everyone from beginners to experienced knitters this January. For more details on classes or products visit our website at www.alikelyyarn.com. To register for classes, call (276) 628-2143.

Dr. Etta: Family Specialist

Friday, February 11 at 8 p.m.

Music City Artists present a new one-woman show from Award Winning comedian Etta May. Dr. Etta



(Family Specialist) is a hilarious and heartfelt look at the breakdown of the American Family. It's common sense for the common man. The family of the 21st century is deathly ill, and Dr. Etta has the cure!

This two-act play, staged as a seminar, makes you laugh one minute and cry the next.

The star of the sell-out tour, "Southern Fried Chicks," Etta May is a regular on CMT and winner of the prestigious Female Comic of the Year award. Etta May is a seasoned performer with a huge fan base and a reputation that adds up to an incredible following.

Comedian Etta May at the Diana Wortham Theatre in Asheville. This performance is considered PG-13. For more information or to purchase tickets call the Box Office at (828) 257-4530, or visit www.dwtheatre.com.

joe's brew notes



M.A.L.T. Takes Over Highland Brewing

Out and About

Our local breweries are serving a number of delicious beers this Holiday season. Although I haven't had the opportunity to taste all of them (yet), I can recommend you make it a point to sample the Russian imperial stout at both the **Wedge** (with raspberries) and **Green Man** (brewed to style).

Also give Green Man's rum-barrel-aged imperial stout a try. Stop by the **French Broad** for their Belgian Brown and Anvil Porter. **Craggie's Dubbelicious** is a delight, and **Highland's Cold Mountain** is always a must-try.

BREW NEWS

In January, **French Broad Brewing** will introduce their Abbey style ale and a Belgian style stout. Both beers will have a limited draft-only release.

Larry Bell, a craft-brew pioneer and founder of Bell's Brewing (formerly Kalamazoo Brewing in Michigan), visits the **Thirsty Monk** on Wednesday, January 19. Bell's beer will "take over" all 16 upstairs tap lines.

On January 22, one of Asheville's premier beer events, the **Winter Warmer Beer Festival**, will be held downtown at the Asheville Civic Center (Exhibition Hall level). The party begins at 3 p.m. and ends at 7 p.m., plenty of time to enjoy samples from 20 to 25 beer vendors, and Italian food provided by Fiore's restaurant. Music by Leigh Glass Band (blues, country blues), and Brushfire Stank Grass (from bluegrass to rock).

Ticket sales are limited to keep lines short and allow plenty of room to relax and socialize. Buy your tickets early, the Winter Warmer has sold out every year since its start four years ago. For more details and to purchase tickets go to www.brewscruise.com/beerfest. Tickets are \$38 per person and include a commemorative tasting glass and food. A portion of the proceeds support Riverlink with the funds focused on local Asheville projects.



For eight years, Joe Zinich has been taking a self-guided, high-intensity tour of the Asheville beer scene. Contact him at: jinich@bellsouth.net.

BY JOE ZINICH

on mutually supportive projects. For example, MALT helps organize the Highland Cup while Highland provides their facilities for the MALT sponsored Blue Ridge Brew Off competition. So, when Steve Morgan of MALT approached

John about a "Brew In", he readily agreed.

A "Brew In" is a group of enthusiastic home brewers who agree to meet and brew together. In this case, the "MALTsters" brought their own brewing equipment to Highland. Steve helped design the base wort (a liquid which contains sugars and enzymes from malted grain) produced on Highland's three-barrel pilot system. The malts for the wort were chosen to give each of the ten brewers maximum flexibility and freedom to make almost any style ale.

Each MALT brewer received a portion of the wort and with very little fuss they could have chosen to brew light amber ale (~7%) or to continue the boil, concentrate the sugars, and brew a high alcohol beer. The brewers could also choose to dilute the wort for a lower alcohol beer or add dark malts for a darker beer, spices for holiday beers, or Belgian yeast for Belgian style beers, etc.



MALT Members with John Lyda in front of the 3-Barrel Brewing System. Rear (L-R): John Lyda, Joel McSwain, George Keel, Sean Maloney. Front (L-R): David Maida, Norm Penn, Karen McSwain, Andy Brouwer, Mark Hebbard, Steve Morgan, Alex Buerckholtz. Crouching, Joseph Jones.

A "Brew In" is a group of enthusiastic home brewers who agree to meet and brew together.

So, as you might expect, ten talented brewers with ten active imaginations and preferences brewed a variety of beer styles. These included a Belgian strong dark (10%), a spiced holiday beer (~6%), an English IPA focused on hop aroma (~5%), an American Red session beer (~5%), an imperial IPA made with blackberry honey (~10%), and (lots) more. Plans are to meet again, sample the results, and present a "peoples choice" award to the top 3 most popular brews. A meeting that makes it to the top of my must-attend list.

The purpose of a "Brew In" is for MALT members to enjoy the camaraderie of a shared experience, the opportunity to brew with other club members, and to share and discuss brewing techniques. A "Brew In" at Highland brewery adds much more to the experience. The use of Highland's three-barrel system serves as an introduction to commercial brewing and, for some, a convenient introduction to whole-grain brewing. Imagine, as a home brewer, the chance to brew in the same space that the iconic Highland ales are made and to socialize and discuss brewing with Highland's esteemed brewmaster John Lyda. And, the capper, Highland brews were available to anyone who worked up a thirst.

The "raid" was a huge success. The objective was met. The "MALTsters" brewed together, learned together, and had fun together with their friends at Highland.

On Saturday, November 20, ten daring "MALTsters" (*Mountain Ale and Lager Tasters*) staged an early morning raid (*they were invited*) on the Highland Brewery. They planned a "Brew In" (*brew together*) with Highland's equipment (*use Highland's three-barrel pilot system to produce their base wort*) while taking brewmaster John Lyda hostage (*he volunteered Highland's equipment and his expertise*).

Actually, MALT (Asheville's home brew club) and the Highland Brewing Company have worked together for years



MALT Members Adding Grain to Make the Wort.



A Brew In is a shared experience.

To thine own brew be true...



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restaurants & wine

Random Thoughts About Wine Drinking in January

It's difficult to write about wine for January. The writing is due extra-early, and while the writer is consumed with thoughts about Champagne and sparkling wines for the 31st, gifts that will be cheaper for the giver but viewed as more valuable by the receiver on the 25th, and what Port wines will finish off the holiday dinners, January is so distant.

It is the month of witnessing our friends getting cranky on the South Beach Diet and pursuing self-delusions. Money spent on quickly-forgotten gym memberships and accompanying clothes may as well buy some wine. Furthermore, December's weather was harsh, way too early, and inconsistent with the break we thought we were going to get after last year. Let's stock up against seasonal depression with juice that will cheer us up or make us feel warm.

It's also hard to know what is available in January. Wine shops stocked up big-time for the holiday season. What surpluses remain? What's going on sale? What are the sudden, post-holiday lifestyle changes of the readers?

A Friend You Can Text On

A former housemate, who evidently learned nothing about wine when he had the chance, sent me a text message at 2:30 in the morning. He wanted a "recommended Champagne shopping list." 2:30 a.m.? He must have been in New Orleans. I obliged:



Winston Churchill

Real Champagne, from the Champagne region of France:

Duval-Leroy (family owned, the only woman winemaker in Champagne)

Pol Roger (Winston Churchill's favorite)

Avoid: Moët & Chandon (good, but it's just too common)

Cava, From Spain:

Segura Viudas, Reserva Heredad (good wine, great package)

Sparkling wine from USA:

Roederer Estate, Anderson Valley

L'Ermitage, Roederer Estate

Anything from Iron Horse Vineyards, Green Valley (frequently served at the White House)

Pink sparkling wines are often better — more body, more flavor

God, it feels good to be able to text that in the middle of the night!

Better With Age? — Here We Go Again.

I was getting acquainted with a bottle of Alsatian Pinot Blanc, Hugel "Cuvée les Amours" 2006, when I remarked at how good it was at four years (the same case for the 2005 when it was four years old as well). A young lady who was by chance also in on this tasting said to me, in a tone that indicated she did not know who she was talking to, "Wine gets better with age, Michael."

Grr. Arg.

Experience has taught me that white wines, in general, need to be consumed before they turn four years old. Pinot Blanc is not something I ever think of aging. There are plenty of exceptions, like products from the best vineyard, from the best winemakers. Still, white wines have a predictable lifespan, and when we praise a white for beating the odds, we are also complementing the winemaker. (Truthfully, we are also showing off what we know.)

While on this topic, let this be an annual reminder to drink the wine gifts you received in December. Drink, not store away. Unless you are a collector and received wine picked out for you specifically to stock in your cellar, you most likely got wine that is ready to drink.

My rubber-stamp rules for wine ageing: Whites need to be enjoyed young and fresh. They typically start turning as they approach the age of four years. Reds vary and need more time, but bolder reds start getting good at four years, like old vine zinfandel, and others may need more. That, my dear reader, is what Google is for.

Hot Toddy, or Hot Watery Drink?

An open request to all bartenders: very rarely among us is a bartender who re-

BY MICHAEL PARKER



Dumping liquor into a glass of hot water and adding a cinnamon stick and a wedge of lemon does not a hot toddy make.

ally knows how to make a good hot toddy. There are many ways to make a good one, but there is a big mistake I still occasionally witness. It makes me want to speak out as if I were witnessing a crime.

Let me make this clear: dumping liquor into a glass of hot water and adding a cinnamon stick and a wedge of lemon does not a hot toddy make. If you are going to do this right, and earn the money you ask for, you have some simple work to do ahead of time.

And it is simple. I call it brown water. Whole cloves, allspice, star anise (if a desired flavor) and cinnamon sticks must be boiled. Your hot water must be brown and smell and taste like the spices. It's not too unlike brewing a tea. A quart can be made in the microwave oven in six minutes. A simmering pot can be kept on the stove. The spices can be re-boiled, and cinnamon chips are usually as good as sticks (and cheaper), considering the other accompanying spices and ingredients.



January 2011 Events at the Weinhaus

Friday, January 21

The Grovewood Café, with chef/owner Larry Waldrop, will join the Weinhaus in presenting a five course meal paired with suitable wines, a post holiday feast to fight the mid-winter blues. The time is 7 p.m. The cost is \$55 all inclusive. Please call the Weinhaus for reservations at (828) 254-6453.

Friday, January 28

Friday night flights at the Weinhaus will present a tasting of wines for the New Year. The price is \$10 for a tasting and light hors d'ouvres. Time is 5:30-7:30 p.m. Held at the Weinhaus.

**The Weinhaus, 86 Patton Avenue
Asheville, NC (828) 254-6453**

The idea is this: the spices are beneficial to the body. They boost the immune system. While it seems potentially undoing to blend something like brandy, rum, or Bourbon with the Vitamin C of lemon and the immunity enhancement of spices, it can in fact be a healthy drink.

Carnival Season, Asheville Mardi Gras, Krewes

Asheville Mardi Gras is in planning stages for 2011. The wine drinkers' krewes, the Grand Krewe, Dionysiaque (Grand Cru, get it?), will be announcing its own events in January via Facebook and in the February column here. As Krewe Captain, I welcome you to join the Krewe and participate.

Great values & styles

FREE Wine Tastings on Saturdays from 2 to 5 p.m.

Tasting wine is not only fun, but it presents a chance to learn about wine and what it is about a particular wine that you like, or don't like. You can sip while you shop. Find some new favorites — try it before you buy it. We will usually have a few whites and a few reds open, with the occasional guest speaker. Please stop by!

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fine art news

ASHEVILLE ART MUSEUM NEWS

*Discussion Bound
Monthly Reading Group*

**Tuesday, January 11 from 3-5 p.m.
The Bird Artist: a Novel by
Howard Norman**

Pop into our monthly book discussion where we read and discuss books that relate to artwork in our galleries. Moderated by a member of the Museum's staff or a volunteer, we exchange ideas and learn about books, art and each other! Bring your copy

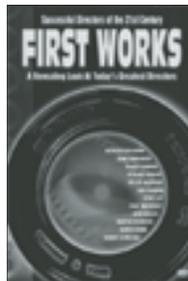


of the book. Each book is available for purchase through the Museum Shop as well as area bookstores.

January's read is *The Bird Artist* by Howard Norman. Norman's haunting novel,

set in turn-of-the-century Newfoundland, is about a young man who confesses to the murder of the village lighthouse keeper and whose gift for drawing birds becomes both his physical and his emotional release. A 1994 National Book Award finalist, Norman employs a spare writing style that ably describes the characters and the landscape.

Suggestions for future books are most welcome! For information, contact Nancy Sokolove, Adult Programs Manager at (828) 253-3227, ext. 120 or nsokolove@ashevilleart.org.



Film Screening

**First Works
Saturday and
Sunday, January
8 and 9 at 2:00
p.m. each day**

A diverse group of now well-

known film directors such as Martin Scorsese, Spike Lee and Ron Howard discuss what it was like to direct their first film and what inspires them to continue, despite changes in the film industry. Held in conjunction with the exhibition *The Director's Cut I: 1995 - 2010*.

These events are free with Museum Membership or Admission.

**Asheville Art Museum
2 South Pack Square, Asheville, NC
Visit www.ashevilleart.org**

UNC Asheville's Holly Iglesias Awarded Prestigious NEA Literature Fellowship

Holly Iglesias, poet, translator and lecturer in UNC Asheville's Master of Liberal Arts Program, has been awarded a prestigious Creative Writing Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

Iglesias is the only North Carolinian and one of only 42 poets chosen nationally to receive the \$25,000 fellowship for 2011. The NEA received 1,063 eligible applications for the fellowship, which alternates annually between poetry and prose.

In accepting the NEA award, Iglesias described the fellowship as "a kiss, an embrace, a dare... and the mandate to keep writing." She says she will use the funding to support and expand the work she is best known for, prose poems based on historical events. "Because the work is its own reward, the NEA fellowship is icing (thick butter cream) on a three-layer chocolate cake," says Iglesias. "The poems have been graced upon me; they come and go. My job continues to be staying awake and opening the door when they arrive."

Iglesias' prose poetry collection "Souvenirs of a Shrunken World" (Kore Press, 2008), won the publisher's First Book Award. In "Souvenirs," Iglesias focused on small details and assumed the perspectives

of ordinary people to bring the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair back to life, and with it, insight into what it must have felt like to experience the dawn of grand, modern technology. One example is "New Moon," in which Iglesias took on the inner voice of a pre-teen: "...Twelve, I am twelve, and I will act the lady. Take ice cream in a dish and touch door knobs only with my hanky. I will ride the Wheel, once, and no screaming... They say that night is brighter than day at the Fair. That women swoon at the sights. But I shall keep my eyes open..."

Of mixed heritage that she describes as "German, Irish, Midwestern, Yankee and Cuban," Iglesias is bilingual and has translated the works of Cuban poet Caridad Atencio. Iglesias spent her younger adult years among Miami's Cuban exiles, and plans to revisit that community and explore its sense of nostalgia through her next writing project. Entitled "Walking to Cuba," Iglesias says it will consider "the impossibility of return to an imaginary island, the Cuba before Castro." In another



**Poet, translator, and lecturer
Holly Iglesias.**

upcoming writing project, Iglesias will again focus on the world as it was in the mid-1950s, recalling through prose poems, the culture and mindset of the Cold War era.

Iglesias is also the author of the poetry collection "Angles of Approach" (White Pine Press, 2010), the critical study "Boxing Inside the Box: Women's Prose Poetry" (Quale Press, 2004),

and the chapbooks "Hands on Saint," and "Good Long Enough." Her work has also appeared in *Prairie Schooner*, *The Prose Poem*, *Arts & Letters*, *Barrow Street*, *Margie*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Massachusetts Review* and *Spoon River Poetry Review*.

In 2009, Iglesias received the North Carolina Arts Council fellowship in poetry. She is also the recipient of fellowships from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Edward Albee Foundation. She earned a Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Humanities from Florida State University and a master's degree in History from the University of Miami.

**Founding Curator and Director
Martin DeWitt to Retire**

Martin DeWitt, founding director and curator of the Fine Art Museum at Western Carolina University, has announced his retirement.

"I think the timing is right for changes," said DeWitt, whose career spans more than 30 years in museum administration. He will end his work at the museum in December.

"Martin has been an outstanding founding director of the Fine Art Museum," said Robert Kehrberg, dean of WCU's College of Fine and Performing Arts. Kehrberg praised DeWitt for his strength in defining a vision for the museum and cultivating it as a cultural destination. He also credited DeWitt with strengthening the university's ties with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

DeWitt joined the university in 2003, with the museum opening in 2005 as part of WCU's Fine and Performing Arts Center, a \$30 million, 122,000-square-foot facility. With a mission of cultural enrichment for the region, FAPAC also houses a 1,000-seat performance hall and classrooms, studios and offices for the School of Art and Design.

As founding director, DeWitt launched

the 10,000-square-foot Fine Art Museum, which comprises a main gallery and three auxiliary spaces. He was involved in the facility's construction, curated the museum's permanent collection (which grew from about 400 objects to more than 1,200), drafted the museum's policies and procedures, and scheduled the museum's inaugural exhibitions.

Denise Drury, curatorial specialist at the museum, has been named the museum's interim director beginning in January. Drury spent four years, including two as executive director, with 621 Gallery, a nonprofit, contemporary visual art space in Tallahassee, Fla. "Ms. Drury brings experience, professionalism and forward-looking vision to this position," Kehrberg said. A national search is planned to permanently fill the director's position by July 1, 2012.

Since the museum opened, DeWitt has overseen approximately 100 exhibitions, ranging from historical and collaborative projects to work by WCU students and in-



Martin DeWitt in the museum's main gallery.

ternationally known artists alike. DeWitt and Drury recently oversaw the installation of a one-year outdoor sculpture exhibit in the FAPAC courtyard that features five artists from the Southeast.

Colleagues say DeWitt has a particular talent for discussing complex concepts in plain language and for gallery presentation that draws visitors into exhibits, a valuable skill in a university setting. DeWitt teaches an exhibition practicum class where students learn how museums and galleries function.

For more information about WCU's Fine Art Museum, contact Denise Drury at (828) 227-3591 or ddrury@wcu.edu, or go online to fineartmuseum.wcu.edu.

fine art

Resolutions... Um, What Are Those?
OK, MAYBE JUST START WITH A T.D.L. ("TO DO LIST")

I firmly resolve to: re-watch all 10 years of Stargate SG-1! Sort 100 years of family photos! Learn to cook, and pronounce, "quinoa." Actually, I don't make resolutions, as I believe any day of the year is the right time to work on one's artistic T.D.L.

However, society does run on certain traditions, like returning gifts and pretending to not like fruitcake, so January is of course an ideal time for some businessy-plan-ish-type notes. And it's much more productive than that second watching of Starship Troopers with the commentary on.

On with some suggested Resolutory To Do List Categoricalness for artists!

1) Make To Do List. I know it's totally alternate-reality to write this list ON itself, but the number one thing people forget to do is... MAKE THE LIST. So remind yourself on a sticky note, and then put it on your bathroom mirror at eye level.

2) Filing and Orderliness. Keep all your I.P.'s ("Important Papers") in one place. You know that drawer or shelf with all appliance instructions, even really old ones for coffee makers you no longer possess? It's like that. All together so you can find the information you need when you need it. Some suggested file types: License, Contracts, Lease, Insurance, Taxes, Receipts, Marketing, Advertising, Artist Statements and Really Great Headshots.

3) Calendarization. Scheduling is very important. Being old-fashioned, I still use a yearly notebook-style calendar, but computers are certainly super handy, too. I mark down not only events and opportunities (like art competitions), but also early reminders for future stuff. If you remind yourself that Leaf Season is on the way, and you know it takes X weeks to make enough inventory, make a note to start prepping in June. Or else suddenly it's October (again!) and you're thinking: "Darn it! I forgot to make the Leafy Things! Again!"

4) Business Plan. Even writing down one's internal vision can be the beginning of a solid strategy. It's easy to over-think this and decide it's too hard, thus leaving business planning off the T.D.L. But then future

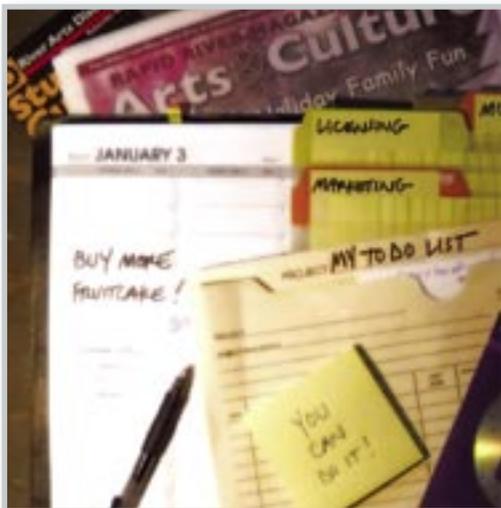


Photo collage by Greg Vineyard

BY GREG VINEYARD

T.D.L.'s are possibly off-strategy. You don't want your Parallel Universe You to be working on this when you're not, right? In addition to helping one set and meet goals, planning also spreads-out critical developmental tasks across manageable timeframes. Try tackling one business need every

Monday morning. At the end of a year, you will have 52 Things off your shoulders! And Asheville is chock-full of experts in planning, marketing and design for those who seek extra help.

Resolutory To Do List Categoricalness for Artists!

5) The Nitty-Gritty. Also known as "Everything Else", this is that way more extensive listing-out, including notations about picking up cat food on the way home. And dropping-off a post-holiday fruit cake somewhere even though you really want to keep it at home to snack on later.

6) Down Time. Make sure your List includes a category related to recharging your creative batteries.

7) Put all your appliance instructions in one drawer. You know they're everywhere. Try it, it's an S.V. ("Small Victory"), but it has a high feel-good factor.

Keep in mind that T.D.L.'s need to be flexible, perused daily and revised frequently; evaluate and adjust it as your year unfolds. To Do or Not To Do, that is the question, and it's entirely up to you.



Greg Vineyard is an artist and creative consultant in Asheville's River Arts District. He and his Ceramics for Contemplation & Connectivity can be found at Constance Williams Gallery,

(the middle building in CURVE), 9 Riverside Drive in Asheville. Open every day 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Visit www.CURVEstudiosNC.com.

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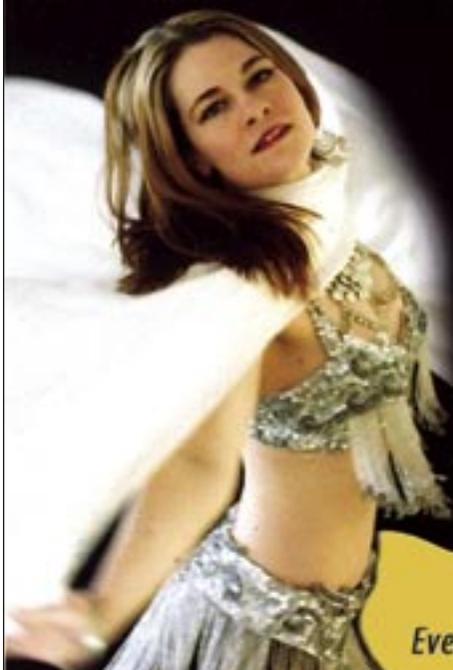
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UNC Asheville's Blowers Gallery Hosts Exhibition by Asheville Artist Marsha Balbier

BY NANCY HAYES

UNC Asheville's Blowers Gallery will present "The Essence of Asheville," an exhibit of glass and encaustic artwork by local artist Marsha Balbier, January 5-30. The exhibition includes works in fused and shaped glass as well as encaustic paintings, which are created using heated beeswax.

The encaustic technique dates back to ancient Egypt, when it was used to create mummy portraits.

The Essence of Asheville

Balbier's work is featured in the permanent collection of the Banff School of Fine Arts at the University of Alberta. She has studied fine arts and design in various schools, including the Banff School of Fine Arts, the



Encaustic piece by Marsha Balbier

University of Northern Colorado, Endicott College and the Philadelphia College of Textiles & Science.



Blowers Gallery, located in UNC Asheville's Ramsey Library, is free and open to the public, and is usually open 7 days a week. For gallery

hours and more information, call (828) 251-6436, or visit <http://bullpup.lib.unca.edu/library/exhibits/blowers/exhibits.html>.



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Twelve Questions with Local Artist Laura Sims

Local artist Laura Sims took the time to answer a few questions about her functional and elegant silk creations.

Rapid River: Tell us a little about your silk wall hangings.

Laura Sims: When people see the dye paintings (wall hangings) at shows or in Van Dyke's Jewelry and Fine Craft Gallery they are struck by the dimensional quality of the imagery, the way the silk moves in the air currents and the beautiful way each piece is mounted. The mount that my husband and I designed has an Asian or Arts and Crafts feel that is simple, functional and elegant.

It allows the dye painting to be displayed to its best advantage and to hang away from the wall so that it can move freely. As for the bold interpretations of nature, customers are drawn to the double imagery on sheer silk creating the illusion of depth. What I am learning from my clients is that they purchase what they want immediately, or stay in touch until the time is right, or are watching and waiting for the one (or ones) that speaks to them and says "this is mine."

RR: Please give us a brief bio, where you are from and how you started in this field.

LS: I grew up in south central Alabama near Montgomery. As an only child I spent many hours entertaining myself making things. After teaching in my hometown for a short time I moved to the Asheville area and found a job with the Folk Art Center. It was there that I met professional craftspeople and formed a desire to be part of the craft community.

After a two-year detour working with the International YMCA in Rosario, Argentina I re-connected with the Southern Highland Craft Guild, as well as being hired as a staff member of John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, NC. During my time at the Folk School I was introduced to an amazing hydro-printing process called marbling.

I quit my job a year later to marble full time and was thrilled to become a member of the Southern Highland Craft Guild. Twenty-four years later I am happy to say that my business is thriving. I have authored/co-authored

BY DENNIS RAY

two books, have work around the world, enjoy teaching and am still learning and growing.

RR: How do you go about creating your silk hangings?

LS: A dye painting begins with a walk to collect objects and take photographs of my surroundings. From there I work on ideas for the composition before any materials are prepared. A thick dye paste that includes a discharging agent to remove color and a type of dye called vat dye to add color is mixed. Each container of paste has a different dye color in it so that I can use the paste as paint.

One of the tricky bits is that in paste form many of the dyes do not show their true color, so I have to remember which one I put where as I am painting. The paste is applied to solid black silk organza. The silk has to then be carefully steamed in a special box where the chemical magic happens; the black dye is dissolved and the new dye color is simultaneously deposited in its place. After putting the silk through a special washing process the true colors emerge on the silk and the image is complete.

RR: You also create wearable art. What all do you create?

LS: Luscious silk scarves are individually dyed and printed multiple times to achieve a unique combination of vibrant color and bold organic designs. The charmeuse silk scarves come in varied sizes and are not only beautiful to wear, but can be used as a lovely table runner or a small wall hanging. I also offer unique silk ties for men in a variety of colors and classic marbled designs.

RR: When did you first discover your creative talents?



Star Burst, silk charmeuse scarf.

Photo: Mary Vogel



Poke Berry Time, silk organza dye painting.

Photo: Robert Batey



Autumn Sumac, silk organza dye painting.

Photo: Robert Batey

For me talent has more to do with practice and enthusiasm. The more I understand the materials the more I can explore the potential and limits of a process and the better I am able to become in my media.

RR: Could you tell us about some of your work?

LS: It is more about the power of the work of the hand, whether it is mine or someone else's. Someone has to buy the work in order for me to keep mak-

ing it... a contract if you will. My part of the contract is to strive to make work that is the best I have to offer at that stage of my growth. The customer's part is to choose work for their self or as a gift for another that enhances and sustains some part of them.

RR: What inspires you to keep going and how do you keep yourself motivated?

LS: Deadlines are one of the best motivators I have whether for an order, a show or an exhibition. On the hard to get moving days I will do anything just to keep me in the studio. There seems to be grunt work with any process and mine is an endless need to wash towels, sheets, tools and containers for dyeing, painting and marbling.

Oddly enough the routine work allows me to do the necessary brain preparation before beginning to "make" something. Sometimes the creative process is as painful and laborious as birthing a baby and occasionally it is as effortless as riding a wave. The 'waves' are worth the wait.

This coming year I am challenging myself with new goals and deadlines by signing up for a non-credited Special Studies in the Fiber Department of Haywood Community College with Amy Putansu, head of the fiber program. Amy will be working with me to offer guidance and resources... very exciting!

RR: How will you describe your style?

LS: Original, organic, bold and colorful are descriptions that fit both my silk dye paintings and my marbled silks. I work hard to produce fresh interpretations by blending what I know from my individual experiences and skills with any process I explore.

RR: What is your approach to design?

'Laura sims' continued on page 38

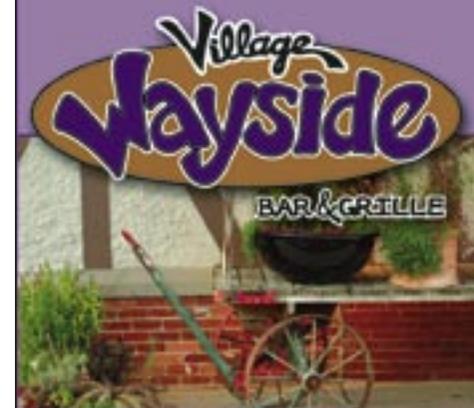
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fine art

FOCUS GALLERY EXHIBITION Anne Freels & Leslie Owens

Anne Freels, Wingshuck Industries

I started making corn shuck dolls in 1975, when I was introduced to the craft in an Appalachian Studies class during my senior year of high school in my hometown of Oak Ridge, TN.

I instantly fell in love with this graceful art, and not only had discovered a way to express myself artistically, but was also attracted to the historical nature of corn shuck dolls. They

linked me to my paternal heritage deeply rooted in East Tennessee's Appalachia. I have been making corn shuck dolls ever since that day.

My method for making the dolls is based on the same method that has been practiced for decades. I begin by dampening the shucks with water to make them pliable, then rolling and tying the shucks into various figures of different sizes and poses. Except for thread, and wire inside the arms to allow for different poses, the blank doll is made entirely out of corn shucks.

Once I have tied the shucks into a blank doll, I trim it and allow the doll to dry before adding the embellishments. These can include dried flowers and herbs, shells, seed pods, feathers, twigs and found or purchased objects along with other natural materials. Wool, flax, or dried corn silk is used for the hair. These finishing touches allow



Created by long-time corn-shuck artist Anne Freels.

me to create unique dolls that spark my imagination and allow me to share my interpretations of folklore, nature, history, whimsy, magic, myths and the seasons.

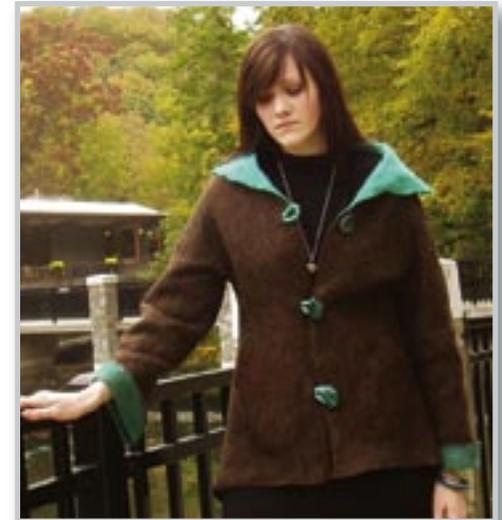
The future of corn shuck dolls lies in teaching the art to others through classes, workshops and books, as well as with starter kits which I have been producing for the beginner. My first instructional book is due out in Autumn, 2011.

Leslie Owens, Nice Threads

I grew up in a fiber-centric family — my grandmother was a seamstress for Hart Shaffner Marx and my mother knitted and sewed for her children. My first fiber craft was making octopuses from dime-store yarns, but I graduated into embroidery, crochet, macrame, and sewing while in college.

After 25 years as a corporate graphics designer, I came back to fiber when I went to Haywood Community College in 2000 to learn weaving and dyeing. That began my journey into the myriad techniques that comprise the fiber arts.

I found right away that I loved wool and loved to handle it, learning spinning just for the joy of feeling it glide through my fingers. I was an extremely slow weaver, since I just had to stop every few minutes to feel the new cloth I was making. When I discovered felting, a technique that consists of just hands and fiber, with no equipment



Natural brown jacket with lagoon alpaca collar and cuffs created by Leslie Owens.

intervening, I knew I had found my true calling as a feltmaker.

The real discovery was that making felted garments was more like sculpture than any other technique. Starting with the loose wool fibers, I can form the fabric and the garment at the same time, and my weaving liability — handling the cloth to excess — is precisely the technique that creates the garment. Each garment is shaped by my hands, coaxed into three dimensions and finished with a few carefully chosen closures.

Miraculous, a warm, light garment, formed only by my hands.



Works by Anne Freels and Leslie Owens on display through January 25, 2011. Folk Art Center, Milepost 382 on the Blue Ridge Parkway in Asheville, NC. Phone (828) 298-7928 or visit www.southernhighlandguild.org for more information.

'Laura Sims' continued from page 37

LS: By reviewing my past work I have identified elements that please me most. Not surprising I find that it affects the way I look at my natural surroundings, where I spend my time in a museum and what books attract me. I use all of these resources as tools to develop designs.

RR: Any influences or anyone you look up to when it comes to designing?

LS: I enjoy visiting exhibitions of artifacts from ancient cultures, as well as Native American, Aboriginal, African and Pacific Island peoples. The pattern and imagery used on functional,

decorative or ceremonial objects are reflections of their surroundings and inspire me.

RR: Describe yourself in five words.

LS: You've got to be kidding.

RR: Do you do commission work?

LS: Van Dykes Jewelry and Fine Craft on Biltmore Avenue exhibits my dye paintings. Recently I have completed four commissions and am happy to discuss options with interior designers and homeowners. Silk accessories are also available at the Folk Art Center and Miya Gallery. Additional images and information can be found on my website www.IndigoStoneStudio.com.

IF YOU GO: Laura Sims will teach a 1-day course, *Introduction to Intuitive Marbling on Silk and Cotton*, on February 12 at the Cloth Fiber Workshop. For more information please go to www.ClothFiberWorkshop.com.

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fine art

West African Art Exhibit and Lecture at UNC Asheville

Art educator, collector, and curator Jan Goffney will present an exhibit of West African art at UNC Asheville's Highsmith University Union Gallery.

The exhibit, "African Art: A Collector's Perspective," includes traditional masks, mortar and pestles, slave shackles and Kente cloths, and will be on view from January 10 through February 7, 2011. Goffney will also give a lecture accompanying the exhibit at 6 p.m. Thursday, January 20, in the gallery. A reception featuring traditional West African foods will begin at 5:30 p.m. The events are free and open to the public.

"African Art: A Collector's Perspective," showcases a selection of art and artifacts from Goffney's personal collection. Goffney hopes to use the exhibit to break down common misconceptions about Africa's past and present.

Goffney served as curator in the Detroit Public Schools Children's Museum specializing in ethnic studies,



Kente Cloth

BY TRACIE POULIOT

and later opened her own Multicultural Museum. She has spent many years traveling to Africa to collect artworks and their accompanying stories.

The event is sponsored by the following programs at UNC Asheville: the Office of Student Activities and Integrated Learning, the Honors Program, Multicultural Student Programs, the Center for Diversity Education, the Department of Africana Studies, and the Craft Studies Initiative.



The gallery is located on the lower level of UNC Asheville's Highsmith University Union, and is open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information call (828) 251-6991.

Revelations

at the FW Front Gallery at Woolworth Walk

Local artists Abby Lee and Michelle Sumares will be featured in the F.W. Front Gallery at Woolworth Walk for the month of January.

BY MEGAN STONE

Wildly vivid and compelling.



Painting by Abby Lee

Abby Lee is a painter who strives to express through her work the various ideas that form daily in her brain. She is also known to have wildly vivid and compelling dreams that she then portrays as a story on canvas with her paint and brush upon waking.

Michelle Sumares is a figurative, ceramic sculptor who works in her home studio in Asheville. The mystical, sensual and spiritual nature of the feminine tends to define her work, although aspects of child archetypes speak their voice as well.

Come meet the artists and enjoy the opening reception on Friday, January 7 from 4 to 6 p.m.



Ceramic sculpture by Michelle Sumares



Abby Lee: paintings
Michelle Sumares: sculpture. On display through January 30, 2011.

Woolworth Walk, 25 Haywood Street in Asheville, NC. Phone (828) 254-9234. Gallery Hours: Monday through Saturday 11 to 6 p.m., Sunday 11 to 5 p.m.

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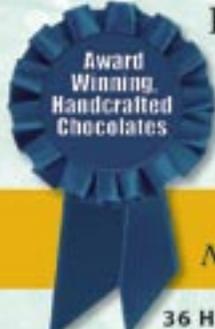


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