

Letter from the President

Dear Friends of the Blue Sage, Spring is a busy time here in the North Fork Valley, along with the beauty of renewal and a lot of things to do. It feels like spring at the Blue Sage, too.

Lorelei Sells has left her short but sweet tenure as Executive Director to pursue other endeavors. She orchestrated two wonderful events here: "Opera Colorado" and the children's play "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe". We wish you all good things, Lorelei!

While the board continues its work in finding an Executive Director, Joy

Kuhlman and I are donating our time to manage the office.

The Blue Sage needs your volunteer help in the office or gallery once a week, once a month, or once in awhile. We are looking for a few folks to form a "Dance Committee" to organize much requested dances at the Sage. If you know any interested performing artists or lecturers, please let us know at 527-SAGE.

Our Annual Membership Meeting Barbecue and Dance with the "Strolling Scones" will be on Friday, June 15th from 5-12. It's free for members. Not a member? Become one or renew at the dance. See you there!

Be sure to check out the ongoing Blue Sage Gallery and Gift Shop now open Thurs – Sat. from 11-3.

Remember, the Blue Sage Center for the Arts belongs to you, the membership. As it seeks to continually redefine itself, it requires your ideas, energy, love and most of all, your financial support to keep it going. Plug in whichever way you can to keep this beautiful space alive and thriving.

Many thanks,

Lynn Wetherell

Administrative Director

Jazz Renovators play it cool at Blue Sage Center's Jazz Cafe by Marion C. Stewart

You can saunter in, grab a drink, take a chair or join a table, and expect the best at Jazz Renovators' second Jazz Café of the spring season, Tuesday, June 5th.

Tony Peters, Robin Nicholoff, Dave Alderdice, Mike Antonavich, Willie Wright and Rich Hansley will take the stage at 8 p.m., and from then on, you've got it made if you like jazz.

An enthusiastic crowd attended the first spring Jazz Café on April 2, and Peters expressed pleasure at the turnout. "It was incredible for a Monday night," he said.

The Jazz Renovators, comprised of some of the valley's most gifted instrumentalists, are generous promoters of young musicians, too, so look forward to a repeat performance from Cory McClure. A student of percussion genius, Dave Alderdice (who is a knockout at both classical and jazz performance) Cory, 13, wowed his audience at the April Jazz Café when he was invited to join the ensemble (temporarily taking over

Alderdice's drum set) in a couple of jazz favorites. Like his teacher, Cory is a great joy to hear and to watch.

One of the joys of jazz, and surely one of the joys of a Jazz Renovator get-together, is watching, close up, the synchronicity, the delightful rapport among these fine and well-trained musicians.

Peters is the group's organizer and evocative trombone, while Nicholoff, an amazing keyboard artist, vocalizes as well from his seat at the Blue Sage grand piano. Reynolds, well known in these parts for his subtle, oh-so-effective bass, has been replaced by Mike Antonavich, who undoubtedly will make the transition smooth; Wright, Paonia High School's much-loved band director, will propel you into the right head space with the fluid and moving voice of his tenor sax, and Hansley will be keeping the very musical beat with his congas.

The happy audience at last month's Jazz Café at the Blue Sage enjoyed a full evening of jazz favorites such as "Take



Cory McClure

the A Train," Cole Porter's "Night and Day," Thelonious Monk's "Well You Needn't," and Freddie Hubbard's "Up Jumped Spring."

June 5th will bring us more of such greats played a group of Valley greats.

Enter through the "Old Bank Building" lobby of the Blue Sage and drop a donation (\$7 is fine - \$8 is even nicer) in the jar on the table, grab some refreshments, and sit yourself down in the main hall for a relaxing and re-energizing evening.

Professional Opera Comes Superbly To Paonia

Excerpt from a review in the DCI, written by Bill Bishop

After just five minutes of their performance, seven talented young musicians had totally captured an audience of over 60 on Wednesday evening, March 21st. The Opera Colorado's "Outreach Ensemble" came to the Blue Sage in Paonia that night and wowed the crowd. And the audience reaction further excited the performers. Said Leigh Holman, the tour director, "What a great audience. Their reaction [to the music] just feeds back to the cast and energizes them. It happened tonight."

The audience was clearly captivated, many with tears of joy in their eyes (this reviewer included). Cheers of "bravo" and "brava" followed each of their songs. At each break in the program the crew received a standing ovation from the audience, with heartfelt cheers. The singing was uniformly excellent in tone and phrasing.

This was unusual "opera". The Blue Sage room is small compared to concert halls, but with nice acoustics. The stage for the singers was the floor of the hall with no curtain nor proscenium. The clever set was a colorful backdrop with a collection of square boxes and various props, rearranged according to the needs

of the song or the scene. The orchestra was one grand piano, and a very talented player. The setting was intimate, with the audience sharing the stage and performance space. One of the audience called it "chamber opera", and aptly so. The singing was as powerful as on any opera stage but personal, unlike the concert hall.

The excitement level carried throughout the performance and into the reception afterward. Said John Moore, host of the Sunday "In the Classical Tradition" on KVNE, "I was more enthusiastic about everything in this concert than I've been about any performance recently. The consistency and high quality of the singing and acting were stunning, just splendid. It was more than I expected.

Opera Colorado should be highly commended for bringing this ensemble on the road." One person, often seen in classical music audiences, said simply "I was mesmerized for two and half hours." Reflecting on the cast's interaction with the audience, Al Haack, who sat in the front row and was approached seductively by Carmen (sung by Christina Rosas), said, "I'm so glad I came, even if I did not get the girl." Ulli Lange, a newer resident of the North Fork who grew up hearing high quality German classical music, remarked "It was a world class performance."

The music was varied, as appropriate for an opera sampler. The first half was in two portions. In the first they performed arias and ensembles from the opera greats like Mozart, Donizetti, Bizet, Verdi, and Puccini. The second portion was more contemporary with numbers from Gershwin, Rodgers, Schwartz, and Bernstein. After an intermission, the second half of the show was a complete performance of the short opera "La Curandera" (roughly, the woman who cures, a practitioner of folk magic) by contemporary composer Robert Xavier Rodriguez with libretto by Mary Medrick. Rodriguez's music combines old classical techniques with ethnic and contemporary materials. It deserves its own review, but suffice it to say that it was clever, musical, witty and marvelously performed.

Their one-week tour of the Western Slope appears exhausting, and the Blue Sage event was the second concert on that Wednesday. The tour featured small concerts, educational events in schools, and full concerts like that in Paonia.

Opera Colorado selected the musicians for this tour from many candidates. Each deserves individual coverage, but we can only list the performers: Christopher Thompson (coach and piano); Sangeetha Appavoo (soprano); Gregory Bruce (baritone); Lianne Coble (soprano); Christopher Job (bass); Chester Pidduck (tenor); and Christina Rosas (mezzo soprano).

Could Opera Colorado's Outreach Ensemble be back next year? Both the Blue Sage director and the Opera Colorado director hope so. If they are back, don't miss it, this reviewer will be there.



Lianne Coble and Christopher Job in a scene from *La Curandera*

Blue Sage Calendar of Events

Thursday, May 17, 7:30pm

Michael Soulé lecture - "The Spine of the Continent" an initiative that aims to connect 5,000 miles of ancient migratory routes, from Northern Mexico to the Yukon Territories, allowing safe passage for wildlife and protecting many species from extinction.

Sunday, May 20th, 4-5:30pm

David Krest lecture - "From Child-birthing to Nurturing and Death-birthing." Sharing a year of experience living with the Hills people of the Himalayas in India.

Friday, June 1st, 8:00pm

Howard Berkman's *Hot Fingers* CD Release Party and rock'n with Big Bottom Band.

Tuesday, June 5th, 8:00pm

Jazz Café with the Jazz Renovators.

Sunday, June 10, 8:00pm

Drew De Four - pianist playing a mixture of Ray Charles, Tom Waits, and George Winston.

Friday June 15th from 5 -12pm

Blue Sage Annual Membership Meeting & Barbecue, featuring fresh, local foods, and dance with the "Strolling Scones" It's free for members.

Monday, July 2nd, 8:00pm

Cherry Days Sock Hop for the whole family - with David Starr Band.

The White Witch Shares

By Mary Morgan Hinz

This was my first production with the Blue Sage, in fact it was my first production on the Western Slope. Having just moved from Denver, I happened to learn of the auditions from a neighbor.

Thankfully, I tried out and landed the role of the White Witch. I was very nervous not knowing anyone, but Lisa and Carl helped all of us to feel comfortable by playing games which helped us to get to know each other better. Soon after, we all got our scripts and started blocking, Lisa and Carl made sure no one was left out.

I had a really great time working with Lisa and Carl on *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. It was a little difficult at times since I was playing the White Witch (I had played Aslan, the good guy, in Denver) and have never played a truly evil character before. If it had not been for Lisa I don't think I would have been able to play the part as well. She pushed me beyond my limits and made me do

stuff with my character that I never thought I could (be really, really mean and wicked). Lisa and Carl were very encouraging throughout the whole play. They also let me choreograph and block the fight scenes in the play which I was very grateful.

Having choreographed and blocked the fight scenes for my previous play (*Young Arthur*, performed in Denver) in which I blocked a sword fight and a staff fight, I found it was a little more difficult blocking the fight scenes for *The Lion, Witch and the Wardrobe* because it consisted of one person having claws as their weapon and the other having a short knife or a sword. I would love to have had more time to work

on the fight scene. All in all, I think they turned out okay.

I was fortunate to help with the make up and some of the costumes including the design and creation of my own dress. You have no idea the chaos that goes on back stage when all the actors show up.



Mary Morgan Hinz, Lacie Hall and Helene Meneley. Photos by Cobun Keegan

They ALL are trying to get into costume and they ALL want their makeup put on, ALL at the same time. But it was fun, and I have more respect for what goes into making a play. When everything is all together it comes to life, not only for the audience but for the actors as well. When I get into costume, I am able to do more with my character than I would if I were just wearing jeans. Although, to be a good actor you must be able to pull off a character in whatever you are wearing and in whatever the situation. So, I will keep working on that and when you see me again I will be at the top of the list. Practice makes a perfect star.

Summer classes offered at the Blue Sage

- Karate - Monday/Wednesday evening
- Thai Chi - Thursday/Sunday evening
- Yoga - Thursday morning
- Social Dance - Tuesday late afternoon
- Call 527.SAGE for details

Blue Sage Center for the Arts Membership Form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

- Student/Senior \$15/year
- Individual \$25/year
- Family \$40/year
- Supporter/Non-profit \$50/year
- Sponsor/Business \$100/year
- Patron \$500/year
- Patron Saint \$1000/year
- Check Visa MasterCard

Credit Card Number Exp.Date

Signature _____

Membership Benefits

- Discounts on Blue Sage rentals
- Discounts at Blue Sage sponsored events
- Member-only annual appreciation party
- Annual board member elections
- Membership card

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***Wanted:
Underwriters***

You can display your business card here to advertise in each quarterly issue. Benefit the Blue Sage Center for the Arts as well as your company. The cost is only \$25 per issue. Limited space available. Call now!

The New Blue Sage Gallery and Gift Shop features an eclectic mix of outstanding local arts and crafts: Wall art from traditional oil and watercolor, to contemporary pastel; fine jewelry, hand-painted china, colorful greeting cards and much more! We will be open Thursday through Saturday from 11 - 3:00pm.

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