

SIUSLAW CRIES A RIVER FOR JAZZ

Miles to Go Concert Review

By BURNIE GARELICK

Everyone cried tears of joy when songstress Maree Beers sang “Cry Me A River,” overflowing the banks of the local waterway. The old song from 1953, recorded by the likes of Julie London and Ella Fitzgerald, revived its grandeur in Beers’ rendition.

Talk about a class act! Florence’s Class Act Theatre presented the classiest musical event of the New Year on Jan. 26 when Miles To Go jazz quartet played a sizzling cool concert, including silky smooth divas Beers and Denise Dee.

Fresh and exuberant arrangements of standards received enthusiastic applause from the sold-out crowd appreciative of superb talent.

Miles To Go began its performances on stage at City Lights Cinemas, when generous and genial theater owners prepared one stage for live performances. As extraordinary as “Live in HD” shows are, live in person shows of the quality of the jazz quartet are devoutly to be wished in a small town far from the madding crowd and the bright lights of the big city. Stylish Class Act Theatre provides elegance to the performance venue.

Instrumentalists and vocalists held the audience in thrall, even those not yet in sync with the glory of jazz.

The quartet includes keyboards, percussion, horn, and bass personified by Gus

Russell, Nate Kaplan, Ron Green and Michael Anderson, respectively. Anderson, who plucks chocolate from acoustic and electric bass, though not simultaneously, occasionally croons, melting and melliflously. We flew first class with him on “Bye Bye Blackbird” and stirred his bubbling champagne brew on “Witchcraft.” A musician doesn’t have to sing, but one who does both exceedingly well is a treat.

With notes sufficing the ears with the sweet juice of fresh fruit, Green is a horn of plenty, actually two horns, trumpet and flugelhorn, again not simultaneously. A masterful musician, his trumpet sparkles and soars and his flugelhorn swirls like melted gold. His interpretation of “Emily,” written in 1964 by Johnny Mercer and Johnny Mandel, was dreamy. Green’s “So Nice To Come Home To,”

written by Cole Porter in 1943, and later recorded by Chet Baker, master of trumpet and flugelhorn, was toasty. Every note from Green’s instruments punctuates the quartet with perfection.

Russell is a versatile and exacting pianist who commands the eighty-eight, whatever the tune. He and Beers delighted with Gershwin’s “You Can’t Take That Away From Me,” and he blew it away whenever the quartet dashed out, swinging through genre, such as the Mongo Santamaria frolic in which Kaplan, a usually steady and on-the-money drummer, rocked out with a smashing solo.

Perhaps it was the approach of February that brought the quartet’s delivery of a funnier Valentine — a wild, bumpy ride through hearts and flowers and boxes of candy. These four

musicians are one organism, the way they anticipate each other’s licks. If the great Miles Davis were still around, he would see that the foursome was gaining on his coattails and didn’t have far to go!

With generous support from the astonishing quartet, the divas held their own, with Dee’s voice bright and witty, scattling with glee and aplomb, and Beers’ stunning with majesty, particularly on “Nature Boy” — written by 1947 George Alexander Aberle a.k.a. Eden Ahbez and a 1947 hit for Nat “King” Cole. The song prompted a grand old Florence gentleman, with a penchant for dancing in the aisle, to recall his Army days in Venice when he spied a nature boy strolling on the beach.

Beers invited her young student, Nyah Vollmar, to the stage for a duet, a happy har-

monic arrangement of two old songs, “Get Happy” — written by Harold Arlen and Ted Koehler in 1950 — and “Happy Days” — written by Milton Ager and Jack Yellen in 1929 and the Democratic Party’s unofficial theme song since 1932. Since many of us didn’t get to sing the latter song this year, we were enraptured by vocal dexterity and excitement of teacher and student, soaking the happiness from the lyrics to both songs and breaking the glass ceiling with jumping jazzy joy.

Perhaps happy days are still here with class acts like Miles To Go and class venues like Class Act Theatre. Stay tuned for the CD that was said to be recorded at the concert, and stay tuned for more information about the next performance of the fabulous jazz quartet.

Backstreet Gallery authors featured this month to receive reception

Backstreet Gallery features four outstanding authors next month. There will be a reception in their honor on Feb. 11, from 3 to 5 p.m. at the gallery.

“Dogs, Crows and the Corn Chip Dance,” by Kathryn Damon-Dawson, Darby McCann and Riley McCann, is a children’s book which teaches backwards-counting through rhyme.

The text is whimsical, engaging and fast-paced.

Watercolor illustrations are by Damon-Dawson, who incorporated digital images and drawings of dogs, crows and cars gathered by granddaughters Riley and Darby.

The book was conceived one afternoon while they traveled by car from Beaverton to Florence. Damon-Dawson wanted her granddaughters to understand how, with diligence

and effort, an idea can be taken to completion.

Judy Fleagle worked as editor and staff writer for Oregon Coast and Northwest Travel magazines for 21 years. Prior to that, she taught first and second grades in California for 22 years. In 2009, she retired to write her first book.

In 2011, she co-founded the Florence Festival of Books.

Fleagle’s books include “Crossings: McCullough’s Coastal Bridges,” “The Crossings Guide to Oregon’s Coastal Spans,” “Around Florence” and “Devil Cat and Other Colorful Animals I Have Known.”

A fifth book is in the works that will be another guide to the Oregon Coast and available late in 2017.

Pattie Brooks Anderson is first a painter and printmaker,

but most recently she has become an author of books for children, she says, “from eight to eighty.”

She has always loved illustrations in children’s stories and her work is evidence of that inclination. Though she has always loved writing, she has found her paintings are the inspiration for the stories she writes.

She said she hopes to use her children’s books as a message to children of all ages to respect the earth and all its creatures and the importance of our role as human beings in preserving our environment.

Karen Nichols, an artist, is also author of five books. All her novels are set in Florence. Her books: “Triumph Over Fear: An inspirational novel of wilderness survival,” “Second Chance Heart: How often does

one witness a miracle?,” “The Unexpected Gift: A novel of Inspiration” — a Marine returns from Afghanistan to reclaim purpose and trust through love and redemption;

“Thornton House” — mysterious love transcends time and opens death’s door.

The latest, “The Moral of the Story,” is a collection of short stories from the poignant to the

completely hilarious.

Join the authors on Saturday, Feb. 11, for a book signing at Backstreet Galleries and they will tell you about their many adventures.



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2 nice 2 bedroom/1 bath units with backyard alley access. Great location, close to shopping, library, hospital & shopping
2 Units-2 Bdrm, 1 Ba 945 sq ft (each unit)
\$259,900 BH7390 ML#17377037



NEW LISTING
Multi family duplex 2 units, each with 1143 sq ft 2 bedroom/1 1/2 bath. Both have private fenced patio areas and attached garages
2 units-2 Bdrm, 1 1/2 bath 1143 sq ft (ea unit)
\$289,900 BH7391 ML#17598038



NEW LISTING
Shelter Cove custom elegance-propane fireplace, double garage-covered back deck & porch
3 Bdrm, 2 Ba 2211 sq ft
\$444,500 BH7395 ML#17196889



FEATURED LISTING
Near Heceta Beach. Private setting in area of fine homes.
2 Bdrm + den, 2 Ba 1558 sq ft
\$325,000 BH7388 ML#17411914



FEATURED LISTING
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2 Bdrm + den, 2 Ba 2255 sq ft
\$249,000 BH7386 ML#17034555



FEATURED LISTING
Stunning panoramic ocean views from this custom home in gated community. Separate family/bonus room opens to wind protected deck.
3 Bdrm, 2 1/2 Ba 2603 sq ft
\$625,000 BH7381 ML#16243862



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3 Bdrm, 2 Ba 1808 sq ft
\$619,900 BH7376 ML#16376820