

Concert combines songs, short films to present Black history in Oregon

BY BEN SALMON • For The Bulletin

At its height in the 1940s, Vanport, Oregon was the second-largest city in the state, with more than 40,000 residents, nine schools, 14 playgrounds, shopping centers, a hospital and a 750-seat movie theater that offered three double features per week. Today, if you zero in on Vanport on Google Maps — near the Portland International Raceway, just south of Vancouver, Washington — all you'll find is a historic marker. The town, which was 40% African American, was destroyed by a flood in 1948.

More than 300 miles to the east, there's another point on the Oregon map labeled Maxville, where aerial photos show only trees, trails, a couple of roads and a whole bunch of open space in the mountains north of Wallowa. But 100 years ago, Maxville was a bustling company town developed by Bowman-Hicks Lumber, and it was home to African-American loggers at a time when Oregon's constitution included a provision excluding Black people from the state. It was the largest community in Wallowa County from 1923 to 1933, when Bowman-Hicks' logging operations in the area ceased.

If You Go

What: Portland Jazz Composers Ensemble's "From Maxville to Vanport"

When: 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 27, doors open 6:30 p.m.

Where: Tower Theatre, 835 NW Wall Street, Bend

Cost: \$20-\$29

Contact: towertheatre.org.

These two long-gone locations are the framework for "From Maxville to Vanport," a multimedia concert of songs and short films from the Portland Jazz Composers En-



On Wednesday at the Tower Theatre, Portland Jazz Composers Ensemble will perform "From Maxville to Vanport." The show uses music and short film to tell the story of Black history in Oregon.

Submitted photo

two communities, the people who lived there, the prejudice they faced and the roles they played in Oregon's Black history.

The Tower performance will coincide with a special exhibit at the Deschutes Historical Museum in Bend. Ticketholders for the show can get "buy one get one free" admission to the museum through the month of May.

semble that will come to the Tower Theatre next week. The production features text by S. Renee Mitchell, video by Kalimah Abioto and music composed by Ezra Weiss and

performed by the PJCE and vocalist Marilyn Keller. The result of their work is a lively assemblage of jazz, blues and gospel music along with visuals that tell the story of these

■ Ben Salmon is a Bend-based music journalist and host of *Left Of The Dial*, which airs 8-10 p.m. Thursdays on KPOV, 88.9 FM and streams at kpov.org. You can find him on Bandcamp and Twitter at [@bcsalmon](https://twitter.com/bcsalmon).

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But mostly, you hear Bielanski: hooky, thoughtful, inspired, driven. Hear it for yourself at bryanssuperhappyfuntime.com.

He's from Charlotte, N.C., which means he'll be approximately 2,600 miles from home when he stops in Bend for a couple of gigs this weekend. Stop by one of 'em and make him feel welcome.

Bryan Bielanski, live in Bend: 8 p.m. Friday at Worthy Brewing Beers & Burgers (806 NW Brooks St.)
2 p.m. Saturday on KPOV Bend radio, 88.9 FM
8 p.m. Saturday at Worthy Brewing Company (495 NE Bellevue Drive)

More info can be found at bryanssuperhappyfuntime.com.

— Ben Salmon, *The Bulletin*

