

# OLY ARTS

Issue No. 24 | Jan./Feb. 2020

Crescendo!

## Ballet Northwest

The Northwest's oldest ballet company celebrates turning 50.

P. 6

Author Jim Lynch's

## Highest Tide

Harlequin adapts a South Sound novel for the stage.

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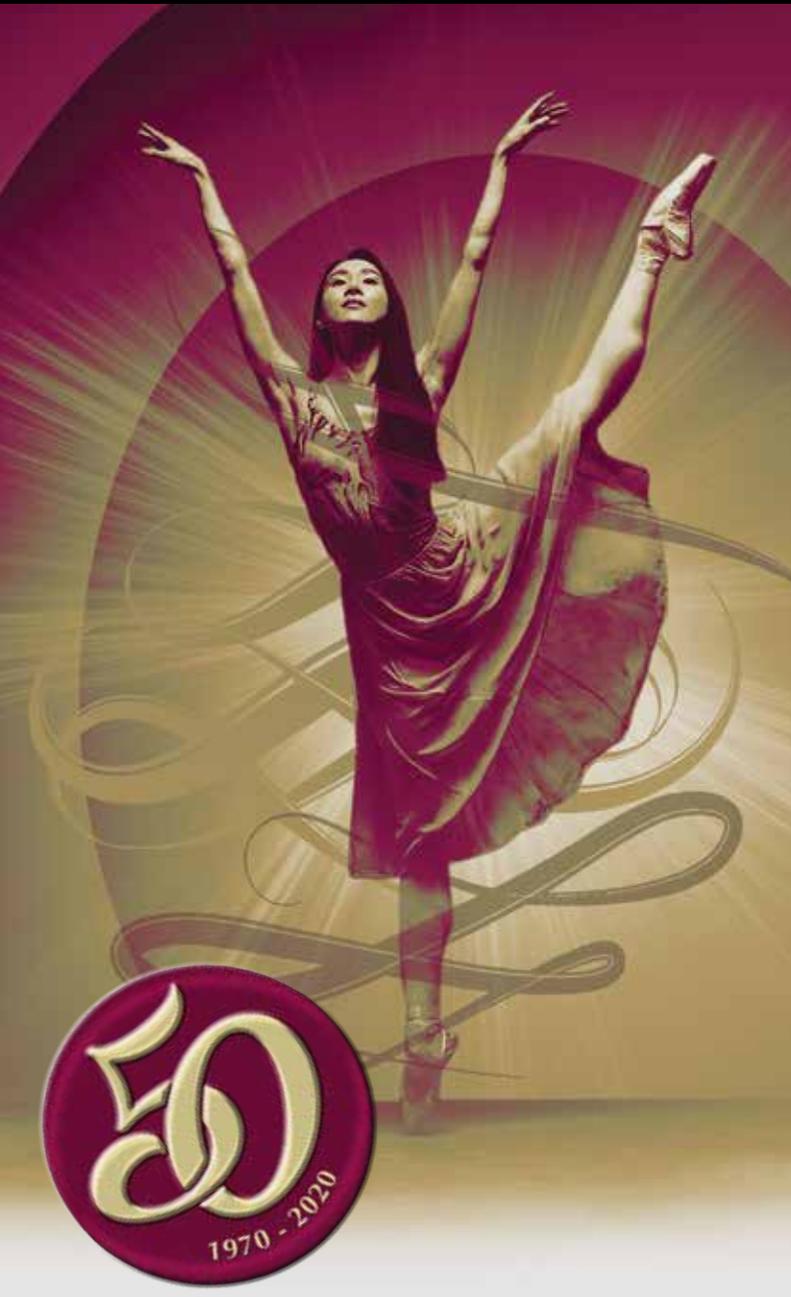


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# BALLET NORTHWEST

OLYMPIA'S DANCE COMPANY SINCE 1970  
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Jan 25 • 4:00pm  
Lunafest 2020

Feb 23 • 8:00pm  
Ecstatic Productions:  
Ghost Note

Jan 31 • 8:00pm  
Dosed with Paul Stamets

March 5 • 8:00pm  
Summer Cannibals

Feb 8 • 8:00pm  
Reverend Horton Heat

March 7 • 8:00pm  
Live Dead '69

Feb 12 • 7:00pm  
The Doors: Break  
on Through

March 13+14  
Bikini Kill (sold out)

Feb 15 • 8:00pm  
Tush! Burlesque

May 3 • 8:00pm  
Mudhoney

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**NOISES  
OFF!**  
 by Michael Frayn

**January 17 - February 8, 2020**

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**(360) 786-0151**  
**HarlequinProductions.org**



Cover: South Sound author Jim Lynch

**OLY ARTS ISSUE No. 24**

January / February 2020

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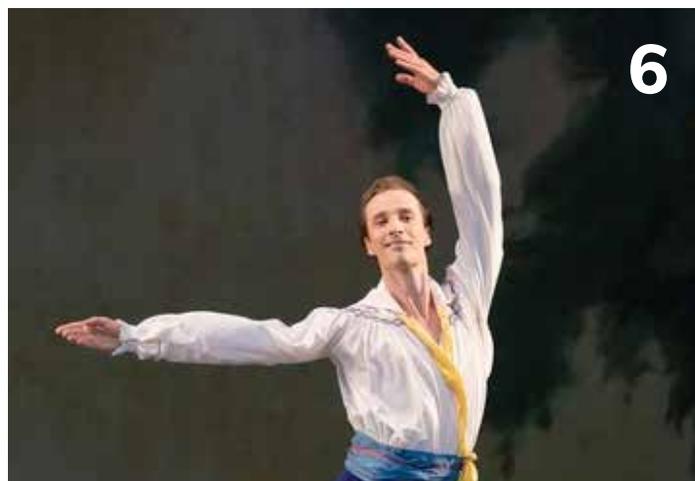
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Special coverage: **OLY ARTS** celebrates the  
Oly Old Time Festival

Schedule of Workshops

Old-Time Music: Where Did it Come From?



# Ballet Northwest

## En Pointe for Half a Century

By Christian Carvajal

For all the influence they had on popular music genres, aside from success they've enjoyed on their own, the Fab Four were only together eight years. Alexander the Great ruled the Macedonian empire from 336 BC till his death a mere eight years later. The Qin dynasty that reunified China lasted a decade and a half. (That's about the length of time Julius Caesar held power in Rome.) Shakespeare's legendary playhouse, the Globe, opened in 1599 and burned to the ground in 1613; the Bard's career as a playwright lasted less than a quarter of a century.

Perhaps that provides contrasting context as we note Olympia's Ballet Northwest, the oldest dance company in the state of Washington, is about to celebrate its 50th anniversary. This laudable institution is still going strong after outliving B. Dalton Bookseller, Blockbuster Video, Judy Garland, Alexander Godunov, Marilyn Monroe and Elvis Presley. In fact, Ballet Northwest hasn't lost a step, as demonstrated by an upcoming gala at The Washington Center for the Performing Arts.

Asked how Ballet Northwest endures and prospers, its co-artistic director, Ken Johnson, points to "our core values. And that's really to create a high-quality product — with high-quality sets and costumes and dancing and choreography — for both the performers and the audience, while also creating a wonderful, positive environment that's nurturing and supportive and is really a family environment. ... We're really proud here in Olympia of this tradition," he adds, "and we have 50 years of alumni out there who can attest to that." Johnson first danced with the company in 1988, as an eight-year-old "party boy" in *The Nutcracker*. He and wife Josie Johnson have been artistic co-directors since Bernard "Bud" and Mary Johansen retired in 2008.

"When they came here in 1972," Ken Johnson explains, "the organization had been in existence for a couple of years, but [Bud] was really the one who created the core company of dancers that performed in community." Initially tied to The Evergreen State College, the Johansens moved Ballet Northwest to its enshrined status at The Washington Center for the

Performing Arts when that facility opened as such in 1985. The Johnasens are "still very much involved and part of the family," says Johnson. "We've been really lucky to build on that great foundation that they laid."

Ballet Northwest's golden anniversary will be celebrated in a semiformal gala headlined by talents from around the world. "We're really lucky," says Johnson, "to have six amazing dancers who have danced with American Ballet Theatre New York, [including] one of their top ballerinas, Hee Seo. Ask la Cour ... is a principal dancer at the New York City Ballet and danced with the Royal Danish Ballet; and then [there's] an amazing Cuban couple, Adiarys Ameida and Taras Domitro, who danced with National Ballet of Cuba, and he also was a principal with San Francisco Ballet and she danced with Boston Ballet. And then the program is rounded out with James Moore and Angelica Generosa, who are lead dancers with Pacific Northwest ballet in Seattle. ... We're bringing in these world-class dancers for our community to witness, which is just a really neat opportunity."

Past dancers, dance teachers and board members appear in video clips to commemorate the company's achievements over the decades. Attendees get heavy hors d'oeuvres and desserts by Bayview Catering, with dancing to follow in the venue's black box theater. The Johansens will be there as guest emerita, as will Margie and Sam Reed. Margie Reed danced with Ballet Northwest for years, and Sam Reed was president of its early board of directors. Ticket income goes toward costume and scholarship funds. VIP guests will enjoy a pre-show reception with hors d'oeuvres, beer or wine and a souvenir wine tumbler plus priority seating.

Before Christmas, Ballet Northwest closed the 35th production of its annual holiday draw for dancers and audiences alike, *The Nutcracker*. It follows its anniversary gala with the 10th edition of Olympia Dance Festival on, aptly, Leap Day 2020. **0**

**WHAT**

Ballet Northwest's 50th-Anniversary Gala

**WHERE**

The Washington Center for the Performing Arts,  
512 Washington St. SE, Olympia

**WHEN**

8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 25

**HOW MUCH**

\$48-\$98

**LEARN MORE**

[balletnorthwest.org](http://balletnorthwest.org)  
360-753-8586



Olympia Family Theater presents

# Number the Stars

By Ned Hayes

Imagine being 10 years old, and a friend is caught in a place of violence and struggle. Families are identified for racial profiling and are destroyed based on their country of origin. Yet if the friend flees and illegally crosses the border, then her family may be incarcerated by the military in camps, where many children die. There's a chance to rescue her, but such an act requires resistance to the law, and lying to the police and military. What is one to do?

In Lois Lowry's famous novel *Number the Stars*, published in 1989, a young girl named Annemarie Johansen faces this ethical choice. Annemarie lived in Denmark during the Nazi occupation in World War II. In the novel, she risks her life to rescue her friend Ellen Rosen, a Jew, by pretending Ellen is her older sister. The two best friends fake their sisterhood as Ellen's parents go into hiding to escape the Nazis.

Director Samantha Chandler is excited to bring this unique story to the Olympia Family Theater

stage for the first time. "I hope that people will recognize the devastating impact of hate and the various ways we can resist tyranny," explained Chandler. "Young people are likely to be the most fearless when it comes to fighting for what is right. And, because we continue to live in a time where racism and 'othering' divide and destroy, I hope people will recognize this is an ongoing struggle."

In 1990, the novel *Number the Stars* was awarded the prestigious Newbery Medal as the "most distinguished contribution to American literature for children." Yet the story's route to stage and screen has been mixed. In 1996, Doug Larche wrote a dramatic adaptation of *Number the Stars*, which went on to be featured in 250 productions around the world. The OFT adaptation uses Larche's script.

Meanwhile, between 2007 and 2017, *Lord of the Rings* actor Sean Astin spent ten years trying to bring an adaption of *Number the Stars* to the silver screen. A film version is yet to emerge. Olympia Family

Theater has had better success than Astin at bringing its version of this famous story to life. OFT co-founders Samantha Chandler and Jen Ryle started planning for their adaptation several years ago, and in January their dream will come to life on stage.

"With a young female protagonist and strong themes of bravery and friendship," explained Ryle, "we felt this was the right time to bring it to life. We see so much hate and divisiveness in our country and our world. It is important for children to hear that they can participate in being a part of a solution and stand up for what is right." 0



## WHAT

Number the Stars

## WHERE

Olympia Family Theater, Fourth Ave. E, Olympia

## WHEN

7 p.m. Fridays, Jan. 31 - Feb. 14

2 p.m. Sat and Sun, Feb. 1 - Feb 16

## HOW MUCH

\$15 - \$20

## LEARN MORE

olyft.org

360-570-1638

# A Visit to Art House Designs

By Alec Clayton

Art House Designs is a large frame shop and gallery with hundreds and hundreds of paintings, prints and other artworks displayed salon style on the walls and on tables and even stacked on the floor, including hundreds of original paintings and prints by local and regional artists and printed reproductions of paintings by famous artists such as Picasso, Degas and many others.

There's something to pique the interest of almost anybody. A recent visit revealed two almost exact copies of Degas dancers and a copy of Van Gogh's "Starry Night" with a cityscape in the foreground.

Most of the art is competently executed. It ranges from abstract to figurative to landscapes. It is easy on the eye, predominantly what has been somewhat derisively termed wall fodder, or art that is pretty and guaranteed not to ruffle any feathers.

Among the best paintings recently seen were a pair of untitled copper-leaf paintings by Tom Anderson, one of Olympia's most well-known artists. Anyone familiar with Anderson's work will immediately recognize these paintings for his signature surface textures and the milky blue color seen in so many of the works. There is a veiled complexity, mystery and depth to these that I find personally appealing. Someone who can afford fine art should buy these two as a matched pair to be hung together.

Arnold Iger's monotype "Urban Mural Study #Twenty" is an abstract with a strong sweep of black, something like Asian calligraphy, floating over a field of white, gray and ochre with printed number 587 and a red stenciled number three. It's one of the more enjoyable works in the gallery, a kind of melding of Franz Kline and Jasper Johns.

John Anderson's watercolor and ink "The Apple Was in the Chapel" is a humorous semi-surrealistic picture with a line drawing of Botticelli's "Birth of Venus" posing as Eve in the Garden of Eden, with a large apple hovering in a pop-style sunburst.

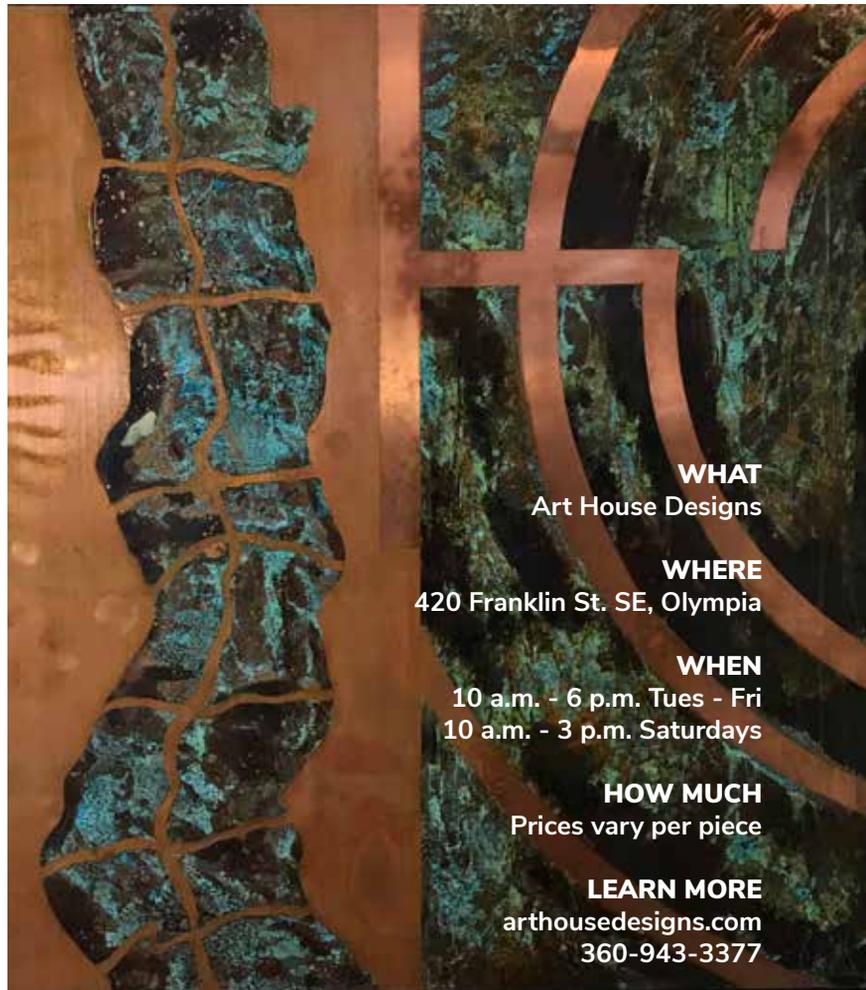
There is a group of eight very small oil-on-canvas landscapes by Marz Doerflinger with simplified imagery and heavy paint application. One of the nicest of these is "King's Blue," a picture of two

trees perched on the horizon line, with dark grasses below and a stormy sky above.

There are also a number of large paintings by gallery owner Susie Englestad, including a digital work called "Dusk." It is an abstract that can easily be interpreted as landscape, with a field of floating green and yellow marks with black squiggles reminiscent of Mark Tobey and many small dots of black, red and yellow.

When visiting Art House Designs, allow plenty of time to browse through everything. One could spend an entire day and not see it all. I was told the works mentioned here will be on display for at least two more weeks, but art basically stays indefinitely unless sold or withdrawn by the artist. 0

*This article appears courtesy of The Weekly Volcano.*



**WHAT**  
Art House Designs

**WHERE**  
420 Franklin St. SE, Olympia

**WHEN**  
10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Tues - Fri  
10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Saturdays

**HOW MUCH**  
Prices vary per piece

**LEARN MORE**  
arthousedesigns.com  
360-943-3377

# Welcome to the Leonor R. Fuller Gallery

By ALEC CLAYTON

The art gallery in the Minnaert Center for the Arts, South Puget Sound Community College will be named for retiring trustee Leonor R. Fuller in honor of her advocacy for arts and education. The dedication event will take place Jan. 24.

Fuller served as the chair of the Women of Washington State Association for Justice (WSAJ), an organization that works to protect the rights of her clients. She was also one of the original board members of the WSAJ Foundation, which supports WSAJ's work in appeals of cases that benefit people like her clients. She has been elected to the SPSCC Board of Trustees twice and is one of the longest serving community college trustees in the state. She has served on the board of the Olympia Symphony and was chair of the Olympia Arts Commission.

"When I found out that the gallery was going to be named after me, I cried," Fuller said. "It is a gesture that has profound meaning for me. It is like having a child named after you. The gallery is like my child; I'm thrilled to have had a part as it grew and flourished into the successful and important component of the college and community that it is today."

SPSCC gallery director Sean Barnes said, "Leonor has been a longtime supporter of the arts at the Gallery at the Kenneth J. Minnaert Center for the Arts and in the Olympia community. In the brief time that I have known Leo she has shown continued patronage of all gallery events and expressed praise to the faculty and staff of the arts at SPSCC. We're very excited to have the gallery named after her."

During her 17 years on the board, Fuller helped guide and support three presidents, worked collaboratively with 11 different trustees, and chaired the board from 2004-2006 and 2017-2018. Notable college projects that were completed or underway during her tenure include the Kenneth J. Minnaert Center for the Arts building, the purchase of 54 acres of property for the Center for Continuous Learning at the Hawks Prairie Center, the Health & Wellness Center, and the Craft Brewing & Distilling Center.

"The number one rewarding experience (of my tenure) is being part of the evolution of support we have been able to provide our students," Fuller said. "SPSCC has made it its mission to provide wrap-around services to help students succeed. These services come in many forms. There is the traditional person-to-person intervention through counseling. There is the use of technology that has enriched the connection between student and professor and student and counselor."

"The number two rewarding experience is watching the college become a more integral part of the community. SPSCC is not an introverted institution; it is an extroverted college and can be seen and felt everywhere in Thurston County. SPSCC is more than just physically present in our cities; it is considered a crucial partner in the economic development and the quality of life of our region."

Fuller says she has taken in many art exhibits in the gallery and that her home and law office "are full of the many art pieces I have purchased from this gallery. This gallery is a magnet for members of the public who would normally not visit our campus."

She hopes for the future of the college that the Minnaert Center and the gallery "continue to be a magnet for people who would not otherwise be visiting our beautiful campus." 0

**WHAT**

Naming of the art gallery after  
Leonor R. Fuller

**WHEN**

5-7 p.m. Friday, Jan. 24

**WHERE**

Kenneth J. Minnaert Center for  
the Arts, building 21, South Puget  
Sound Community College, 2011  
Mottman Rd. SW, Olympia

**HOW MUCH**

Free

**LEARN MORE**

360-753-8586  
spscc.edu/gallery



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JANUARY 16 | 7:00 PM



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JANUARY 31 | 7:30 PM



**THE NAKED MAGICIANS**

FEBRUARY 8 | 7:30 PM



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FEBRUARY 14 | 7:30 PM



THE RISING STARS OF LATE NIGHT TV  
**THE GOOD HUMOR MEN**

FEBRUARY 21 | 7:30 PM



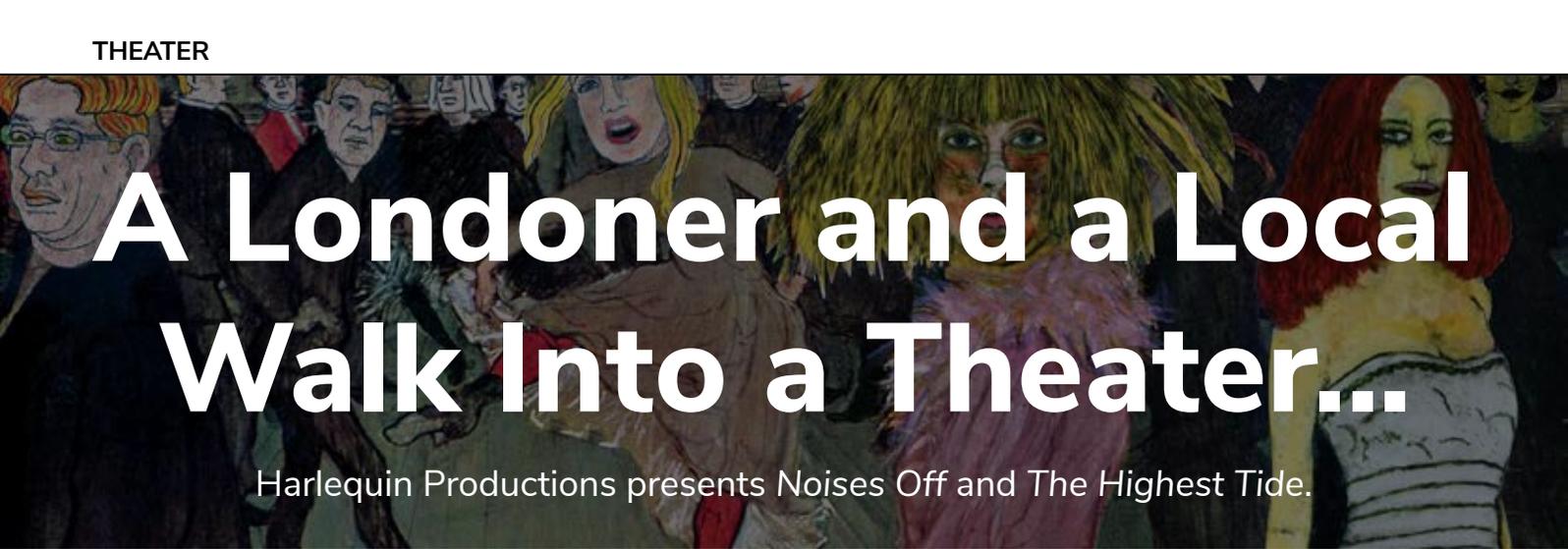
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# A Londoner and a Local Walk Into a Theater...

Harlequin Productions presents *Noises Off* and *The Highest Tide*.

By LUCY VOLKER

**T**ransformation is the theme for Harlequin's 2020 season. The production company begins the New Year with *Noises Off* and *The Highest Tide*. Riffing on the season's theme, *Noises Off* is said by Harlequin to be "one of the funniest plays ever written, offering the community some much-needed comedic relief."

*The Highest Tide* is a coming-of-age story written by local bestselling author Jim Lynch. Both productions exemplify the theme in different ways encouraging audience members to laugh, feel and think about what transformation means to them.

*Noises Off* is a play-within-a-play following a London theater troupe on several rehearsals and performances for a play titled *Nothing On*. "*Nothing On* relies heavily on mistaken identities, innuendos, a touch of slapstick, heavy doses of farce, and a never-ending use of doors, entrances, and exits that create an orchestral precision timing," says director Corey McDaniel. Written in 1982 by Michael Frayn, *Noises Off* quickly became an international hit. Frayn was apparently inspired to write the script after watching the commotion behind the scenes of another production and realizing how entertaining life behind the scenes can be.

The performance is an outrageous picture of what it's like to work in the theater world and experience myriad mistakes and technical difficulties that can happen at any moment. The set design for *Noises Off* is intricate, featuring a two-level set with a large window, three exit pathways and seven doors — all used throughout the performance. "The world around us right now is deeply conflicted, severed, confused and divided," says McDaniel. "We want to transform our community by offering a place where the community can gather and reflect. We believe we can 'transform' our community from a place of uncertainty, stress, fear and division and lean into a place of joy, laughter, happiness and community togetherness."

*The Highest Tide* is a story about a 13-year-old boy named Miles who makes a life changing discovery on the

shores of the Puget Sound. Set in Olympia and written by local author Jim Lynch, the story highlights the natural beauty of the region along with themes of learning about the complexities of life and growing up. Adapted for stage by Jane Jones through the "Book-It" style, almost every line of the script comes directly from the book. "I'm thrilled Jim's enchanting story *The Highest Tide* will be in its own hometown under Aaron Lamb's direction," says Jones. "This novel ranks in my favorites after 30 years of adapting fiction for the stage. And I promise, once you are under its spell, you'll never walk the beaches of Puget Sound again without marveling delightfully at the wonders of the inhabitants that populate its shores."

Lynch, a former reporter, grew up in Seattle, attended the University of Washington and now lives in Olympia with his family. He has written four novels, winning the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Award for *The Highest Tide*. Portland's Powell's Books recently named it one of the top books for people in the Pacific Northwest to read before they die. *Tide* was performed in Seattle by Book-It Repertory Theater in 2008, but this will be the first production of it in Olympia. "I'm so excited to see *The Highest Tide* come to life on stage in Olympia where I wrote and set the novel 15 years ago. Thanks to Harlequin for taking on this project," says Lynch.

In *Tide*, Miles is 13 and the role was cast with young actors. It will be split between cousins Leo Brotherton and Jack Conklin. Both actors will bring their own energy to the role, and Harlequin hopes it will be intriguing for the audience. Harlequin artistic director Aaron Lamb says, "[*Tide*] is a beautifully written coming-of-age story and a love letter to Olympia. This is my first year as a local myself, and my first full year as artistic director. I wanted to celebrate the community I've chosen to be a part of."

The theme "Transformation" is very fitting for Harlequin's 2020 season. We are in a time of deep social and cultural transformation, which sparks introspection

“I’m so excited to see *The Highest Tide* come to life on stage in Olympia where I wrote and set the novel 15 years ago”  
*The Highest Tide* author Jim Lynch



and often transformation on a personal level for many. Harlequin has selected nine plays for this season that demonstrate the theme in many forms: transformation of the written word to the stage, transformation and development of the plot and characters, and transformation of the audience through experience.

“As we prepare to transform these written texts into movement and light, spoken word and shadows, we hope that you will see the stories of transformation before you in our work,” says Lamb. “We hope you will find — within yourselves — some kernel of the same. We hope you will see the beauty we see and will recognize the journey necessary for learning. We hope to enlighten.”

This season Harlequin will offer nine productions instead of seven. The additional two productions will be held at the Washington Center Black Box Theater. Please note membership changes on Harlequin’s website. [U](#)

**WHAT**  
Noises Off

**WHEN**  
7:30 p.m. and 2 p.m.;  
Jan. 15 - Feb. 8

**WHAT**  
The Highest Tide

**WHEN**  
7:30 p.m. and 2 p.m.;  
Feb. 26 - Mar. 21

**WHERE**  
State Theater;  
202 Fourth Ave. E,  
Olympia

**HOW MUCH**  
\$36

**LEARN MORE**  
[harlequinproductions.org](http://harlequinproductions.org)  
360-786-0151

# Grammy-nominated Aizuri Quartet: Bringing Us “Home”

By LUCY VOLKER

**K**icking off its fifth year as Seattle’s up-and-coming classical music company, Emerald City Music often graces the pages of **OLY ARTS** with showcases featuring world-renowned artists who specialize in reimagining the boundaries of classical music. This year is no exception; come February 15, the Grammy-nominated Aizuri Quartet will perform its collection “Songs and Echoes of Home” in Olympia’s own Washington Center, as well as neighboring locations in Seattle and Bellingham.

While the debut album *Blueprinting* (2018) defies genres, from its vivid, engaging first song “Carrot Revolution” to its stirring, mesmerizing three-part conclusion (tracks titled “Lift Pt. 1,” “Pt. 2” and “Pt. 3,” respectively), Aizuri Quartet strays from original compositions in this performance, instead giving the audience a carefully curated cocktail of songs tied together with a more personal common ground. “One thing that sets the Aizuri Quartet apart is that all its

members are female,” notes Emerald City Music artistic director Kristin Lee. “That’s pretty unique in the classical chamber music world. I don’t know that we can say that about another group we’ve had perform.”

Another less obvious feature that sets Azuri apart is its multifaceted repertoire: rather than stick to one subgenre of classical music, for this particular performance the quartet offers a mix of timeworn classics and newer pieces, not only classical but folksong, tying their concerts together with one overarching motif. This concert’s theme is “Songs and Echoes of Home,” featuring pieces with a personal significance to each of the quartet’s members — music that the quartet’s cellist Karen Ouzounian describes as embodying “a sense of homeland and national identity, but at a distance, one step removed by the forces of psychology, geography and time.”

## WHAT

The Aizuri Quartet’s Songs and Echoes of Home

## WHEN

7:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 15

## WHERE

The Washington Center for the Performing Arts Black Box, 512 Washington St. SE, Olympia

## HOW MUCH

\$25-\$40

## LEARN MORE

[emeraldcitymusic.org](http://emeraldcitymusic.org)  
206-250-5510



Lee describes the musicians as “champions of celebrating the classics — but also commissioning more modern living composers, who might not be heard as often.” So no matter our take on folk song, we’ll likely be pleasantly surprised as the quartet reimagines the definition of the genre. The arrangement begins with three sets of songs from Romantic-era composer Antonin Dvorak’s “Cypresses,” which was originally titled “Echoes of Songs” — another thematic tie-in. These particular compositions draw inspiration from love poems by the Czech poet Gustav Pflieger-Moravsky, which encapsulate a love and reverence for nature and its sense of Czech identity. Dvorak’s timeless works are followed by the darker, melancholic works of Komitas, an Armenian priest who composed folk songs to encapsulate the unspeakable sorrow of the Armenian genocide in the 1800s. For the Armenian people, these works were some of the only remnants of their homeland inaccessible by their oppressors. “They offer to their listeners,” says Ouzounian, “a window into the Armenian soul.”

The program shifts, then, into something a bit more modern, although still resonating with that sense of history passed down throughout generations. The first half of the program concludes with the musical poems of Lembit Beecher, a composer who often draws inspiration from themes of belonging and home himself. His works, titled “These Memories May Be True,” are derived from elements of his grandmother’s Estonian culture, mixed with his own childhood memories, distorted through the lens of time. “This piece is a little like the scattered image of Estonia that I had while growing up, filtered through many layers of retelling, and touched by a sense of nostalgia,” he says of his songs.

In the second half of the program, the theme switches focus onto something a little more insidious. In “At the Purchaser’s Option,” musical historian and composer Rhiannon Giddens uses spirited, stable folk stylings to mournfully reimagine the life of a 19th-century female slave and her child. The entire conglomeration comes to a crescendo with early-modern Finnish composer Jean Sibelius’s “Voces Intimae,” written during a period of crisis, as Sibelius battled alcoholism and rapid mental deterioration. Regardless of the somber themes, the rapidly changing tones of the piece culminate in a triumphant finish that certainly instills a sense of awe in the audience.

The takeaway? The Aizuri Quartet transcends genres and generations, defies borders and boundaries, and still ultimately ties a centuries-long span of music together with one common truth: Each and every one of us deserves to have somewhere or something to come home to. “They’re eclectic and diverse,” says Lee, “which, at the end of the day, is ultimately what Emerald City Music tries to embody.”

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October 25-November 10, 2019

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December 6– December 29, 2019

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**Shattering**

January 24-February 9, 2020

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**A CHORUS LINE**

March 6-March 29, 2020

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*Terms of Endearment*

April 24-May 10, 2020

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One of our best-selling scents, this intoxicating love note has a cloud burst of green leafy levity, a little dalliance with the floral and even a juicy pinch of creamy coconut. Olympia likes to bring the unexpected, and, truth be told, we don't fail at it.

Oly  
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# Olympia... ...On Ice

By JERICA PENDER

It was 2007, just as our country took a deep dive into a recession, that the idea for a pop-up ice rink popped up on Jonathan Turlove's radar. As the director of parks planning and maintenance for City of Olympia Parks, Arts and Recreation, it's his job to have great ideas. It clearly wasn't the right time for a rink, though; the city didn't have adequate funding or the right space to host one, according to Scott River, the department's director of recreation and facilities. Hosting a seasonal ice-skating rink became an idea the city would just have to keep under its winter hat for a while.

Fast forward to 2013, when the City of Olympia purchased property, then the location of two blighted buildings (Housing Authority offices and the former Thurston County Health Department), on the isthmus near Capitol Lake. In 2015, the buildings were razed; in 2018, the property was developed as an interim-use space, now known as Isthmus Park.

Site improvements were made to allow public access until a permanent plan for the property could be developed. Sandwiched between Capitol Lake to the south and the southern tip of Puget Sound to the north, this multi-use, 2.34-acre, flexible space has emerged as the winter home of Oly on Ice, a seasonal ice-skating rink, for the past two years.

River remembers, "It was a crisp, blue sky, little-bit-of-frost kind of day – a beautiful day." The city was hosting a small celebration of the newly acquired property, and River was walking over from his office. He was thinking about past conversations on how best to use the new space. "As I'm walking [toward the isthmus property], it just all starts coming to me," River says. "You've got



this wide-open, flat space, you've got the shadow of the Capitol, the Olympics, the Sound to the north. There's even parking. If we were ever going to do the rink ... " He trails off.

He recalls whispering, "This could work" to Parks, Arts and Recreation director Paul Simmons during the celebration. "Paul is a visionary who likes ideas," River says. "We didn't get out of there without him already sharing the idea with a couple executives and elected officials. There was some excitement about that."

Excitement there was indeed, always needed when it comes to ushering an idea from thin air into something solid and tangible. Fortunately for Oly on Ice, the citizens of Olympia overwhelmingly approved the Olympia Metropolitan Parks District measure in 2015, thereby funding a junior taxing district to fund parks acquisition, development, maintenance and safety.

It was then the ice really began to solidify. The city began a search for the right company to bring the idea to life. Contractor Ice Rink Events specializes in modular-ice-rink technology and constructs pop-up ice rinks all over the world. In our region, it operates seasonal rinks at Point Ruston, in Bellevue and the Enchant rink at Safeco Field. The two conversed over several years, collecting data and researching the viability of a rink in



Olympia by studying the success of rinks in towns with similar populations.

In 2018 the city decided to move ahead. It hired Ice Rink Events to build a rink that has quickly become the backdrop of new winter traditions and holiday memories. A rink with real ice was skillfully constructed in less than two weeks. In its inaugural season last year, it exceeded 20,000 skaters.

More than doubling its goal of hosting 9,500 skaters last year, the city is happy with its progress. It delights in receiving feedback from such local residents as Penelope Goode, who says, “I think it’s a really exciting time in Olympia right now, with all sorts of new development and improvement of previously unused areas. The ice rink is a perfect example of an innovative idea to take advantage of underutilized space, and [it provides] a fantastic gathering spot for families to get out and do something fun this winter.”

Joellen Wilhelm, outgoing Olympia school board member, is also an ice-rink regular. “I go about twice a week with my two kids, ages 12 and 7,” she says. Wilhelm grew up in Ohio and, like most Midwesterners, skated its creeks and ponds when the weather got cold enough. She even took an academic quarter of ice skating at Ohio State University.

**WHAT**  
Oly on Ice Seasonal Skating Rink

**WHERE**  
Isthmus Park  
529 Fourth Ave W, Olympia

**WHEN**  
November 22, 2019 - January 20, 2020

**HOW MUCH**  
\$3 - \$12  
(Skate rentals included in admission pricing)

**LEARN MORE**  
[olyonice.com](http://olyonice.com)

“I have had a chance to skate at the New York City Rockefeller rink once,” Wilhelm says. “My recollection is that the ice rink was smaller than here. After the Olympia rink opened last year, I decided to get my own skates, and my daughter got a pair this year as an early Christmas gift.”

When asked if skating is an artistic expression for her, Wilhelm replies, “I’ve never thought of it that way, but I guess it is. I’m fairly untrained in that regard, but it definitely is a creative outlet.”

“This is a particularly fun and festive opportunity,” remarks local massage therapist Aniyasa Zuchowski. Like other Olympians, she skated as a child but hadn’t donned a pair of skates since. “Ice skating makes me feel 12 again, and I am reminded that I’m never too old to find things to make me feel like my youth isn’t as far away as I think it is some days.”

Like Wilhelm, Charity Atchison also grew up skating outside. “I’m ecstatic to share my favorite sport with her kids,” she exclaims. She’s committed to going at least once a week and shares that she loves listening to the sounds of the skaters.

Although Olympia is not yet what might be called a proficient skating community, ice-skating aficionados do exist; and even if getting out on the ice incites trepidation for some, there’s no cost to stop in and watch the twirls, spins, loops and jumps of stylish skaters.

“There is something about the sound of a sharp ice skate cutting the ice that brings joy to my soul,” Atchison says, “so just look for the lady with the big smile pushing her kid in the skate aid as fast as we can go. That’s me.” 



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*TGB Architects rendering of Mason Clinic, opening February 2020.*

**OLY ARTS PRESENTS:**

# **2020 Oly Old Time Festival**

**A program of the Arbutus Folk School**

**Feb. 14 - 15**

**South Bay Grange &  
Arbutus Folk School**

**Evie Ladin and  
Keith Terry**  
**P. 21**

**Workshop  
Schedule**  
**P. 22 - 23**

**Ella  
Korth**  
**P. 28**



## 2020 Lineup:

### Performers

Brad Leftwich and  
The Humdingers

Evie Ladin and  
Keith Terry Duo

Ella Korth

Piney Gals & Pals

Atlas Stringband

Les Coeurs Criminels

Briar, featuring Joe Seamons

Brograss

The Sassafras Sisters

Yodelady



### Callers

Evie Ladin

Conner Maquire

Caroline Oakley

View more photos and exclusive  
content online at [OlyOldTime.com](http://OlyOldTime.com)!





# Evie Ladin and Keith Terry

By Molly Walsh

Crossing old-time folk with percussive dance, Oakland-based duo Evie Ladin and Keith Terry bring a fresh take to the longstanding old-time music tradition. Echoing the rich sounds of Appalachia, Ladin and Terry marry notes from a clawhammer banjo, guitar and bass with dance and storytelling.

A daughter of a folk-dance teacher, Ladin grew up on the East Coast, immersed in old-time culture as she learned banjo, clogging and square dancing. Traditional Appalachian musicians were regular guests at Ladin's home, with impromptu sets regularly being performed in her living room. Ladin went on to study African roots in Appalachian music, earning a degree in African Studies in Dance at Brown University, followed by a study of eastern Nigerian dance through a Fulbright Fellowship.

Terry is a percussionist and rhythm dancer. In addition to his work with Ladin, Terry is a figure in the contemporary Body Music scene and is the founder of the International Body Music Festival. As a pioneer in the Body Music genre, Terry has forged connections to create international musical and dance collaborations in addition to his work with educational outreach. On stage, Terry's musicianship is multifaceted, using the bass as tonal percussion, in combination with the bells and additional percussion instruments.

As a touring duo, Ladin and Terry will both perform and host workshops at Oly Old Time Fest. They became initially familiar with the festival through their connections with the old-time community.

"Old-time music is far and wide," said Ladin. "It's a very strong subculture in this country and the people who are interested in this music and dance tend to find each other."

As neo-traditional artists, Ladin and Terry will bring a set full of string instrumentals, jam sessions and dance elements that are true to the impassioned folk songs at the heart of the old-time music genre. During their festival set, Ladin will also call a square dance for the audience. Ladin's workshop series includes instruction on partner dancing, square dancing and old-time harmony singing.

Ladin said she is excited to both perform and teach at the festival, because of old-time music's participatory nature. The old-time culture is not just based on listening to the music, but also on learning new skills, interacting with fellow listeners and engaging in traditional dances.

"The music is very rich and interesting and there is a lot of participation," said Ladin. "It's not just about consuming. We experience it by jumping up and down, dancing or taking music or singing workshops and it's definitely very inclusive. Really open to all kinds of people and it's really about the music and dance." 🍷

# Venues and Tickets

**South Bay Grange** - 3918 Sleater Kinney Rd. NE, Olympia

**Arbutus Folk School** - 610 Fourth Ave E, Olympia

Prepurchase tickets are available through [BrownPaperTickets.com](http://BrownPaperTickets.com). There are no physical tickets. Pre-purchased will be added automatically to the will-call list. The will-call list will be at the check-in desk at the event (South Bay Grange) and each participant will get a wristband upon checking in. Wristbands are required for entrance into the Grange.

## Ticket Prices (per person):

- \$5 - Thursday Night Kick-Off Dance
- \$20 - Friday Night Concert
- \$20 - Saturday Night Square Dance
- Kids 12 and under are free. All workshops are free.



# Workshops

## Friday, February 14:

Time	Workshop	Instructor	Description
11 a.m. - noon Arbutus Folk School	<b>Cajun Fiddle</b>	Lisa Ornstein	Lisa is a masterful fiddler in multiple genres including Cajun, Quebecois, and old-time. She'll give you some Cajun tunes and discuss techniques that make Cajun fiddling unique.
Noon - 2 p.m. South Bay Grange	<b>Make a Crankie</b>	Emily Teachout and Shanty Slater	Illustrate a tune or ballad on a scroll of paper. We'll then perform it by illuminating it from behind and rolling it by in time to the music. We'll demonstrate a crankie we've made and then make one together.
Noon - 1 p.m. South Bay Grange	<b>Mountain Dulcimer</b>	Tom Murrett	Tom will teach a couple of simple tunes, show a few basic chords and how to incorporate them into songs and melodies. There will be a couple of extra dulcimers on hand for those who want to try it out.
Noon - 1 p.m. Arbutus Folk School	<b>Ukulele</b>	Briar	Beginning ukulele with Briar (Tina Dietz). Briar will teach the basics of playing the ukulele in an old-time music setting.
Noon - 1 p.m. Arbutus Folk School	<b>Songs</b>	Joe Seamons	Multi-instrumentalist and educator Joe Seamons will teach some of the songs Woody Guthrie wrote for the Bonneville Power Administration back in 1941.
1 - 2 p.m. South Bay Grange	<b>Clogging Basics</b>	Abby Ladin	Learn the fundamental steps, how to string them together and keep a rhythmic pulse from Abby Ladin, of The Humdingers. Abby will challenge us with syncopation and beginning improvisation.
1 - 2 p.m. Arbutus Folk School	<b>Harmony Singing</b>	West of Roan	Explore ideas of intuitive harmony singing and basic techniques to two-part singing. Channing and Annie have a "no rules" approach to finding the powerful capacities of two unaccompanied voices.
1 - 2 p.m. Arbutus Folk School	<b>Mandolin</b>	Anna Sandys	Anna, of Portland's Hops & Honey Goodtime Band, will lead this informative class on old-time backup for mandolin. Explore using the mandolin as a rhythm/percussion instrument for backing up tunes.
2 - 3 p.m. South Bay Grange	<b>Oklahoma Fiddle Tunes</b>	Brad Leftwich	Brad, of The Humdingers, will teach unusual tunes from two Oklahoma fiddlers that were his mentors: Tom Fuller, from Southwest Oklahoma, and John Dee Kennedy from Pawnee, in Northeast Oklahoma.
2 - 3 p.m. South Bay Grange	<b>Rhythm</b>	Keith Terry	Keith, of the Evie Ladin and Keith Terry Duo, will lead this entertaining and informative workshop. Improve your rhythmic skills by exploring downbeats and upbeats, syncopation and more.
2 - 3 p.m. Arbutus Folk School	<b>Old-Time Songs</b>	Jen Witherspoon	Come sing some songs with Jen, of Yodelady! Old ballads, old country, nothin' fancy, just fun. Lyrics sheets will be provided.
2 - 3 p.m. Arbutus Folk School	<b>Accompaniment</b>	River and Sage Scheurell	Olympia's own energetic multi-instrumentalist brothers River and Sage will help you explore creative chords in old-time music. For those wanting to move beyond the one, four and the five.
3 - 4 p.m. South Bay Grange	<b>Dancing with Others</b>	Evie Ladin	Evie, of the Evie Ladin & Keith Terry Duo will teach the basics of partner dance. Learn basic skills for dancing with a partner - weight sharing, leading, following, turns, footwork.
3 - 4 p.m. South Bay Grange	<b>Mandolin</b>	Sam Barlett	Sam, of The Humdingers, will teach a few old-time tunes. Tunes will be taught using an embarrassing amount of singing, as we examine this peculiar instrument stuck at the crossroad of rhythm and melody.

# Workshops

Saturday, February 15:



Time	Workshop	Instructor	Description
11 a.m. - noon Arbutus Folk School	<b>Old-Time Fiddle</b>	Lisa Ornstein	Master old-time fiddler and skilled teacher Lisa Ornstein will help us get some solid old-time tunes under our belt. Lisa is known for her insightful tips on bowing that give tunes their old-time drive and syncopation.
Noon - 1 p.m. South Bay Grange	<b>Kid Jam</b>	Maggie Neatherlin	After growing up in the Olympia Old Time music scene, Maggie loves helping younger kids participate in making music. She'll lead a kid-oriented jam with familiar tunes. All acoustic instruments welcome. All interested youngsters are welcome to participate.
Noon - 1 p.m. South Bay Grange	<b>Harmony Singing</b>	Evie Ladin	Using the Carter Family as a jumping off place, Evie will teach simple three-part harmony in this beautiful style. Finding harmony lines that sometimes weave around the melody, you will develop a better ability to hear and find parts and learn what gives these harmonies their particular old-time country sound.
Noon - 1 p.m. Arbutus Folk School	<b>Mandolin</b>	Tashi Litch	Tashi, of Brograss, will cover fundamental techniques for the right and left hand, and then help the class apply those techniques to a tune.
Noon - 1 p.m. Arbutus Folk School	<b>Old-Time Guitar</b>	Jen Witherspoon	Jen, of Yodelady, will go over the basics, some simple and slick bass runs, and a little bit of how to create your own stylish signature in the rhythm section. Chord sheets provided.
1 - 2 p.m. South Bay Grange	<b>Ozark Fiddle Tunes</b>	Brad Leftwich	Brad, of The Humdingers, will share tunes from Ozark fiddlers Violet Hensley of Yellville, AR (who is still fiddling at the age of 103) and Fate Morrison of Fox, Arkansas. If time allows, we'll also explore one from Howe Teague from Salem, Missouri.
1 - 2 p.m. South Bay Grange	<b>Stuntology</b>	Sam Bartlett	Learn the best tricks you wish you'd been taught by your grandfather. Sam is an authority on best, dumbest tricks and author of four books on the topic.
1 - 2 p.m. Arbutus Folk School	<b>Flatpick Guitar</b>	Kaj Litch	Kaj, of Brograss, will focus on foundational flat picking technique and then he'll help the class apply those techniques to learn a tune.
1 - 2 p.m. Arbutus Folk School	<b>Clawhammer Banjo</b>	Monica Peabody	Monica, of Yodelady, will teach the basic clawhammer stroke and rhythm as well as a tune to get you started.
2 - 3 p.m. South Bay Grange	<b>All Ages Dance</b>	River, Sage and Friends; Caroline Oakley calling	This is a square dance that is especially geared toward inclusion of youngsters. Caller Caroline Oakley specializes in welcoming and fun dances for all ages and abilities and will teach all the necessary moves. Brothers River and Sage Scheuerell will provide energetic and lively tunes.
2 - 3 p.m. South Bay Grange	<b>Community Discussion</b>	Joe Seamons	American roots music was created by a wide range of cultures, and yet we don't see that range reflected in the audiences at many of our festivals. How do we, as musicians and community members, create a more welcoming environment for all types of people to celebrate our music and culture?
2 - 3 p.m. Arbutus Folk School	<b>Harmony Singing</b>	West of Roan	Harmony singing repertoire - Join Channing and Annie, of West of Roan, in learning two-part harmonies to some beautiful songs. You'll sing everything acapella, and learn each part note for note.
2 - 3 p.m. Arbutus Folk School	<b>Pitchfork Banjo</b>	Cameron DeWhitt	Cameron is the innovator behind pitchfork banjo, a three-finger clawhammer technique that allows the player unprecedented access to melody, harmony, and rhythms that are impractical with the standard clawhammer stroke. He'll demonstrate and teach some basic applications to a well-known tune.
3 - 4 p.m. South Bay Grange	<b>Teen Jam</b>	Maggie Neatherlin and Friends	Maggie and friends will host a jam geared toward older kids and young adults. All acoustic instruments welcome. This is a chance for young adults to get to know each other and have fun sharing tunes. Familiarity with basic chords and ability to pick up tunes on the fly - by ear - will help players join in.
3 - 4 p.m. South Bay Grange	<b>Bass</b>	Abby Ladin	Beginning techniques and basic framework for backing up old-time tunes in the keys of D and A. Abby, of The Humdingers, will discuss rhythm and timing, communication and how to find a session's rhythmic sweet spot.
3 - 4 p.m. Arbutus Folk School	<b>Cajun Accordion</b>	Paul Denison	Learn the basics of Cajun accordion from Paul, of Les Coeurs Criminels. Work on playing out of different positions as a foundation for Cajun rhythm and ornamentation. And a tune, too. (Paul will be playing a C accordion.)
3 - 4 p.m. Arbutus Folk School	<b>Cajun Singing</b>	Jinny Macrae	You will learn as many tunes as we have time for and get a few pointers on the unique Cajun French pronunciation. Bring instruments if you want to accompany yourself and recording devices if desired. Lyric sheets will be provided. If you can carry a tune and like to sing loud, you're good.
4 - 5 p.m. South Bay Grange	<b>Guitar Accompaniment</b>	Ella Korth	In this workshop geared at intermediate guitar players, Ella will talk about ways of adding variety to your rhythm playing to serve the song you are singing, especially if it is just you and your guitar, and ways of approaching the melody of the song on your guitar.
4 - 5 p.m. Arbutus Folk School	<b>Cajun Twin Fiddle</b>	Joanne Pontrello and Paul Denison	Joanne and Paul, of Les Coeurs Criminels, will explain some basic chord shapes, how they work across the neck, and different bowing patterns that create that Cajun/Creole rhythm. Learn a tune and apply the method to come up with some fun seconding (the gateway into Cajun music).
4 - 5 p.m. Arbutus Folk School	<b>Cajun Guitar</b>	Jinny Macrae	Learn how to be that powerful rhythm that drives the Cajun two steps and waltzes. You'll need to be able to play the one, four five in C, G, D and A and be able to nail the major bar chords. Chord charts will be provided and recording devices encouraged.



# Concerts, Shows and Dances — All at South Bay Grange.

## Thursday, February 13:

6 - 11 p.m. **Kick-Off Dance**  
Piney Gals & Pals  
Charmaine Slaven calling

## Friday, February 14:

5 - 7 p.m. **Lounge Acts**  
Briar, featuring Joe Seamons  
The Sassafras Sisters

7 - 10 p.m. **Main Concert**  
Ella Korth  
Evie Ladin and Keith Terry  
Brad Leftwich and the Humdingers

10 - 11 p.m. **Late-Night Square Dance**  
Atlas Stringband  
Conner Maguire calling

## Saturday, February 15

5 - 7 p.m. **Lounge Acts**  
Brograss  
Yodelady

7 - 10 p.m. **Square Dance**  
The Humdingers  
Evie Ladin calling

10 - 11 p.m. **Late-Night Cajun Dance**  
Les Coeurs Criminels

## Sunday, February 17:

1 - 3 p.m. **Cabaret**

Our traditional close-out of the weekend festivities. The Cabaret is open to anyone and receives a mix of festival performers, instructors and participants. Amazing things happen when we open ourselves up to possibilities.

## A Hometown Act:

# Yodelady

By Molly Walsh



A hometown act, Yodelady, has been kindling the traditional music scene in Olympia and surrounding areas since forming in 2010. The members of this triple threat trio have deep roots in the Pacific Northwest old-time music community, and their sets boast three-part harmonies that send audience members to their feet for a round of square dancing. Yodelady consists of Monica Peabody on banjo, Emily Teachout on fiddle and guitar and Jen Witherspoon on guitar and ukulele.

"We love the same old songs and old-time music and old country music, and I think really gravitated towards each other because we like to sing," said Teachout. She's excited to perform a lounge act set during the festival, where Yodelady will jam in a relaxed atmosphere and present new material. She described the lounge acts as a lighthearted and fun performance space with beer and wine on tap and attendees mingling throughout the South Bay Grange venue. The band can present its varied playlist, which was inspired by Appalachian ballads, the Carter Family and Hazel Dickens.

Teachout, a founding member of Oly Old Time Festival, said a vast menu of workshops will be offered. Consistent with a culture of participation in the world of old-time music, festival workshops revolve around dancing, instrumentals and singing. "We have a really robust program of free workshops," she added. "We have a lot of dances. All the dances are taught. Everything's aimed at being

affordable and accessible and welcoming, and that's all because that's what the tradition is. There's workshops for all levels."

For their festival set, members of Yodelady created a crankie, meaning a scroll adorned with artwork, to illustrate an old murder ballad the trio will perform. "It's an old art form," said Teachout, "and it's fun, because it really draws people close and kind of changes the feel in the room — because everybody turns their attention to the art that goes along with the music, and it's just fun to be able to portray these old songs visually." Teachout and Slater will also host a crankie workshop, where attendees will work alongside the trio to create a new crankie to be used in Yodelady performances throughout the rest of the festival.

Teachout said Oly Old Time Festival is geared toward music-enthusiasts of all ages, but it's also a great way to get out on the rainy days and nights of late winter to interact with the community and learn a classic form of American dance and music.

"What I really love about the festival," she said, "is that it's really geared towards participation, and there's something for everybody. So old-time music, by its very nature, is intended to be really participatory. It's not so much performance-oriented, [it's] people making music to get their friends to dance or entertain themselves or the community. That's really how it originated." 🎵



# Brad Leftwich

## And The Humdingers

By Molly Walsh

An old-time quartet, Brad Leftwich and The Humdingers, will deliver an Oly Old Time Festival performance with layered vocal harmonies and fiddle-heavy tunes. Dubbed a supergroup in the old-time music community, Leftwich and The Humdingers formed as a group of friends and veteran musicians while jamming together in the band's hometown of Bloomington, Indiana.

Frontman Brad Leftwich is in charge of both fiddle and vocals. As a teenager in Oklahoma, Leftwich carried on a family tradition by becoming a third-generation old-time musician. He was immersed in the genre by his banjo- and fiddle-playing grandfather and guitar-playing father. After taking up the banjo and fiddle himself, Leftwich trained under prolific old-time musicians including the Hammonds family, Violet Hensley, Tommy Jarell and Melvin Wine. Throughout his seasoned, four-decade career, Leftwich has become a pillar of the modern-day old-time community. In addition to creating over a dozen recordings, he's also at the forefront of old-time music education, as through his participation in music camps and the creation of instructional videos.

Linda Higginbotham is a string musician who plays the banjo and banjo ukulele as part of the Humdingers. She

hails from a family of musicians including her father, a New York City songwriter. After moving to Bloomington, Indiana in the early 1970s, Higginbotham became instrumental in cultivating an old-time music community in that region. After meeting Leftwich, she took up banjo and banjo ukulele, and the pair toured the Appalachian and Ozark mountain regions and learned from a number of seasoned, old-time musicians.

A multi-instrumentalist, Sam Bartlett's musical skills span banjo, guitar and mandolin. Over his three-decade career as a musician and performer, he's contributed music to documentaries including Ken Burns' *Prohibition* and *The Dustbowl*. Bartlett is also a published author who penned *The Best of Stuntology*, a bestselling how-to guide on pranks and parlor tricks.

As a Humdinger, Abby Ladin plays stand-up bass and provides additional vocals. Growing up on the East Coast in the 1970s, she became acquainted with old-time folk as part of a musically inclined family. As a bassist, she's paired her percussive energy with fiddlers across the United States. In addition to her instrumental abilities, she's also a lifelong dancer who toured nationally with dance company *Rhythm in Shoes* at the age of 18. 🪕

# Where Old-Time Music ...and Where

By Ned Hayes

In 1991, MC Hammer was huge. I was a published music critic; yet I wouldn't write about Hammer's platinum hit "U Can't Touch This." Instead, I was obsessed with a young, touring folk musician. In an era when hip hop was going corporate and rap and rock bands were signing their souls away, I heard James "Sparky" Rucker giving his audience a timeless experience. Rucker sang old-time blues, Appalachian music, ballads, Civil War music, railroad songs, slave songs, spirituals, work songs and original compositions, accompanied by banjo, fiddle and picked guitar. These tunes had an authenticity that served as a powerful counterbalance to the corporate monster of the music-industry machine. When I heard his Tiny House Concert, I felt my faith restored: Music could matter; music could echo in our souls long after a concert was over, and it didn't have to be all about making another buck or selling another album. My headline article for the music section was titled "Can Touch This: Sparky Rucker's Real Music." Real music: That's exactly the revelatory experience one can find at old-time music events today.

"Old-time" is the umbrella term for tunes by musicians like Sparky Rucker, and it's also the sacred, musical wellspring that has given voice to entire genres of music — from bluegrass and western swing to country and many strains of contemporary rock. In fact, such present-day performers as Brandi Carlile, Mumford & Sons, Old Crow Medicine Show and Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros use their music to echo the old-time traditions of acoustic hand-picked instruments, improvisational play and melodic vocals that edge in and out of harmony in joyful and melancholy chord structures. But creating pop stars isn't the point of this music.

"Old-time music is mainly made by people in their communities, either to entertain themselves or their friends and family, or often for a dance. At its heart it is a folk music," explains Emily Teachout, cofounder of the Oly Old Time Festival. The word "folk" refers to the fact that music can be played by anyone on acoustic instruments that they can learn to use by themselves or from another player, and that is shared through an aural tradition. These instruments usually include fiddle and plucked-string instruments like the banjo, guitar or mandolin. Old-time music is also dance music — it accompanied square dances, waltzes, and individual flatfoot dancers (or cloggers). Yet old-time music also includes both ballads and songs that were often stories or cautionary tales, and not just instrumental dance tunes. "It's really much more about participation than performance," says Teachout. "That's why the tradition includes so much group jamming. Compared to later forms of American music, like bluegrass, where people take breaks and solos, in old time everyone plays the same melody together. This makes it easier to learn, and easier to pass on."

The original music emerged out of a melding of several cultures on the Appalachian frontier in the 1700 and 1800s. Scots-Irish immigrants brought fiddles and tunes from the British Isles, and in Appalachia, they began to encounter African and Native American musical cultures. African Americans, both slave and free, had brought with them from Africa the original, gourd-based banjo, as well as haunting melodies and improvisational traditions. The African instruments and traditions became the core of new musical interactions. Traditional, Native American circle dances and community dancing mirrored, echoed and

changed how the musical community gathered and interacted.

The components that make up old-time music can be picked on separate strings: from the African gourd-banjo, harmonized singing and uniquely African-American style of fiddling to Spanish guitar to the dulcimer from Germany. They include Cherokee flutes and Native American fiddle styles, Cherokee circle dancing and community dances as well as the English and Scots-Irish ballads that still make up many important tunes in the tradition. Together all these parts make one harmonious whole.

It's important to understand this music didn't start with one group and use techniques from another. Instead, each addition to the music radically changed the tunes, style and approach to the music. Scots-Irish musicians who picked up the African-American banjo worked in the African-American strumming and thumping styles and, with African-Americans, developed the unique clawhammer banjo technique. Paired dancing from Europe melded with Native American circle dances to become the square dances we know in old-time today.

"By the early 19th century, there was a black banjo presence on the Appalachian frontier and white fiddlers encountered African-American banjo players ... influences working in both directions between blacks and whites," writes traditional-music host Fiona Ritchie in *Wayfaring Strangers*, her bestselling book about this tradition's musical history. Ritchie adds, "The music evolved through an egalitarian process of inclusion. The core Scots-Irish tradition from the glens of Ulster cross-pollinated with cultural gleanings from the English, Scottish, Irish, German, Welsh, Scandinavian, native Cherokee, and the African-American community."

With the commercialization of country music on the radio in mid-century, the old styles started to fade. By the 1950s, this profoundly American music with deep roots was on the verge of dying. A number of musical aficionados strove to keep the music alive. Among the foremost was Mike Seeger, brother of folk-music star Pete Seeger.

"Mike Seeger was very influential in the revival of old-time music," explains Teachout. "Mike did a lot of field recording and sought out the master players in Appalachia, learned from them and, importantly, brought people like Roscoe Holcomb and Tommy Jarrell out of their local communities and into the larger folk scene."

Mike Seeger wrote, "Music from the true vine grows out of hundreds of years of British traditions that blended in our country with equally ancient African traditions to produce songs and sounds unique to the United States." Seeger made it his mission to keep the music alive and grow its audience. "For the peoples of the rural South, their great variety of music, song and story provided their Shakespeare, their dance music, their news and the fabric of their daily lives," said Seeger. "This music in time became the roots of today's country, bluegrass and popular music and remains, as ever, enduring and refreshing listening."

Mike Seeger and other revivalists brought traditional styles to larger audiences, and such bands as the New Lost City Ramblers began to revive old-style music. For his work, Seeger received six Grammy nominations. In 2009 the National Endowment for the Arts awarded him a National Heritage Fellowship.

# Came From It's Going

Yet Seeger and his musical compatriots weren't doing this work for the honors or Grammys. Instead, they were investing in the future and wanted to see this music thrive. The greatest achievement of the group that revived old-time traditions is that today the music seems alive and well with thriving communities of players and dancers.

Individual, melodic traditions within old-time have also been revived and refreshed. In the 1700s, Fiona Ritchie writes, over half of all fiddlers in the United States were black. Today, there are many groups celebrating that rich, African American heritage of old-time music. The Carolina Chocolate Drops are a black, old-time string band from North Carolina. Their 2010 album, *Genuine Negro Jig*, won a Grammy for best traditional folk album. Native American singers and fiddlers like Walker Calhoun add their voices to old-time traditions. Calhoun, for example, sang Cherokee songs over three-finger-style banjo.

Films from the last two decades have featured old-time music, from the Coen Brothers' *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* in 2000 — featuring George Clooney singing old-time vocals to fiddle and banjo — to the 2003 film *Cold Mountain*, set in the Carolinas, featuring Jack White on "Wayfaring Stranger." Less-known movies that feature a great variety of old-time music include Emmett Malloy's *Big Easy Express* in 2012, which showcased folk rock, old-time and bluegrass musicians including Mumford & Sons, Old Crow Medicine Show and Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros and Julie Simone's 2018 documentary *Fiddlin'*, a foot-stomping celebration of Americana and old-time music.

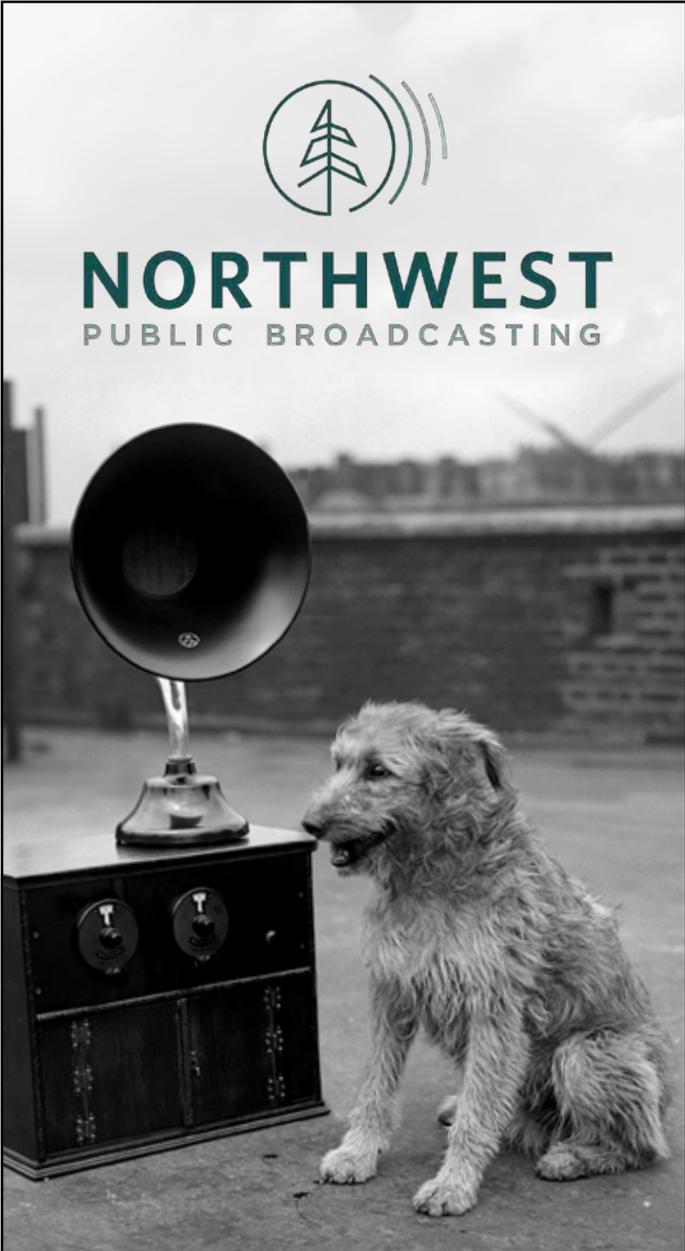
Today, a particular fountain of creativity is emerging in the Pacific Northwest. It's inherently community-driven, community-made and creates a community experience. Anyone is welcome to play, and everyone is welcome to dance.

What's the appeal of this style of music to people today? "It sound[s] homegrown, yet somehow exotic," wrote Paul Silveria in the *Old Time Herald*. Silveria's introduction to old-time music was seeing "a crowd of punks and hipsters clapping, stomping and dancing as though they would kick the floor through. It was my introduction to old-time stringband music, and it left quite an impression."

Emily Teachout remembers the early days of the scene: "The current, Northwest old time scene was sparked when The Foghorn Stringband formed in Portland and were coupled with a charismatic dance caller and musician, Bill Martin aka King Bubba, who taught a bunch of young folks to call, organize local dances and pass on the music."

Old-time music is a living tradition. The musical community is still evolving, with influences from hip hop and spoken word to punk rock and anti-corporate and DIY movements in the United States. There's a unique, Northwest-influenced community growing up around the scene. Silveria describes people you might see at any old-time event: "Train-hopping punks, high school students, radical organizers and plenty of other, younger folks are beginning to dance, call and play alongside people who are 10, 20 and even 30 years older."

"Today," Teachout explains, "this is as much about the community as it is about the music." 🐾



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# Ella Korth

By Molly Walsh

**B**luegrass multi-instrumentalist and vocalist Ella Korth is a teenager from British Columbia. As a Canadian, her musical inspirations stem from old-time traditions across the North American continent. She's the child of two bluegrass musicians, so she learned to play bluegrass by attending a steady stream of music festivals in her youth. It was at one of these festivals where she discovered old-time music.

Korth first attended the Oly Old Time Festival as a student, and she formed a connection with the festival in subsequent years by teaching music workshops. This year she'll instruct students on old-time guitar playing. "I really like the organizers at Oly Old Time," said Korth, "and am really excited to be a part of it again this year."

Her Friday-night concert will blend old-time music with bluegrass. Playing banjo and guitar, she'll include traditional songs that originate from Canada and the United States. Korth said she intends to bring the Canadian experience to Olympia. This includes an old-time song from her hometown in British Columbia.

Korth has witnessed firsthand the participatory nature of the festival. Between concert sets and workshops in dancing, instrumentals and singing, she said the festival offers something for everyone. The festival is open to all ages, so adults and children can immerse themselves in old-time dance and culture, thereby growing as individuals while enriching their community.

"The workshops are really important to keep the music alive and [for] teaching new people who are coming," said Korth. "The people develop their skill, and they're dancing and practicing, the community together. So I think having a festival like this means a lot to the old-time community."



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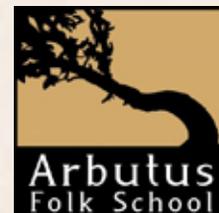
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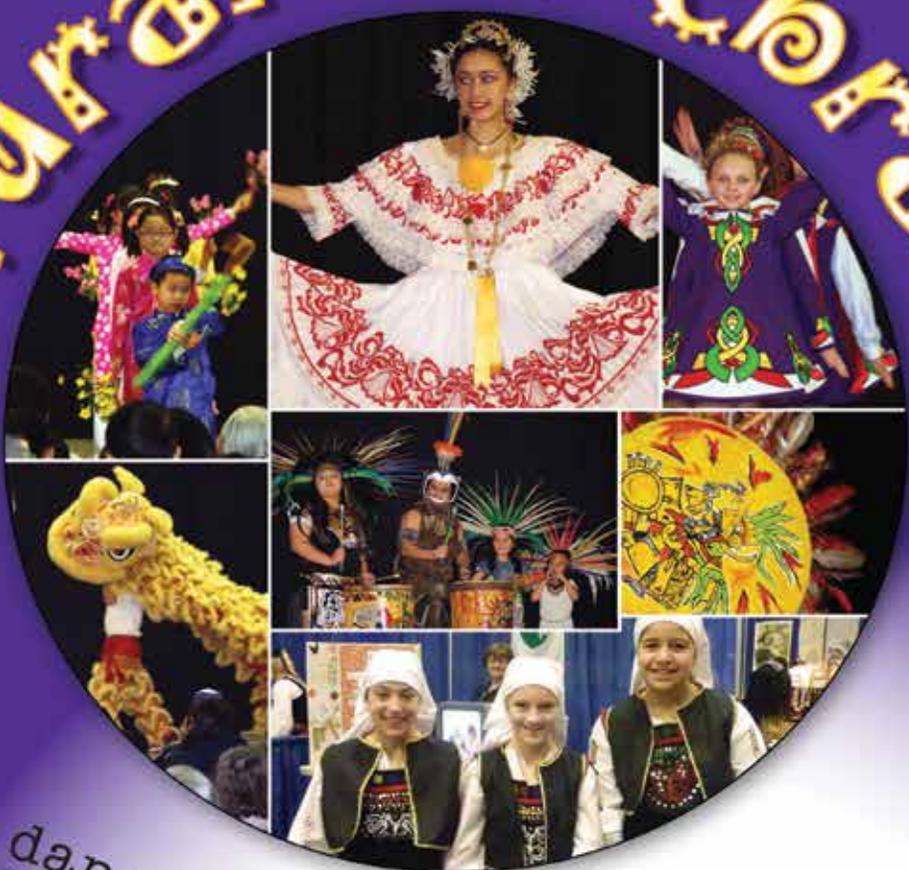
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