

2013 - A Year of Music

Singer & Simpson Productions

Music is a gift. You don't have to play, sing or write it to enjoy it. Just listen, and what you hear becomes part of your life. In my life, one experience sums up the profound impact a song can have. One day after I sang at a nursing home, an elderly woman approached me and said, referring to the song *Stardust* that I sang in the program, "I'll never forget that song. I'm ninety one now, but when I was nineteen years old dancing with my boyfriend he told me, 'Whenever you hear this song, you'll think of me!' And I always think of him. I ended up marrying somebody else. But when I hear *Stardust*, I remember my boyfriend." It was seventy two years since that dance, but she never forgot. How lucky we are to have music to mark and shape our lives, and give us something to remember and treasure.

For Singer & Simpson Productions 2013 has taken the shape of bringing more quality memorable music to Flathead Valley. We started off New Year's Eve and New Year's Day with the beautiful jazz piano of Billy Wallace who played the new almost hundred year old Chickering at McGarry's Roadhouse. We're so grateful to Adriene Brown who needed a home for her grandmother's upright grand and gifted it to McGarry's. Thank you Adriene. And thank you to McGarry's for taking care of that grand old (new) piano.

In February, we were part of the Kalispell Downtown Association's third annual Chocolat Affaire celebrating Valentine's Day and downtown businesses with chocolate. Our band, The Cocoanuts, played for the dance at the Red Lion. Jazz pianist Karin Kajita came from Seattle, Chuck Florence came from Missoula to play his tenor saxophone, and Don Caverly played bass and Neil Batterson drums. And I was the songbird for our dance band. Check us out again next year for the fourth annual Chocolat Affaire on February 7th, 2014!

Chuck Florence and Don Caverly joined us again for Valentine's Day at the Boat Club with Billy Wallace on piano. And Billy played at McGarry's Roadhouse the next two nights. We sure are glad they got that piano.

In March, two time Grammy Award winner Diane Schuur put on an amazing show at The Whitefish Performing Arts Center with Bill Anschell (piano), Chuck Kistler (bass) and D'Vonne Lewis (drums) from Seattle, and John Nastos (tenor sax) from Portland, Oregon. The quartet played at The Bigfork Inn the night before, and Diane sat in and sang a few. Diane had new arrangements written by Alan Broadbent. Broadbent was the first artist to play the Steinway at the Whitefish Performing Arts Center in March, 2012. We'd acquired it in February, 2012 with the generous contributions from members of our community.

Speaking of the Steinway, classical pianist Alon Goldstein gracefully flew over its keys performing concertos by Beethoven and Mendelssohn during Glacier Symphony's Amadeus Festival in August, 2012. Alon said our Whitefish piano is "Among the finest

I've played in this country." When we asked the brilliant French pianist and composer Michel Legrand what he thought of the Steinway, his face lit up, his hand went to his heart and he gave the piano a big thumbs up. Mr. Legrand was here to perform in concert with his lovely wife Catherine Michel on harp at the Performing Arts Center in September, 2012. In December, 2012, Mike Eldred gave a wonderful Christmas concert. His pianist, Jeff Steinberg called the Steinway "an absolute treasure" and said we are very fortunate to have such an excellent instrument.

If you'd like to donate to the Steinway Fund and help pay for this wonderful piano, please make your check out to: **WHITEFISH SCHOOL DISTRICT/ WPAC Steinway Fund**. Mailing address: **WPAC STEINWAY FUND/P.O. Box 4772/Whitefish, MT 59937**

In May we were delighted by Brazilian virtuoso guitarist Diego Figueiredo. John Simpson was contacted by his agent who told us that Diego had a couple of nights free. John contacted David Feffer of Crown of the Continent Guitar Foundation, and the next thing we knew we were involved in a fund raiser for Crown of the Continent and the Steinway Fund at a private home in Bigfork and in Whitefish. It was two intimate evenings with a beautiful soul.

In June the talented and versatile pianist Doug Montgomery played the Steinway concert grand at The Whitefish Performing Arts Center and was marvelously entertaining. Mike Eldred sang with Doug and we got to hear his gorgeous tenor voice. And Cynthia Dario delighted with opera favorites.

In July, Dena DeRose came from Graz, Austria to play piano and sing. BruMar Estate in Bigfork opened up their lovely event facility which is home to many happy weddings for a night of music and fine dining. Once again, the Steinway Piano Gallery of Spokane provided a fine instrument. It was a beautiful summer evening of wonderful music at the temporary jazz club in Bigfork. The following night Dena put on a concert at the Whitefish Performing Arts Center.

John Pizzarelli was here in September traveling with Monty Alexander as the pianist with his quartet. It was a rare pairing of two great entertainers. Pizzarelli was warm and funny and clearly loved working with Monty. He told us that his regular pianist was on his honeymoon, so he decided to call the best jazz pianist in the world. They were inspired and put on two fabulous shows at the Bigfork Center for the Performing Arts and the Whitefish Performing Arts Center. John told us stories about his dad Bucky Pizzarelli who clearly taught him more than a thing or two about the guitar. He told us that growing up, you had to move a guitar out of the way to sit down on the couch.

In October, Pearl Django performed at the Bigfork Center for the Performing Arts, and they didn't need a piano. In fact they don't have a drummer either. Bass and two guitars take care of their rhythm and accordion and fiddle fills in the rest with infectious joy. The mission of this hot club gypsy jazz quintet is to incorporate the music of Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grappelli with American swing music. And that they did with much creativity and fun.

The warm and enchanting Judy Carmichael is a master of stride piano. The Judy Carmichael Trio was here in November in concert at The Bigfork Center for the Performing Arts and on stage in the dining room at the Whitefish Lake Golf Course Restaurant. Once again, the Steinway Piano Gallery of Spokane delivered a Steinway to both venues. So, the restaurant had a piano on stage in the dining room which Judy played to our delight while we enjoyed our delicious dinners. She was accompanied by Harry Allen on tenor saxophone and Chris Flory on guitar.

Thank you to Don "K" Subaru and to Subaru of America for their support in bringing music to Flathead Valley. And thank you to the Steinway Piano Gallery of Spokane for all those pianos.