



Giving the Gift of Music

As a small-town nonprofit, the Redmond Community Concert Association brings entertainment to the community and outreach to the local schools.

by Ronni Wilde, for The Bulletin Special Projects

The Redmond Community Concert Association (RCCA) is an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization that works hard to bring class acts to the local stage at affordable prices. Its mission statement, "Presenting quality live entertainment to Central Oregon audiences," is an undertaking the group very much takes to heart.

With 2016-2017 marking its 33rd season, RCCA has grown each year, now attracting almost 1,300 subscribers to the five-show series. Tickets go on sale each spring for the following season, which starts in October and runs through April. Typically, there are five concerts over the six-month season.

"We almost always sell out," said Loie Boero, past president and marketing chairperson. "More than 80 percent of our subscribers renew every year. We consider it a gift to the community.

"We were the best-kept secret for years, but we don't want to be a secret," added Boero.

In addition to the affordable entertainment the association brings to the community, RCCA also offers the gift of musical outreach for the local schools. In most cases, the performers who come to town stay overnight in order to participate in outreach programs at Redmond schools the next day.

"Outreach is a big part of what we do. Lots of music programs have been cut out of the schools," Boero said. To help keep music alive in the Redmond schools, RCCA brings the artists in to perform mini concerts for elementary grades and to teach master classes to the upper grades. Different schools are selected each season on a rotating basis.

In the 2016-2017 season, Ridgeview High was presented with a mini concert and its freshman choir received an informational talk on Oct. 17 by Shades of Bubl , the act that kicked off the season. On Dec. 5, Two on Tap presented a mini concert for the entire student body at Sage Elementary School. On Feb. 13, 2017, cellist Kristina Reiko Cooper will perform a mini concert at Vern Patrick Elementary, and on April 24, 2017, Tom Rigney and his band Flambeau will present a mini concert at John Tuck Elementary.

"We are a regional resource. We are reaching out to the community in many ways," said Jay Jantzen, president and operations manager of RCCA, adding that even the Deschutes County 4-H benefits from the concerts. Members of the 4-H serve cookies and coffee during intermissions, and concert-goers donate money for the treats. The coffee is donated by the Coffee Depot of Redmond, and 4-H gets to keep the proceeds.

Another important arm of RCCA's outreach is its scholarship program. In 2014, the association began awarding \$1,000 music scholarships each spring to Redmond high school students pursuing a music education. Boero said the board is committed to giving out at least one scholarship per year, but during the 2015-2016 season, there were three students so closely tied as possible recipients that the board approved giving scholarships to all three of them.

Owen Hucke, now a freshman at Southern Oregon University in Ashland, was one of those three students from Redmond who received a \$1,000 scholarship, and he said he was thrilled to be honored by the RCCA.

"It's really beneficial to me in helping me pursue my interest in classical music," said Hucke, who is working toward his bachelor's degree in music performance. Hucke started playing the piano at age 8, and decided as a teenager to pursue it more readily. "I saw the bigger picture of where it could go."

Hucke grew up listening to live music, as his parents began purchasing RCCA series tickets before he was born.



Owen Hucke, now a freshman at Southern Oregon University in Ashland, credits the Redmond Community Concert Association for helping him pursue his interest in classical music.

"I have been going to the concerts my whole life," said Hucke. "I always liked music, but hearing it live can be inspiring and make you want to go out and do something with it."

Skylar Adams, now a freshman at Santa Clara University in California's Bay Area, is another RCCA scholarship recipient who is a theater major studying dance and voice, and is musically training in voice and piano.

"When I heard I was a scholarship recipient, I was blown away," said Adams, who has been actively involved in community theater productions in Central Oregon, including a lead role as "Dorothy" in Thoroughly Modern Productions' 2014 staging of "The Wizard of Oz."

"I have had the honor of watching, meeting and learning from extremely talented and passionate artists," said Adams, who is a member and patron of RCCA. "I am forever grateful for the scholarship because I have the gift of representing RCCA wherever I go, and I wouldn't have been able to pursue becoming a working artist myself without it. I am beyond lucky and fortunate to have been given this scholarship."

RCCA performers come from all around the world, including the United States, Europe and Canada, Boero said. An RCCA booking committee and a

booking director are on the lookout for new acts all year, and — because of its good reputation — many talent agents contact the association on behalf of their clients.

"People are amazed at the quality of talent we get," said Boero. "Over the years, we have developed a close relationship with many agents. They tell us we treat the artists so well that they want to come back."

The concerts and outreach programs are funded through ticket sales, which are available only through season subscriptions. Subscribers, organizers and sponsors also donate varying amounts of money to help keep ticket prices affordable and to support the outreaches.

Jantzen said the concerts are a tremendous amount of work, but that the 22-member board and the other volunteers help keep the shows running smoothly.

"This is a hard-working board," said Jantzen. "There are no paid staff members; we are all volunteers who work out of our homes, and we want to keep it that way in order to keep ticket prices down."

In addition to the board, there are 20 committees that work year round tackling marketing, outreach, subscriptions, hospitality, advertising and many other duties.

"The majority of the work is before a concert doing preparation," said Jantzen, adding that the volunteers assist backstage and at intermission during shows, help with setup the day before a show and assist with sound checks.

From 1984 through 2013, concerts were held in the Redmond High School auditorium. In 2014, however, RCCA moved the concerts to a new venue, Ridgeview High School's Performing Arts Theatre. The new 614-seat theater provides state-of-the-art acoustics, Jantzen said, which is appreciated by performers and audiences alike.

Most concert subscribers live in Redmond, but Jantzen said 30 percent come from surrounding areas including Bend, Sisters and Prineville.

For more information about RCCA, the website can be viewed at www.redmondcca.org.

Tickets to the 2017-2018 season will go on sale in April 2017. Concerts are all general admission and are sold via season subscription only. Subscriptions provide admittance to all five concerts and cost \$60 per adult; \$120 per couple; \$125 for families (two adults plus all children under 21); and \$25 for students under 21. Shows are held at 2 p.m. and 6:30 p.m., all on Sundays. Subscriptions can be purchased through the RCCA website.

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