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Nature is painting for us, day after day, pictures of infinite beauty.
— John Ruskin

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INSIDE PUBLICATIONS

Rendezvous Arts bringing people together

Entering its fifth season, Rendezvous Arts offers a seven-concert series, repeating each event at distinct venues in Ravenswood, Lake Forest, and Dixon, IL. Their next event is this coming Saturday.

Interdisciplinary arts events thrive with varied takes on Chamber Music

BY JANE LAWICKI

While most artists still struggle post-pandemic, Rendezvous Arts now thrives by bringing people together with intimate music, visual artists, and interactive discussion.

Entering its fifth season, the group offers a seven-concert series, repeating each event at distinct venues in Ravenswood, Lake Forest, and Dixon. A sampling of their varied music and musicians can be heard Sept. 14-15 at the Ravenswood ArtsWalk, hosted by

sic we were playing, [the painter showed] true interdisciplinary connections and collaborations - real artists in real time together, to beautiful effect," says Bartsch.

Rendezvous Arts was founded in dire times for the arts and artists, just as the government-imposed pandemic lockdown silenced live music and many musicians lost work.

"Sadly, the Lake Forest Symphony fell on hard times financially and disbanded in March 2020," Stevenson shared. "The morning COVID hit, 63 musicians just lost their jobs."

As chair of the players at that time, Stevenson recalled a special event in Albuquerque that weaves together new and traditional classic music in an unconventional,

not going to survive, Deb asked to keep the Chamber Series. Together, she and her colleagues formed a board, pulled resources, secured a small business loan and 501 c3 status and within six weeks, Rendezvous Arts was born.

Their first season was limited to 30 people at the Gorton Center in Lake Forest. In October, the group made the decision to go virtual and through professional audio producers developed their own Patreon channel which continues with events and musician and artist interviews.

Mosaic street artist, Jim Bachor, popularly known as Chicago's "pothole" artist, has done an interview on Rendezvous Arts' Patreon Channel as well as one of their live events. With his modern take on the ancient art form, he says it's always interesting to interact with people and get people's reaction to what he does.

"You'll be successful if you're passionate about what you do," says Bachor. "These [musicians] are really passionate about what they do, it's a passionate tribe. It's really cool to interact with them, fun to sit back and watch it all come together."

Rendezvous Arts is dedicated to reshaping artistic expression, cultivating community, nurturing talent, and spreading the joys of music and art throughout greater

the Greater Ravenswood Chamber of Commerce.

Regular season concerts will be held at Artifact Events, 4325 N. Ravenswood Ave.

"It's seven very different concerts per season," explains Deb Stevenson, a professional oboist for 38 years and the group's founder. "We focus on as many styles and time periods as possible."

Stevenson adds that every concert includes visual artists. At the end of the event, a post-concert reception is held where musicians, artists, and audience members mingle.

"At a typical concert, the audience goes out the front door and musicians go out the back and never the two meet," Stevenson says. "But our concerts are designed to be gratifying and educational." Noting the intriguing details of a harpsichord, for example, she adds, "The more we teach people one-on-one, the more they are hungry to learn."

Andersonville resident Beth Kljajic, a regular attendee, enjoys talking with the artists and the two-for-one season tickets. She recalls conversations with a dress maker from Amsterdam, some famous jazz musicians, and that Irish music is done in a different key than most western music.

"You meet and greet both the musicians and the artists," Kljajic explains. "Some artists do artwork as they attend. You learn about music, bond with your neighbors, it's almost like a salon."

First violinist for the critically acclaimed Kontras Quartet, Eleanor Bartsch joined Rendezvous Arts' 2022-23 season. The event included a painter who did beautiful artwork while the quartet performed.

"Being inspired by the music and the artists is a unique experience," Bartsch says. "The intimate venue encourages musicians and audience engagement.

"They filled 250 seats, 50 Sundays a year in a cool warehouse space." Stevenson explains. "They have different music, musicians, and visual artists every week. Artists sketch during rehearsals and audience members can buy the sketches at the event."

Recognizing the Symphony was Chicago. Offering disparate types of chamber music and visual artists, events appeal to jazz lovers, string quartet aficionados, brass addicts, guitar geeks, lovers of woodwinds, and more.

Visual artists range from professional hat makers to photographers, printmakers, and watercolorists. Rendezvous supports and employs Chicagoland's finest musicians and visual artists.

"It's not chamber music, it's not classical chamber music, baroque music. It may be that, but it's always beautiful," says season ticket holder Besty Shepherd. Noting musicians can play guitar, strings, woodwinds and concerts are never repeated.

"It's a real mix of people of all ages in the audience, the artists and musicians are multi-generational… It's just a great way to spend a Sunday afternoon," Shepherd says. "You can take anyone – you could take your Mom, your daughter. The first time I took my husband, he said, 'They're so good - top notch musicians.'"

For more information and a season schedule, visit https://www.rendezvousarts.org.

Rendezvous Arts at the Ravenswood ArtWalk

Hosted by the Greater Ravenswood Chamber of Commerce

Saturday, Sept. 14:

- ***11:00 -1:00: Fiddle in the Middle (traditional Irish instrumentalists)***
- ***1:30 - 3:30: Grammy Award winning Jazz Bass player Christian Dillingham with Quin Kirchner and Matt Gold***
- ***4:00 - 6:00: Jonas Friddle and Andrew Wilkins Bluegrass Duo***

Sunday, Sept. 15

- ***11:00 - 1:00: Paul Ross and Pan Go Steel (steel drum trio)***
- ***1:30 - 3:30: Apasionado Duo - Emi Tanabe, violin and Gabriel Dactu, guitar***
- ***4:00 - 6:00: James Sanders and Conjunto Latin Jazz Ensemble***

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