

Blues Brothers Revue party rocks Shuler Theater

By Tim Keller
Special to The Chronicle-News

RATON — The balcony dwellers saved \$5 each on their tickets but had plenty to spare for shouting: when Jake and Elwood Blues led call-and-response singing and shouting at the Shuler Theater Wednesday night, the people in the more expensive seats couldn't match the volume of those in the smaller balcony section above.

It was that kind of night. The Official Blues Brothers Revue put on a party — the word “concert” evokes an — that drew a larger crowd than the theater is accustomed to getting for its excellent series of plays. Men outnumbered women in the audience and on stage as Wayne Catania and Kieron Lafferty convincingly resurrected the beloved characters Jake and Elwood Blues, created in 1978 by actor/comedians John Belushi and Dan Aykroyd for a skit on Saturday Night Live. The Blues Brothers skit took on a life of its own, leading to best-selling record albums and the 1980 Hollywood film.

Even the 1982 death of John Belushi couldn't stop it. It's continued so widely around the world that this production has to make clear that it's the official one, sanctioned by Dan Aykroyd and John Belushi's widow, who auditioned countless actors and singers before settling on Catania and Lafferty as Jake and Elwood.

Their physical resem-



Tim Keller/Special to The Chronicle-News

The Official Blues Brothers Revue swung into Raton Wednesday night for a high-energy show at the Shuler Theater. On left is Kieron Lafferty, playing Elwood, the character made famous by Dan Aykroyd. Wayne Catania is playing John Belushi's character, Jake.

blance was spot on, and they'd obviously studied films of Jake and Elwood to duplicate the demeanor and moves of the suit- and hat-wearing front men. The production, built by a staff of 15 theatrical professionals, choreographs their dance moves and surrounds them with a crack rhythm & blues band. Even their singing and Lafferty's har-

monica playing were up to snuff.

No wonder the Raton audience had such a boisterously good time. They got their money's worth, and they were called to stand and sing so often that they even got some exercise.

And yet underneath it all there was a sense that Catania and Lafferty had

done this exercise too many nights in too many towns with too little variation. The production sends its program ahead to each venue on the tour; the program includes the show's sequence of 23 songs, which appears to be followed night after night without change. To re-ignite the enthusiasm of its stars, they should consider a flexible set list with

lots of improvisation.

The heart-and-soul highlights came when the revue featured young lead guitarist Kory Montgomery, a wild man when cut loose — he seemed to be pulled across the stage as if trying to hold the guitar down — and divine singer Arnae Batson, who took a featured solo in each of the night's two sets. Combining Aretha Franklin's “Think” and

“Respect,” then singing James Brown's “It's a Man's World” in the second set, Batson and band suggested that the night could have been even more exciting if they'd just kept going themselves, sending the Blues Brothers down the street for a drink.

Like the band, the music itself was strong enough to shine in any context. From the genres of soul, blues, and rhythm & blues, the show featured such classics as “Can't Turn You Loose,” “Hey Bartender,” “Land of 1000 Dances,” “Green Onions,” “Shake Your Tail Feather,” “Messin' with the Kid,” and “Shout,” drawn from such classic artists as Sam & Dave, Big Joe Turner, Robert Johnson, Junior Wells, Floyd Dixon, Wilson Pickett, Otis Redding and even Cab Calloway.

That The Blues Brothers began as a comedy skit by two comedians but grew into an irrepressible phenomenon that can still draw hundreds to the Shuler Theater on a Wednesday night in January speaks volumes about the show's appeal. No one was disappointed; in fact, days later people are still talking about the high-energy show. The large turnout presumably raised much-needed funds for the sponsoring Shuler Restoration Commission, which deserves thanks for bringing such a popular entertainment to town.

New council members deny involvement in recall effort

By Mike Albanese
The Chronicle-News

Councilwomen Bernadette Baca-Gonzalez and Carol Bolton denied claims they are circulating petitions to recall fellow council member Alfredo Pando.

“There was wrong information going out and it needed to be corrected,” Baca-Gonzalez said about the claims, which were posted on a Facebook page set up by the Trinidad Recall Action Committee, which is currently testing the waters for a recall election.

Baca-Gonzalez said in a letter to The Chronicle-News that “there is no petition to recall any member of council.”

The new council member said she and Bolton, however, have been involved in an effort to col-

lect letters of support from community members for the city's efforts to win a designation for Trinidad as a Colorado Creative District.

A post on the TRAC Facebook page, from a user identified as Chemo Romero, claimed Baca-Gonzalez and Bolton are involved in the recall effort and have circulated recall petitions at a local nursing home.

“I heard today that newly elected council members Mrs. Baca (Gonzalez) and Mrs. Bolton were circulating recall petitions at a nursing home. Many of the residents at the home suffer from dementia or Alzheimer's and have no idea what they are signing,” the post reads. “If this is true, this is about as low as anyone can get. Also to par-

ticipate in attempting to recall one of their colleagues sounds somewhat unethical. They are doing nothing but assisting the recall committee to divide this community. During their campaign they promised to work for the benefit of our community. Is this what we have to look forward to from these two?”

Baca-Gonzalez's letter continues on to say, “The letter of support is to assist the city of Trinidad in obtaining grant money, and the form clearly identified that purpose and invited inquiries to be directed to Louis Fineberg, planning director for the city of Trinidad.”

The councilwoman assured residents that any information they have heard about her being involved in a recall attempt is incorrect.

“I want [the people] to know the information is inaccurate. ... I fully intended on serving on council and I am looking forward to my remaining four years,” she said.

Bolton denied any involvement in the recall effort when TRAC was first formed and she reiterated her lack of involvement again in an email to The Chronicle-News.



BACA-GONZALEZ

“I would like to emphatically state for the record that I am not involved in the referenced recall effort,” the email said.

Bolton's husband, Steve, is involved in the recall effort, though.

Steve Bolton has spoken out against Pando and he and his TRAC group have been gauging local support for a possible recall election.

Carol Bolton continued to state that it has been her goal since her campaign to work together with council and have council function as a cohesive unit.

“My vision has always been to work to move our community forward, ultimately enhancing the lives of all who work and reside here,” she said. “Throughout my campaign I consistently advocated a City Council that can work together for the betterment of our community.”

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Gallery Main artists celebrating new year with lots of activities

By James Courtney
Special to The Chronicle-News

The drop artists of the '60s haven't returned to Trinidad, but some artists have of late maintained the Gallery Main at 130 E. Main St.

And to celebrate the new year, the curators are hosting their eleventh annual, local area group art show on Feb. 2-26.

The art show will feature drawings, etchings, illustrations, engravings, paintings, ceramics, sculptures, mixed medias, videos and even installation pieces representing all of the plastic arts. The only art productions missing from the list are performance works, but another local area institution deals with that aspect of Trinidad cultural production.

The theme of the show is “Intensity.” Intensity signifies everything from emotional overload to complete excess.

The show is open to all Trinidad artists with an exhibition entry limit of three works per person. The entry fee per person is

\$7. The artist must bring his/her work to the gallery space between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. today.

The curators will have to decline or accept the works for the Intensity theme. Artists with rejected works will have to pick up their pieces on Wednesday.

The opening reception for the show is on Friday, from 5 to 8 p.m.

Awards will be presented to artists in the show for best in show, least subtle and most creative.

The gallery is also hosting its Creative Fridays sessions, which feature free art classes for children in the community after regular state school hours.

The children have complete access to the large studio room and workshop area in the back of the gallery main space. The actual studio and workshop room is mostly geared for ceramic work, but painters and sculptors have also used the ample workshop space for their projects.

The gallery has also been offering its Cabin Fever Workshops. The price tag on the workshops is from \$75 to \$150 each depending on the class level, and the overall course fee does include materials.

Among the courses being offered are life drawing and oil painting. The gallery will also host other fine arts-related courses this year, such as mold-making, for both artists and workers in the artisan trades, such as builders, basic drawing, and watercolor painting, which includes Gouache work. Ceramics will begin later in the year.

For more information on upcoming gallery group shows and art courses, call Denise at 680-8645 or Trish at 859-7702, or the general gallery number at 846-1441.

Interested artists call also look up www.trinidadartscouncil.com on line.

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