

THE ARTS

Piano virtuoso gives Shuler's Steinway a good workout

By Tim Keller
Correspondent
The Chronicle-News

RATON – Acclaimed classical piano virtuoso Teresa Walters presented her solo program to an appreciative Shuler Theater audience last Thursday night, Oct. 2, in the first show of this year's Raton Arts & Humanities Council's six-show Performing Arts Series.

The longtime New York City resident was raised on a farm in the American Midwest, began studying piano and a world map at age four, and has now given concert tours throughout the world.

She used a microphone standing ten feet from the piano on the Shuler Theater stage to introduce each composer and composition to her Raton audience. She's actually registered a trademark for these "Keynote Comments," and they were helpful for the audience in appreciating each piece she performed.

The first set—featuring works by Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, and Clara and Robert Schumann—gave the Shuler's beautiful Steinway grand piano a robust workout. Unfortunately, it sounded more like a workout than a concert. Walters seemed to deliver the pieces through long-practiced muscle memory placed on cruise control. Her technical skills were impressive, but

her heart and soul seemed missing, as though she'd left them in the dressing room when she made a rushed late entrance to begin her program.

She seemed weary and sad, as though the decades-long road of one-nighters has taken its toll. When, after each song, she placed her hands over her heart or blew a kiss to the audience, the emotion felt feigned, the motion an affectation.

The 44-minute first set was followed by a 25-minute intermission, though, that did Walters—and thus her audience—a world of good. She returned in a long, slinky red dress that was gorgeous against the Shuler's painted backdrop of an ornate Italian villa. She was more animated and conversational, saying of the costume change, "Now you know how I spent intermission. How did you spend yours?"

For whatever reason, the second set approached the sublime. Walters came to life, more expressive and musical, her playing subtle and nuanced. Where the first set's pieces sometimes seemed simply pounded out, the second set's music breathed.

Limiting herself to two extended pieces in the second set, the music itself seemed at least partially responsible for Walters's awakening. The first was a Franz Liszt adaptation of a sonnet by Petrarch, the master poet of the Italian Renaissance. One's eyes could see that Walters was now playing from the heart, but one's ears knew it best—this was no longer an exhibition of skills: this was music, beautiful music.

She closed with "An American Kaleidoscope," her arrangement of themes from George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" woven with elements of two early American compositions that included motifs from "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "My Country 'Tis of Thee." Rather than today's too-familiar bombastic patriotism, here was Americana that ran through the veins to provoke a profound love of country. It was as Gershwin described it, "a kaleidoscopic vision of America," enhanced by subtly patriotic musical motifs added by Walters. Everything about her performance felt deeply personal, and now her virtuosity was put to good service.

"An American Kalei-



Tim Keller / The Chronicle-News

Acclaimed piano virtuoso Teresa Walters brought her solo program to Raton's Shuler Theater last week, opening Raton Arts & Humanities Council's annual Performing Arts Series.



Also showing at the Shuler!

Phillips Broadcasting to present The 2014 Southwest Regional Country Showdown

Special to The Chronicle-News

Raton's premier fall event is back again this year as Phillips Broadcasting is set to host the 33rd Southwest Regional Country Showdown in Raton on Saturday, October 18.

State contest winners from Colorado, Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri, Kansas and Arizona will compete for a chance to travel to Nashville, Tennessee. The National Contest winner will receive \$100,000 and will be named Best New Artist in Country Music.

Last year's Southwest Regional Showdown Winner, Crystal Yates, was named the winner of the National Competition in January.

True to her promise to return to Raton if she won the national competition, Crystal and her husband Will performed a benefit concert earlier this year to raise money for the Raton Hunger Pantry. Crystal and Will have released a new album entitled "I believe". The album is available for sale on iTunes.

This year's competition looks to be as exciting as ever. Many contestants travel long distances to perform at the Shuler Theatre. The doors to the Shuler open at 6 p.m., with local favorite Colfax Reunion to begin the show at 6:30 p.m. The Southwest Regional Competition will start promptly at 7 p.m.

Just like last year, there is no charge for the event, and

no tickets are required. Seating is available on a first come basis, so be sure to get there as soon as the doors open.

"We are excited that Raton has embraced the Country Showdown, we had the vision many years ago, and with the support of the City of Raton Lodgers Tax Advisory Board, we've made it a reality for the past three years", said David Phillips, Operations Manager for Phillips Broadcasting.



We would like to invite you to visit The RoughNeck's Saloon, one of the last True Country & Western Bars in our area. Where we have expanded to combine two one hundred year old buildings in historic Downtown Aguilar, Colorado. In doing so we are hosting a Grand Opening of our newest addition The Hole In The Wall Dance Hall. Featuring a full bar, large seating area, a huge dance floor, and friendly staff.

Grand Opening
The Hole in the Wall at The RoughNeck's Saloon
October 11th, 2014 in Aguilar 8 a.m. till close
719-941-4001

Susan G. Komen
Fundraisers
• Poker Run
-Registration begins @
10 a.m.
-\$10 per hand
-will run the Hwy 12 loop
• 50/50 Raffle
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Daytime Happenings (free of charge)
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John Peach 2-6 • DJ 6-8 • Whiskey Creek 8-12
Door prizes will be given away
-With a Grand Prize of a Two Night Stay In
Cripple Creek for Two With \$200 Spending Cash.

doscope" lasted a glorious 20 minutes and won Walters an encore, for which she chose another composition based on early American folk music. "Songs of Jubilee," arranged for solo piano by Afro-British composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. It explored themes of finding one's promised land, the safe sanctity of home and homeland. The slow, melodic piece continued the depth of feeling and expressiveness that Walters

brought to her second set and it was clearly the second series of songs that earned her a standing ovation from the Shuler Theater audience.

The second show of this year's Performing Arts Series presents the Glenn Miller Orchestra in a Sunday matinee concert of big band music on October 26. Tickets are available from RAHC at Old Pass Gallery, 145 S. First St., (575) 445-2052.

The Country Showdown begins each spring with over 450 live shows produced by local country music radio stations. This year both KBKZ and KCRT Radio Stations produced local shows free for the community. Local winners advance to state competitions, and then on to one of only five regional showdowns. These five winners then compete in Nashville in January for the national title of Best New Artist in Country Music.

For more information about this year's show, Please call 1-800-791-8028.

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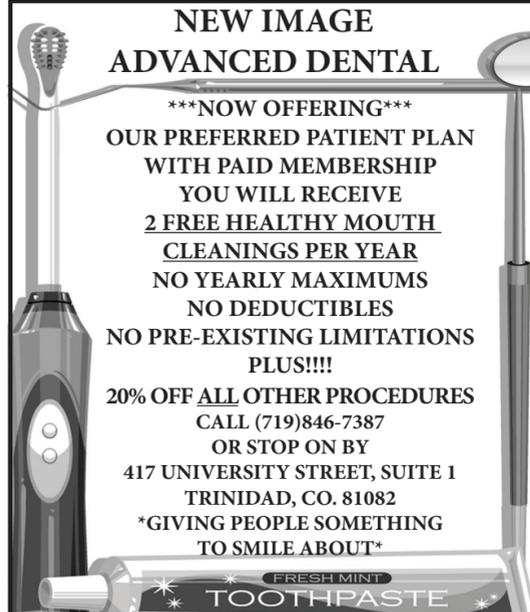


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2833 Toupal Dr, Trinidad, CO

Advance Tickets Only

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\$50 per couple

Get your tickets at the library! (9am-3pm, 9am-3pm on Sat.)

Sample Colorado wines and specialty chocolates.

Silent auction, entertainment and snacks

All proceeds benefit the Trinidad Carnegie Library Foundation.

