Regaining our perspective

BY KETZEL LEVINE

As the campaign for Schools and Arts Together makes its final push, some commentators have labeled the arts as an elitist activity. Ketzel Levine reveals the folly of such a statement.

In the world of arts advocacy, a sense of humor is a sometime thing. Fact is, it just wears a body down, dancing in circles to the same old tune. “The arts are elitist! Exclusive! Inaccessible!” And don’t forget, “Unaffordable!” Yes, it does get a little grim.

So when we came across a hostile response to a post about Arts For All, the city’s phenomenally successful $5 ticket program for Oregon Trail Card holders, well, let’s say we didn’t get the joke.

“This is an outrage!” wrote someone named The Terminizer. “As a taxpaying American, I demand that my poor people remain culturally and intellectually bankrupt, as well as financially. It’s for their own good.”

Thank you, Terminizer! Not simply for your
incredible cheek and wicked humor, but for helping us regain our perspective. Cultural and intellectual bankruptcy in Portland? No way, not on our watch, and not in a city where essential, life-changing organizations knock themselves out to reach underserved communities.

Let’s take a closer look at Arts for All, originally a classical music pilot program launched by Go Classical PDX in 2010. Two years later, it’s nearly tripled its arts offerings to low-income Portlanders who now listen to sublime chamber music, enjoy avant-garde choreography and take in Pulitzer Prize-winning playwrights at $5 a pop. Heartwarming, sure, but as the Oregon Symphony’s Diane Syrcle tells it, humbling, as well.

“I was still at OBT when a man came in to buy Nutcracker tickets. His wife was over at the Symphony’s box office getting holiday concert tickets. ‘We used to be able to buy these ourselves,’ he told me. ‘Now you’re giving me the dignity to participate.’”

Wow. No surprise Diane’s just a tad humorless herself when someone baits her with the ‘E’ word. “Just how ‘Elitist’ is a water front concert when 20,000 people fit in the bowl and come for free?” You tell ‘em, Diane. “Or when OBT Exposed sets up its tent in the park to break down myths about the inaccessibility of ballet?” Yea, sister! “Or when the opera demystifies itself with an outdoor screen so people in the park can watch free?”

So if the organizations aren’t elitist, maybe it’s us city slickers from PDX with urban-centric prejudice that everywhere else is just Podunk. It’s a theory, right? Well, he didn’t come right out and call it Podunk but Stephen Marc Beaudoin wasn’t entirely sure what to expect when he visited Estacada. As the executive director of PHAME, the city’s arts academy for developmentally disabled adults, Stephen was taking his performers to ten communities in eight whirlwind days of outreach and Estacada High School was one of the stops. Naturally, it was a highlight of the tour. “The way that audience embraced our artists, some of whom were difficult to understand, there was so much love! It blew me away.”

So, we’ve determined that neither arts audiences nor organizations are inherently elitist. Perhaps it’s the artists themselves. After all, consider the audacity of nurturing a lifelong dream to conduct! Talk about hubris.

But Edward Elder wouldn’t be dissuaded, least of all by his late middle age, lack of means and cerebral palsy. He could say everything that needed saying with his hands. So last year, in front of an audience at the Tiffany Center, he perched himself on the edge of the plastic seat in his walker and led the PHAME choir in an a cappella performance of the 1938 song “I’ll Be Seeing You.” Could there have been a dry eye? “I went up afterwards,” remembers Stephen, “and said, ‘Edward, you did it, man.’” Mr. Elder was glowing when he responded, “It was like a whole dream coming true.”

OK. You get the point. We can only marvel at the ways and means RACC-funded groups reach out to non-traditional audiences; indeed, exist on behalf of those audiences. The Children’s Healing Art Project uses crayons and glue to conquer hurt and overcome crisis; PlayWrite enables youth at the ways and means RACC-funded groups knock themselves out to reach underserved communities.

But let’s not kid ourselves. Fortune is fickle. This is no equal opportunity world. Some of us need Oregon Trail cards to buy concert tickets, and some of us can afford box seats. The arts would indeed be elitist, exclusive and inaccessible without those privileged to give. And without elected officials with the mandate to give. As long as fortune smiles on both, it is great good news for us all.

Ketzel Levine may be best known for her 35 years as a reporter and producer for National Public Radio, including her role as senior correspondent for Morning Edition from 2000-2008. She lives in Portland.
FALL CONCERT
11/10
Portland Youth Philharmonic
portlandyouthphil.org, 503.223.5939

GAMELAN MUSIC FROM JAVA
11/10
Venerable Showers of Beauty Gamelan Ensemble
vsbgamelan.org, 503.228.1353

REICH-ANALIA
11/10
Third Angle New Music Ensemble
thirdangle.org, 503.331.0301

PINKALICIOUS: THE MUSICAL
11/10-12/9

DON GIOVANNI
11/2-10
Portland Opera
portlandopera.org, 503.241.1407

THE BLOOD OF THE BEET
11/3
Mike Midlo performs
facebook.com/ThePianoFort

MAHLER’S SIXTH SYMPHONY
11/3-5
Oregon Symphony
orsymphony.org, 503.228.1353

STEPHANIE BLYTHE
11/7
Friends of Chamber Music
focm.org, 503.224.9842

A LESSON FROM ALOES BY ATHOL FUGARD
(A reading)
11/7-11
Profile Theatre
profiletheatre.org, 503.242.0080

SUNSHINE
11/9-11
created & choreographed by Tahni Holt
tahniholt.com

THE ADVENTURES OF PERSEUS
11/9-18
Tears of Joy Theatre
tojt.org, 503.248.0557

39TH NORTHWEST FILMMAKERS’ FESTIVAL
11/9-18
NW Film Center
nwfilm.org, 503.221.1156

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39th Northwest Filmmakers’ Festival
11/9-18
NW Film Center
nwfilm.org, 503.221.1156

RACC General Support
PORTLAND ARTS & LECTURES: BARBARA KINGSOLVER
11/16
Literary Arts, Inc.
literary-arts.org, 503.227.2583

SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA: MEDIEVAL LATIN CHANT FOR ST. JAMES
11/16
Cappella Romana
cappellaromana.org
503.236.8202

FRIENDING WITH BRAIN INJURY
11/16
A film by Cheryl Green
storyminders.com, 503.432.3169

SEVERAL FIRSTS
11/16-18
Portland Columbia Symphony Orchestra
portlandcolumbiasymphony.org,
503.234.4077

LIVE WIRE! RADIO
11/17
Live Radio Show
livewireradio.org, 503.548.4920

NOW--

CHELSEA KENBER
11/24-25
Blue Bottle Coffee
Blue Bottle Coffee City Stages
503.241.0629

NOVEMBER 1-30

YOU ARE HERE
paintings by Shawn Demarest
anniemeyerartwork.com
RACC Project Grant

GEORGE BALANCHINE’S THE NUTCRACKER
12/8-23
Oregon Ballet Theatre
obt.org, 503.222.5538

PETER PAN
12/8-1/6
Northwest Children’s Theatre & School
nwcts.org, 503.222.2190

GLORY OF CHRISTMAS
12/9, 14, 16
Oregon Repertory Singers
orsingers.org, 503.230.0652

MUSICAL LAMBS
12/10-12
Portland Baroque Orchestra
pbo.org, 503.222.6000

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM
11/23-25
The Portland Ballet
theportlandballet.org
503.452.8448

SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE CASE OF THE CHRISTMAS CAROL
11/27-12/23
Artists Repertory Theatre
artistsrep.org, 503.241.9807

INK, A DAY IN AMSTERDAM
11/28
Theatre Conspiracy
theatrec.org, 503.225.6200

IN GOOD COMPANY
12/7-23
Northwest Dance Project
nwdanceproject.org
503.421.7434

SEEDS OF HOPE
12/7-16
Do Jump!
dojump.org, 503.231.1232

ZOOZOO WITH BIG SHOES!
12/7-1/1
Imago Theatre
imagotheatre.com, 503.231.9581

YOU ARE HERE
paintings by Shawn Demarest
anniemeyerartwork.com
RACC Project Grant

(Artwork: Shawn Demarest’s Wet Sun)
FUNDING / RESIDENCIES

RACC OPPORTUNITY: INTERSECTIONS RESIDENCY at Portland Archives. Portland area artists producing work in visual, performing, literary and/or media arts are invited to submit qualifications for an artist-in-residence project at the City of Portland Archives and Records Center. http://bit.ly/Si14Iz. DEADLINE: 11/12/12

RACC OPPORTUNITY: FUNDING FOR PORTLAND MURALS. The next public art mural funding application is due soon. All applicants are required to meet with RACC at least one month prior to the deadline. Contact Peggy Kenden at pkenden@racc.org or 503.823.4196. http://bit.ly/QqkJrB. DEADLINE: 12/5/12

OAC’S CAREER OPPORTUNITY GRANTS support Oregon artists by enabling them to take advantage of unique opportunities to enhance their careers. http://bit.ly/R7niyS. DEADLINE: 12/17/12


ROMAN J. WITT RESIDENCY PROGRAM supports the production of new interdisciplinary work with assistance from the Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design community. Open to both established and emerging artists/designers. http://bit.ly/RTnOgo. DEADLINE: 1/11/13

NEA’S OUR TOWN GRANTS improve their quality of life; encourage greater creative activity; foster stronger community identity and a sense of place; and revitalize economic development. http://bit.ly/R7nCxA. DEADLINE: 1/14/13


HAWTHORNE FELLOWS. A five-month program for writers to focus on establishing their writing goals and publishing regularly. It’s part seminar, part editorial team, and part literary assembly line. http://bit.ly/R7nB8I. DEADLINE: 3/25/13

CALLS TO ARTISTS


HOLIDAY SHOW at Lunaria Gallery, Silverton, OR. Artists and crafts-people are invited to submit...
DEADLINE: 11/25/12

POSTER CONTEST. The Three Rivers Artist Guild (Oregon City) is looking for poster designs to help them encourage new membership and promote their mission. http://bit.ly/R7oOkG.
DEADLINE: 11/27/12

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PHOTO CONTEST. The grand-prize winner will receive $10,000 and a chance to participate in the annual National Geographic Photography Seminar. http://bit.ly/R7oYse.
DEADLINE: 11/30/12

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TRINITY EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL ARTS invites artists working in all media to submit work to a juried art show for display Jan-Feb 2013. http://bit.ly/QqeU7l.
DEADLINE: 12/1/12

SMALL SCALE WORKS OF ART: 12 X 12. A juried exhibit comprised of works that do not exceed 12˝ x 12˝ x 12.” This includes the frame for 2D works, and for 3D works, includes the base. http://bit.ly/QqfGrk.
DEADLINE: 12/3/12

DEADLINE: 12/5/12

INTOX SHORT FILM FESTIVAL. The Living Room Theaters are currently accepting submissions from local Portland artists with original, completed, and compelling work for an opportunity to be screened at the event. http://bit.ly/QqgaxE.
APPLY BEFORE: 12/6/12

ST. HELENS GATEWAY SCULPTURE PROJECT. RFPs sought for illuminated landmark sculpture(s) for the City of St. Helens, OR. http://bit.ly/QqglJk.
DEADLINE: 12/14/12

FLOOD GALLERY AND FINE ARTS CENTER (North Carolina) invites artists to submit entries to a national juried exhibition of contemporary art. The focus of this exhibition is on current socio-political relations in, or associated with, the United States. http://bit.ly/WBdY9H.
DEADLINE: 12/14/12

INSTALLATIONS sought for Art Auction for Cascade AIDS Project. These installations will be situated in four areas amid gallery walls on the mezzanine of the Portland Memorial Coliseum.
The spaces dedicated for these works are approximately 30x30 spaces. http://bit.ly/QqgzzZ.

**DEADLINE: 12/15/12**


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**DEADLINE: 12/22/12**


**DEADLINE: 12/31/12**

**CALL FOR JANUARY SHOW** by Cannon Beach Gallery. Theme: Figuratively, a “chimera” is a creation of the imagination, especially a wild creation. http://bit.ly/QqldOo.

**DEADLINE: 1/3/13**


**DEADLINE: 1/4/13**


**DEADLINE: 1/27/13**

**ART IN THE PEARL ARTS & CRAFTS FESTIVAL 2013**. This festival has a reputation as one of the nation’s premier art festivals and features juried work from 130 artists from across the USA and Canada. $35 fee. http://bit.ly/QqtITU.

**DEADLINE: 2/15/13**

**CALL FOR LATINO VISUAL ARTISTS**. Miracle Theatre Group is seeking submissions from Latino visual artists who wish to exhibit at El Centro Milagro during their 2013 season. http://bit.ly/PASjNM.

**DEADLINE: 3/14/13**

**THEATER INSTRUCTOR** (P/T) sought by Walters Cultural Arts Center (Hillsboro) to teach theater classes to youth (ages 5-15). http://bit.ly/0URC9.

**DEADLINE: 11/15/12**

**OREGON CHOREOGRAPHER** sought by McKenzie Rive Gathering Foundation to create or perform existing work at MRG’s Justice within Reach event in Portland on April 20, 2013. The person chosen will receive $2,500. http://bit.ly/UkKfIN.

**DEADLINE: 11/19/12**


**REVIEWING APPLICATIONS: 1/7/13**


**REVIEWING APPLICATIONS: 1/9/13**

**VOICE TEACHER** (P/T) sought by Multnomah Arts Center. Applicants must be comfortable teaching both children and adults in a private lesson setting and have at least a college degree with a music major. http://bit.ly/Qqpxgl.

**DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR** sought by the Portland Youth Philharmonic (PYP) to assist with coordination of all development activities across all constituencies helping to assure meeting the annual goals of contributed income. http://bit.ly/QqpkQT.

**NO DEADLINE**

**MANAGING DIRECTOR** (PT) sought by Hand2Mouth Theatre, a company of 7 members who form the artistic and administrative core of the theatre. Position will oversee company and project management and resource development. http://bit.ly/QqPRMs.

**NO DEADLINE**

**WORKSHOPS / LECTURES**

**11/8 2012 ARTS & CULTURE LEADERSHIP NETWORKING SUMMIT** (Hillsboro). The Summit gives leaders of local and regional arts organizations the chance to get together face-to-face and engage in valuable dialogue about the issues that all face as a community of artists, arts lovers and arts advocates. http://bit.ly/QqPYF9.

**11/9-12 NATIONAL ARTS MARKETING CONFERENCE: Getting Down to Business in Charlotte, NC. Gain new ideas to build your audience, learn ways to stretch even the tightest budget, and discover methods to better engage donors. A program of Americans for the Arts. Register at http://bit.ly/vDZpC.**

**11/17 DMAE ROBERTS WORKSHOP: How to make stunning interviews. Dmae leads you through the steps of a stunning interview that is professionally recorded. She’ll also advise you on low-cost professional records and mics. http://bit.ly/UI/LGPI.**


**1/10 HILLSBORO ARTS & CULTURE COUNCIL WORKSHOPS: Social Media + Communities of Engagement. Arts and culture organizations can create opportunities for real engagement and shared ownership with their community. Just not broadcast via these new social media channels. http://bit.ly/Rhtflah.**

**OTHER OPPORTUNITIES**

**VOLUNTEER AT THE PORTLAND ART MUSEUM** and receive: Free admission to the museum, to most Northwest Film Center Screenings, to most lectures at the museum; 20% discount at the Museum’s Gift Shop; Periodic parties and get-togethers. http://bit.ly/QqKn3D.

**LAKE OSWEGO FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS** (June 2013) volunteer opportunities include Open Show Curator; Park Food Vendor Coordinator; Special Exhibit Co-Chair; Patron Party and Garden Café Coordinator. http://bit.ly/QqSnRf.

It’s Time to Restore Arts & Music to Our Schools and Bring the Arts to Life in Portland

Today in Portland there are nearly 12,000 children attending schools that do not have any art, dance, drama, or music instruction.

Ballot Measure #26-146 will restore arts and music education in Portland’s six school districts and provide grants to help schools and non-profits increase access to the arts. This fund will also support arts organizations city-wide to bring arts, culture, and creativity to life for every Portland resident.

Vote YES! #26-146

Learn more and join the campaign:
SchoolsArtsTogether.com