

The High Desert

# PALETTE

January 2021, Vol. 1, No. 5

**EXCLUSIVE**

Passing on the Love of  
Dance Pg. 6

***Kilted Spirit***

Harmony and Fun Pg. 16

***Did You Know?***

Theater Anniversary Trivia Pg. 12

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## WELCOME TO *The High Desert Palette*

**W**illcox is full of creative artists and craftspeople. Almost any art media you can imagine – and maybe some you might not – are represented. People of all ages, inspired by their own imaginations and by the natural beauty and heritage of this unique corner of Arizona, are creating extraordinary and unique art.

*The High Desert Palette* will introduce you to these artists and their work. We'll have original articles, interviews with area creatives, photographs, visual art, a calendar of events – to bring fascinating creatives and their output to you.

If you're a creative yourself, or if you admire the work they produce, *The High Desert Palette* is for you.

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January, 2021  
Vol. 1 No. 5

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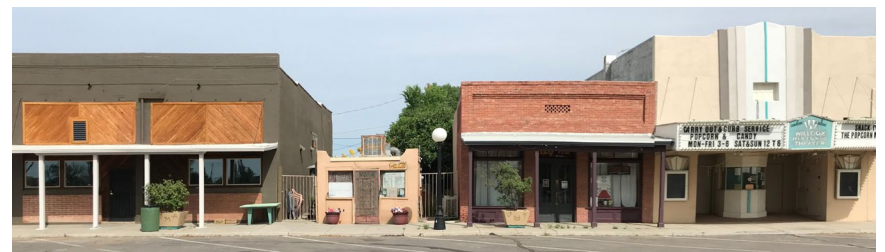
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Amy Truschke

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**Kids Art Club**  
Friday, February 5th @4pm \* The Palace  
**Brown-Bag History Speech**  
Thursday, February 11th @12pm \* The Palace  
**Paint Night**  
Saturday, February 27th @6pm \* The Palace



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# AMY TRUSCHKE

## PASSING ON THE LOVE OF DANCE

Even as a mom of four and business owner, Amy Truschke is a believer in the benefits of dance, both to the performer and to the audience.

Amy started dancing at the age of three at the Worley-Ellis dance studio in Willcox. She continued dancing there until she graduated high school. "My favorite style of dance was ballet. I liked it because it was a challenge," says Amy. "It made me feel strong."

After high school, she was briefly a cheerleader for EAC before she started teaching at the dance studio.

### Growing up in the Studio

"I've grown up in the studio," says Amy, which has gone through renovations, ownership changes, and even a name change during her dancing and teaching. Truschke trained under Dina Ellis, daughter of the dance studio's original founder, Betty Worley, who first opened the studio back in 1966. Dina Ellis ran the studio until 2003, when she passed the torch

to alum Katie Neubauer, who redubbed the studio "Encore Dance Academy" and brought on Amy to assist her. In 2017, Amy bought the studio she had grown up in and started teaching the next generation of Willcox area dancers.

### Passing on the Love of Dance

"As a young dance instructor, I loved the intertwine of instructing and performing, and I enjoyed dancing more than the teaching," says Amy. "...but when I became a mom it became more about teaching and watching kids grow and learn to love dance."

**"You have a magic superpower, and that's to make somebody smile."**

Amy has three boys and one girl with her husband Jonathan, and she's grateful that her daughter has decided to pursue dance. During her last pregnancy, Amy found new layers of appreciation for dance while on a 105-day bed rest. "They wouldn't let me stand for more than 15 minutes. Being able to move and to dance is a just a blessing. It makes you happy."

"I always tell our little ones, 'You have a magic superpower, and that's to make somebody smile.' When they go out into the community to perform, they have the ability to make that guy smile and that person smile."





Practice and performance are not just about a temporary impression for Amy. She knows her students will use what they've learned about performance to succeed in their careers. "They have that confidence to stand in front of a group and know they can do what they need to."

A studio like Encore is rare in such a small market, but Amy doesn't want pricing to get in the way of her students' passion. She grew up with the privilege of dance, and she preserves that opportunity for the next generation of kids. "It's definitely not about me retiring and making a lot of money. I

feel like because I've been a part of this dance studio for so long it's made me feel like it's my responsibly. I feel like a part of it."

And indeed, she is. Amy has embraced a culture of acceptance and hard work, whether it be as a student, assistant, or instructor. She has poured in time, energy, and money to keep dance available to local kids, and she doesn't regret a bit of it.

"If I could do it for free for the rest of my life I would." Amy believes the longevity of the 54-year-old studio is dependent on its culture. "You

have to create a family-oriented atmosphere where people feel safe and can be a part of something"

Amy knows the community of her studio is important for her students in trying times. "I've seen what a difference it's made socially for these kids to go to the studio."

Dance is natural and vital to Amy, and she will endure with Encore through rough times. She's practiced and performed on that same floor for as long as she can remember, and she will continue to make memories for herself, her dancers, and their families.

**"If I could do it for free for the rest of my life I would."**

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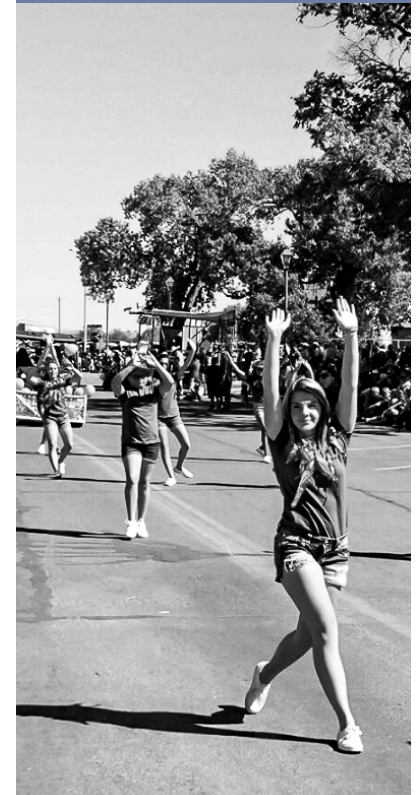


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# THE STORY OF WILLCOX



Kathy Klump explores the true untold stories of Willcox from the Gadsen Purchase through World War I in six multi-media presentations

- EARLY TRAILBLAZERS AND THE RAILROAD (1848 - 1880)**
- THE NEW TOWN: A MAJOR SUPPLY CENTER (1880 - 1889)**
- CATTLE CAPITAL OF THE WORLD (1890 - 1895)**
- TOUGHEST TOWN IN THE TERRITORY (1896 - 1900)**
- BOOM TOWN AND WOMEN BRING CHANGES (1901- 1915)**
- THE GREAT WAR CHANGES LIVES (1916- 1918)**

Tuesdays at 6:30 pm February 16 through March 23, 2021  
Free Admission at the Palace of Art and Theater, 116 N Railroad Ave

The series will be repeated monthly from March to August on the second Thursday at noon at the Palace of Theater and Arts

Sponsored by Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative and The City of Willcox



**Jam Session**  
1st and 3rd Wednesdays @2pm \* The Palace  
**Creative Youth Productions**  
Wednesdays @ 4:00pm \* The Palace



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# DID YOU KNOW?

## Theater Anniversary Trivia

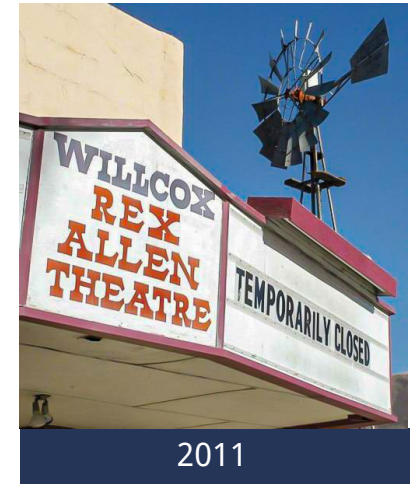
The Willcox Theater opened in downtown Willcox in 1937. The theater boasted leather seats, innovative concrete walls, and the most modern projection equipment.



January, 1937

Over time, the Theater started showing its age. Television had a huge impact on movie theaters. Slowly, there was a decline in the Rex Allen Theater's attendance, which later resulted in it closing in October 2011.

Fortunately, Willcox Historic Theater Preservation was formed in an attempt to purchase the theater and run it as a non-profit organization. Due to the support of the community and a lot of work, it worked!



2011



1989

In 1989, the Rex Allen Museum acquired the theater. Its name was changed to the Rex Allen Theater. Under new ownership, the old, single-screen and balcony theater received another screen and its main entrance was moved to the side of the building.

The smaller of the two theaters displayed its film by a Motiograph 35mm projector, which was made in about 1945. This was the oldest operating projector in the state of Arizona at the time!



January, 2013

In January, 2013, the theater opened again. Celebrations included a ribbon cutting, a 1930s themed gala event, and the 1936 movie, "The Gorgeous Hussy," to honor the 76th anniversary of the original Willcox building.

Renamed to the Willcox Historic Theater, it was completely renovated, retaining the historic Southwest Art Deco exterior and recreating an Art Deco style interior. State-of-the-art digital projection and sound systems were installed to provide a film experience second to none.





**Jonas Kauffmann**

Friday  
Sep. 18th @2:30pm  
Saturday  
Sep. 19th @6:30pm



**The Red Shoes**

Friday  
Oct. 9th @2:30pm  
Saturday  
Oct. 10th @6:30pm



**Cinderella**

Friday  
March 19th @2:30pm  
Saturday  
March 20th @6:30pm



**Wise Children**

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April 16th @2:30pm  
Saturday  
April 17th @6:30pm

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## Kilted Spirit January Set Lists

### Set 1

Michael's Ride Tune, John Ryan's Polka/Tell Me Ma, Baba O'Riley, If I Should Fall From Grace With God, Haste to the Wedding, Wedding Reel/Mairi's Wedding, Tangled Up In Blue, Galway Girl, Come on Eileen, That's Alright/Rattlin' Roarin' Willie/High Drive, Comin' Thru the Rye/Clean Peas Strae/Scotland the Brave/Wearin' O the Green/Piper's Tune, In a Big Country/500 Miles

### Set 2

Last of the Mohicans (Em)/Banish Misfortune (D)/Morrison's (Em) /New Christmas Jig, New Kesh Jig/Drowsy Maggie/Shippin Up to Boston, Whiskey in the Jar, Byker Hill, Spotted Dog/Atholl Highlander, Cumberland Gap, St. Anne's Reel, Drunken Lullabies, Give Me Your Hand/Irish Washerwoman, Music for a Found Harmonium, If I Ever Leave This World Alive

Listed songs are only a repertoire sampling and are subject to change.

## KILTED SPIRIT

### HARMONY AND FUN

#### The Start of a Joyous Ride

**C**olleen Collins was destined to be in an Irish band, what with a name like that plus all that musical talent. It was obvious to people around her, including her father. Colleen said, "My dad was always an Irish music fan and took me to some Chieftains concerts and took me to see Mary Black and always encouraged me.". With that encouragement and inspiration

**“ Colleen Collins was destined to be in an Irish band. What, with a name like that plus all that musical talent.”**

from movies, she decided, "Hey, I'm just going to go for it,"

Colleen didn't have to look far for her bandmates. She studied guitar with Chris Mereno, and the two started the band and became

husband and wife. Nextdoor neighbor and drummer Robert Commer was next. Rounding out the group is Eily Hallagan, fiddler and

fellow vocalist in Kilted Spirit with Colleen. Hallagan was found through a friend of a friend.

Where did the name "Kilted Spirit" come from? Colleen explained, "I have an Irish and Scottish background, and when we were

kicking around names it came up as a play on words with the saying 'kindred spirits'. Since we've been such good friends for so long and it shows in our music, it became Kilted Spirit."

Colleen admits, "In the beginning it was hard to find venues, I think because no one had heard of us. But as we got known it got a lot easier because we are so different.

A lot of places think, why hire a cover band when you can just put on the radio, and that's where our uniqueness has really carried us places."

**“...when we were kicking around names it came up as a play on words with the saying 'kindred spirits'. Since we've been such good friends for so long... it became Kilted Spirit.”**

Kilted Spirit got their real start playing the numerous Irish Pubs all around the Phoenix area, where they were a perfect fit as a high energy band that lives to bring the fun to a crowd. Colleen explained, "We feed off of a

crowd, that is a huge part of our show. There is something infectious about Irish Music. The moment we start playing some fast jigs or reels people just start clapping along

and before Covid people would even join us on stage with their percussion instruments. That audience enjoyment is really why we play and what keeps us going"

## A Unique Set of Skills

When watching Kilted Spirit, you might notice some unfamiliar instruments in use. Colleen explained that through the Irish Cultural Center in Phoenix and the Internet they've been able to learn different instruments such as the Irish Tin Whistle, Irish Flute, and Irish Bouzouki. The group's frequent participation in the Irish Cultural Center's events helped develop an authentic sound and feel. "It's very different trying to learn some Irish instruments and can be quite hard so it took a while to get used to but I think after a few years we got it down," Colleen added.



Colleen Collins



Chris Moreno

## Keeping Things Fresh

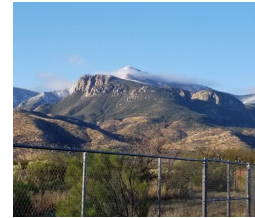
With such a different sound you might think it hard to find for the Kilted Spirit to come up with something new, but they stay original by putting an Irish flavor to songs. Kilted Spirit will take an existing song that people know and incorporate a jig or "Irishify" it and create a new experience. "It really blows some people away with how we do it," Colleen added. "We've been very lucky this last year, and have been able to do quite a few outdoor shows. People can't come up and join us on stage like they used to but they can still clap their hands and join in the fun, so the spirit's still alive."



Eily Hallagan



Robert Commer



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## Contributor Guidelines

*The High Desert Palette* welcomes contributions that highlight creativity and creative people in Southeastern Arizona. We seek to explore the creative impulse, showcase creative product and inspire creatives in all fields. Original contributions in artistic and/or creative fields and articles or feature interviews with the people who create them will be accepted. Let us know of creative individuals we might highlight in future issues.

Please contact *The High Desert Palette* at 520-766-3335 or willcoxtheater@gmail.com to discuss your ideas.







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### **Retro Rewind**

Thursday February 18th @1pm \* The Palace

### **Open Mic Night**

Thursday February 25th @ 6:30pm \* The Palace

### **Open Exhibit Hours**

Tuesdays @1pm-3pm \* The Palace & Studio 128



## **ART LOOK**

Featured are crafts and artworks created by Cori Aten

“Some of my earliest memories are of crafting. As a young child I remember watching my mom and grandmother paint, sew, knit and crochet. At about 10 years old, I started crocheting rugs for my dolls. I took my first sewing class in 4-H and started my first quilt when I was 14. I enjoy all kinds of projects, I don't really have a favorite. I started folk-painting a few years ago and have taken several classes. I've always loved embroidery and sewing. I've got at least five projects 'in the works' right now.”

-Cori Aten









**COMING  
SOON!**

## **February**

Kids Art Club, 5

Brown-Bag History Speech - The Middle Crossing of the San Pedro, 11

The Story of Willcox, 16 - March 23

Retro Rewind - His Girl Friday 1940, 18

Open Mic Night, 25

Paint Night, 27

## **March**

Kids Art Club, 5

Retro Rewind - My favorite brunette, 18

Live on Stage - Acoustic Eidolon, 19

### ***Kilted Spirit***

Saturday  
January 30th  
@7pm



### ***Acoustic Eidolon***

Friday  
March 19th  
@7pm



### ***Brendon Thorpe***

Saturday  
April 10th  
@7pm



### ***The Palace Players***

dates to be  
announced



**GUEST ARTISTS SEASON 2020 - 2021**

This is an open-ended story continued by Joshua Allred. We would love YOU to continue it. Submit your story to [willcoxtheater@gmail.com](mailto:willcoxtheater@gmail.com) for a chance to have it published in next month's issue.

*The word count cannot exceed 650 words. Please keep the story open-ended to keep it going. Please feel free to include a relevant original artwork with your submission!*

## UNWANTED COMPANY

Written By Joshua  
Allred

Samuel dabbed a cloth to his throbbing brow, collecting a portion of the pooled perspiration there. His serious gaze was fixed on a large collection of notes illuminated by a personal kerosene lamp. The gnawing feeling of anxiety mingled with his migraine made him fight for focus.

He had been looking at an assortment of papers, scrolls, and opened books upon a once lavish desk for what must have been the better part of the day. The sheer amount of time spent pouring over the variety of recorded knowledge and lack of proper hydration accounted for the migraine. His anticipation of unwanted company explained the anxious pit in his stomach.

Some time later and in a lower level of the tower, Harriet sat studying the eyes of a stranger. Vanessa, the stranger, continued in the process of cleaning and wrapping the wound in Harriet's hand.

"Where is your father? We thought he would be with you." She asked Harriet with a hint of sincerity in her voice.

"Another red flag," Harriet thought, trying to hide her worry. Harriet hadn't seen her father, Samuel, in what must have been just over a week. Before then he had been acting strange, brushing off inquiries about his archaeological work, and leaving the house at regular intervals, and without notice. Sometimes he wouldn't be home for days. Truth be told, she wondered the same thing.

"You know Dad?" Harriet asked, trying to avoid the question.

"You really don't remember me, do you?" Vanessa responded as she finished her work with the bandages.

"Vanessa Jones, Relic Preservation International," she said, including her associated organization as introduction and extending her hand for a handshake.

In his own place and time, Samuel's studies were interrupted by the muted crash of Harriet's balloon colliding with the tower wherein he sat. Mistaking the crash for the perceived eventual arrival of members of the Relic Preservation International, he gathered the contents of his study up and quickly secured them in a large briefcase. He proceeded to scramble about the room, gathering anything that could identify his stay there. His sleeping bag, his travel pack, everything, and threw them in a previously identified crook of the room before dashing to a window he supposed would overlook the source of the noise.

He was surprised to make out a collection of balloonists bearing the iconic quill on their crafts still approaching rather than anchored to the tower. His surprise grew when he looked downward to identify bits and pieces of his own balloon. A craft he intentionally left at home to avoid being followed here by the watchful eye of RPI. His surprise grew more and was accompanied by a knot in his stomach when the pieces came together in his head.

"Harriet!" he proclaimed in a hushed tone as he rushed back to his belongings to snatch a small pistol.

He scrambled his way down the levels of the library he had already traveled. The sheer size of the tower seemed more a curse than an architectural marvel now.

Whilst he ran thoughts of the RPI chased through his memory. The time they showed up at his home when Harriet was just a little girl with probing questions about St. Ambrose, Nickolas Flamel, and his translated and hidden book. He remembered how his resistance to answer them then turned to bitter competition, and as he grew closer to reaching his goals, how it turned to threats. If Harriet had truly followed him here and if the RPI were close behind he had to find her, find the book, and get out. Before it was too late.

He barreled down the tower until, just before rounding a corner, he heard two muffled voices locked in conversation in the next room. He recognized both of them.

Pressing his back to a wall just outside the room, he tried to level his heavy breathing.

"Vanessa Jones, Relic Preservation International," one of the voices said, in its typical cheery tone.

Oh how he hated that voice.



## A SPECIAL THANK YOU

Willcox Theater and Arts thanks the following individuals, foundations, businesses, and government agencies who are supporting our programming during the 2020-2021 Season.



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Art, music, movies, theater, dance, digital arts, handcrafts, writing – all creative expression – play such an important part in our lives. From 3 to 93, we all need to express ourselves and also enjoy and celebrate the creativity of our neighbors.

Willcox Theater and Arts empowers our community to create, learn, experience and take part in a wide variety of creative expression, supported by our talented creative staff. Help us fan everyone’s spark of creativity and excitement in accomplishment.

As a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, we count on individuals and corporations who contribute each year. Ticket and class fee revenues comprise a small portion of our budget. It is through the generosity of individual donors, corporate sponsorships, and foundations that we can raise the curtain on quality arts programs. Your contributions will support our ability to keep classes, programs, and ticket prices low for the entire community—from students to seniors and everyone in between.

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