



THE ELKS OPERA HOUSE

The newly restored Elks Opera House will open on Saturday July 24, 2010 with a variety of musical and performing arts acts presented by the Phoenix Opera Company. Founder/Artistic Director John Massaro and Founder/Creative Director Gail Dubinbaum will present selections from several operas, *Die Fledermaus* and *Phantom of the Opera*. A scene from *Nutcracker* will feature local youth from the Dance Studio and from the Elks Opera House Spotlight Theater Troupe. A twenty-four piece orchestra will provide the musical accompaniment for the gala opening.

A matinee performance will be presented on Sunday July 25, 2010 at 2 p.m. Tickets may be ordered online at elksoperahouse.com or may be purchased at the Elks Opera House box office after 1 p.m. on July 25.

BEHIND THE SCENE

In 1979, my first project as an architect was a rehabilitation of the Elks Opera House. The owners wanted to spruce up the venue and make it more user friendly for patrons and performers alike. We restructured the sagging stage, cleaned and painted the interior and built the concession stand which is still in use today.

In 2000, Burford and Russell Architects prepared a Building Condition Assessment Report, and in 2002, a heating and cooling system was installed based on a study by Van Dyke Pace Westlake Architects.

The Elks Opera House Foundation was formed in 2002 and this is when activity really started to accelerate at the Elks. Due to the efforts of a Save the Elks Committee of the Prescott Area Arts and Humanities Council, the Foundation, and Nancy Burgess at the City of Prescott, Otwell Associates Architects were commissioned to perform multiple projects to restore the lobbies and stage rigging and to place the copper Elk statue on the top of the building. These efforts improved the house over a four year period from 2003 to 2007.

In 2009 we hit the mother lode. The Foundation commissioned my firm to prepare a Historic Building Preservation Plan for the entire building. Foundation fund raising efforts, including a large grant from The Harold James Family Trust, allowed us to finally complete an accurate restoration of the house interior and marquee.

The combined efforts of the Foundation, the City of Prescott – Mic Fenech and Ron Miller, Haley Construction Company and Wayne Sanford, Architect, has been one of the most enjoyable experiences of my career. This will be a hard act to follow.



RESTORATION OF THE ELKS OPERA HOUSE

In July of 2009 Haley Construction Company became an integral part of the restoration team for the Elks Opera House when we were selected as the General Contractor and our team began an adventure into one of the most prestigious buildings in Prescott's history. As we are nearing the end of this exciting project, a bit of reflection reminds us of the challenges and successes we have encountered along the way.



Day one on the job was not only exciting, but also a bit overwhelming. Paint was peeling, the plaster walls and ceilings were riddled with cracks, the tin ceiling was sagging and rusted out, the

box seats were completely missing, and all of the ornate plaster work, corbels, capitals, columns, and the stencil work was no longer in existence. The theatre had undergone many years of neglect, and required many structural repairs before any of the finishes could be restored. Bit by bit, with the help of a dedicated and talented project team, along with the help of some old photographs, we began to see the grandeur and beauty that once was, and is again.

Some of the challenges that took place include, relieving the stress placed on the roof trusses caused by the suspended balcony, restoring the box seats and surrounding decorative elements, rehabilitating the tin ceiling and substructure, restoring the original marquee, installing fire sprinkler protection, improving energy efficiency, upgrading electrical, and reinstalling the decorative finishes and stencil work. These items all contribute to a safer, beautiful building that will continue to be a reminder of Prescott's colorful history, for many years to come.

It has been a pleasure and honor to be part of this important restoration that we hope and believe will give new life to the Elks Opera House. Thank you to all of our dedicated subcontractors, the Elks Opera House Foundation, the City of Prescott, Otwell & Associates, and the entire restoration team.

Restoration of the Elks Opera House by Tom and Bill Haley, Haley Construction Company. *Behind the Scene* by Bill Otwell, ATA

REMINISCENCES OF THE ELKS OPERA HOUSE AS A MOVIE THEATRE

In response to a request for stories about the past the following two pieces were submitted by local residents:

Jean Phillips

As the new physician in town during the late 40s, my husband, Dr. Mel Phillips, was happy to include obstetrics in his practice. It didn't take long before he was delivering most of the babies in Prescott, necessitating much time spent at the hospital. As professionally dedicated as he was, he was also deliberate in programming precious family time, and movies at the Elks Theatre became our entertainment of choice on attempted time off.

It was before beepers, let alone cell phones; so he always notified the hospital as to his whereabouts. For that reason, he never failed an expectant mother, but neither did he often sit through an entire movie before the manager came tapping his shoulder to tell him there was a deputy waiting outside to escort him to the hospital. Many times he was able to return to the Elks before lights out; but, it was there I often stood in the lobby awaiting his return or a ride home from an understanding friend.

As time passed, modern communications simplified contact, but the Elks Theatre will always have a nostalgic personal remembrance for me.

Fernando "Nando" Otero

Mr. Otero died in Prescott on April 26, 2010 at age 98. As the oldest Lincoln School graduate present for the centennial of that school in 2009, Mr. Otero was interviewed by Sylvia Neely of Prescott, who shared a portion of the taped interview with the *Curtain Up* editors, an excerpt of which follows:

"We went to the Elks all the time with a bunch of kids and enjoyed the cowboy movies. He watched Tom Mix filming on Granite Street once, and was entertained by a bicycle race between Mix and Billy Simon, a real cowboy.

"Nando" often sat in the opera boxes with his friends and once fell asleep. When the show was over everyone left and Nando must have been leaning over the top of the opera box sound asleep when "I fell from up there 'boom', woke me up. ...but it didn't hurt me. Everyone was gone and I tried the front door, but it was locked. I was scared. I went this other way and it was open. I remember it very well"

ZAZA'S ARRIVAL IN PRESCOTT



It was a cold February day in 1905 when Florence 'ZaZa' Roberts stepped off the train at the station in Prescott. Surrounded by her traveling troupe of thespians, luggage, and set pieces, she no doubt reveled in the smell of pine forests while she wrapped herself more tightly against the chill winter air. She had come from San Francisco to perform at the Hardwicke theater in Phoenix, but her touring manager had arranged for a stop in Prescott

to open a new theater, The Elks Opera House.

One hundred years later on June 12, 2005, I arrived at 10 p.m. in the parking lot in front of Albertson's just yards from where ZaZa had alighted from the train. The air smelled of juniper and the cool, night breeze caressed me. After a 20-hour flight from the Middle East where I had lived for five years, it was the perfect welcome. A friend awaited me and I was dropped off with all my luggage to temporary housing opposite the library -- a great location for re entry into life in America.

With jet lag behind me I had lunch with my friend Jody Drake and found myself welcomed into the family of the Sharlot Hall Museum's Blue Rose Theater. In the fall Jody presented me with a marvelous gift, the opportunity to play Florence Roberts in a one woman show written by Parker Anderson. The play premiered in January of 2006 under the title *Don't Despise Me*, a tag line from a scene in *Marta of the Lowlands*, the play that entertained over 900 patrons on opening night February 20, 1905 at the Elks Opera House. Today the play is performed under the title, *Tea with ZaZa*.

What a wonderful gift-- to bring to the stage the life of this First Lady of San Francisco theater, but not just any stage. It is a special feeling to stand on the very stage she stood on. And...on August 14th of this year when I inhabit ZaZa on the stage of The Elks Opera House and look out, I will be seeing the theater very much as it looked 105 years ago.

ZaZa's life was one of love, loss, courage -- a career that was a roller coaster ride from soubrette to star with a precipitous drop into the belly of vaudeville. She was a trailblazer and a survivor. She loved two men in her life both of whom she married, but she also had her share of lovers. On August 14, come learn how she got her nickname and launched the 105 year life of The Elks Opera House.

By Gail Mangham, Board Member, Elks Opera House Foundation & Artistic Director, The Artist's Path

THE ARTIST'S PATH PRESENTS



THE FLORENCE ROBERTS STORY - BOLD! JAZZY! MOVING!
AT THE ELKS OPERA HOUSE

SAN FRANCISCO'S FIRST LADY OF THEATER
HER TRIUMPHS, HER TRAGEDIES, HER LOVES, HER LOSSES
SHE OPENED THE ELKS OPERA HOUSE FEBRUARY 20, 1905.

WRITTEN BY PARKER ANDERSON AND GAIL MANGHAM

FEATURING GAIL MANGHAM AS 'ZAZA'

SPECIAL GUEST APPEARANCE BY CLASSICAL VOCALIST, LECIA BREEN

SATURDAY, AUGUST 14, 2010

TWO PERFORMANCES - 2 PM AND 7:30 PM
INCLUDES THEATER TOUR 4:30 PM

ADULT \$18, SENIORS (55G)/STUDENTS \$13
FOR TICKETS CALL 928.777.1367 OR GO
ONLINE AFTER JUNE 15TH AT WWW.ELKSOPERAHOUSE.COM

NET PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE ELKS OPERA HOUSE FOUNDATION

FOUNDING PARTNERS OF THE ARTIST'S PATH ARE PRESCOTT COLLEGE
AND EMBRY-RIDDLE AERONAUTICAL UNIVERSITY

THE ELKS OPERA HOUSE GUILD PRESENTS

TIMELESS WEDDINGS



Featuring wedding gowns from the 19th and 20th centuries with Historical commentary on the customs and fashions of the past 100 years. Elegant displays of gowns of yesteryear in the beautiful setting of the newly restored "1905" Elks Opera House. Don't miss this journey back through the timeless celebrations of matrimony.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 15, 2010 AT 2 PM

ELKS OPERA HOUSE - 117 E. GURLEY ST

FOR TICKETS CALL 777-1367
FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL DEBRA 775-0727



ELKS OPERA HOUSE FOUNDATION
P.O. Box 3692 • Prescott, Arizona 86302-3692

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CURTAIN UP!

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RECONSTRUCTED LIGHT RING CHANDELIER



With only a small portion of the original light ring shown in a 1905 photograph, the idea of reconstruction was carried forward to the Arizona Department of Commerce Main Street Program by staff of the Prescott Downtown Partnership. The result of the \$15,000 grant received from the Main Street Program is a glorious reconstruction crafted

by A & B Sign Company and embellished by Custom Surface

AUDITION CALL



Presents
ARIZONA'S GOT TALENT!

AT THE 106TH ANNIVERSARY ON FEBRUARY 19, 2011, PRESCOTT ARIZONA.

Audition Call Statewide for Arizona Performing Artists
(www.elksoperahousefoundation.org)

Please study the steps on the website before seeking further information or making a decision to enter.

Gail Mangham, Project Director, 106th Anniversary Show

CURTAIN UP!

ELKS OPERA HOUSE FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER