



ARTS LIFE

CHERISHING THE ROOTS

When Joanie Madden says Woodstock is “one of my favorite towns in all of America,” the Grammy Award-winning performer isn’t just trying to flatter the Green Mountain State. Cherish the Ladies, the Celtic folk band she co-founded in the ’80s, was once stranded for a few days in Woodstock after a blizzard. “We had a wonderful time,” she says of their unplanned layover. “People were so nice.”

Another winter, another Woodstock Town Hall foray, as Madden and her group are scheduled to appear Dec. 5.

A harmony vocalist who plays whistle and flute, Madden shares the stage with four other musicians, one lead singer and four step dancers. Cherish the Ladies (a name derived from an old jig) travels the world regularly and is regarded as one of the top groups of its kind, having recorded or performed with such artists as Joan Baez, James Taylor, Emmy Lou Harris, Pete Seeger and The Chieftains.

“All our parents emigrated from Ireland to the U.S.,” Madden explains. “They wanted to make sure we would keep the culture alive. So we’re a bunch of Yanks celebrating our roots.”

The Ladies are set to release their new album, “All on a Christmas Morning,” on Dec. 2, just a few days before their Woodstock show. Does the record include holiday tunes about frozen precipitation that would resonate with the Woodstock audience? “I can’t find any snow lyrics,” she laments. “Can you believe it?”

- **WHAT:** Cherish the Ladies concert
- **WHEN:** 7:30 p.m., Dec. 5
- **WHERE:** Woodstock Town Hall Theatre; 31 The Green, Woodstock
- **COST:** \$35, \$28
- **INFORMATION:** (802) 457-3981 or www.pentanglearts.org

— Susan Green



ARTS LIFE

GALLERY GOING

Picturesque year-round, Brandon becomes a winter wonderland when the snow flies. To capitalize on that beauty, commercial interests merge with creative endeavors to present the town’s annual Art in the Snow celebration. The event’s sixth edition — as usual, one weekend a month for three months — begins in late January.

“Cabin fever has started to set in by then,” says Jeff Stewart, a retired ad agency executive and the Brandon Artists’ Guild president who coordinates the festivities. “So this is something different to do. There’s always a palpable sense of excitement.”

The all-volunteer effort involves more than 20 local studios and galleries that open their doors to an estimated 250 visitors. Maps are available for finding painters, potters, jewelers, sculptors, photographers and such, many of whom talk about their work or provide demonstrations. The downtown Granary is transformed into an exhibit hall for artists whose studios are too far away for the walking tour, and there are also wine-tasting sessions, snow sculpture in the park and more.

The modest organizational budget of about \$3,000 is raised through small contributions from merchants, innkeepers and individuals, Stewart says, adding that this community spirit could be why Gov. Jim Douglas once dubbed Brandon “the art and soul of Vermont.”

- **WHAT:** Art in the Snow
- **WHEN:** 11 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Saturdays, 11 a.m.–3:30 p.m. Sundays; Jan. 23–24, Feb. 27–28, March 27–28
- **WHERE:** Throughout Brandon
- **COST:** Free
- **MAPS:** The Brandon Artists’ Guild, 7 Center St., Brandon
- **INFORMATION:** (802) 247-4956 or www.artinthesnow.com

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ARTS LIFE

DOMINICAN JOURNEY

Shoreham resident Penny Campbell teaches modern dance at Middlebury College, often collaborating with trumpeter Arthur Brooks. Their new production is “Proyecto República Dominicana,” which will unfold on campus in January, followed by an eight-day tour of the Dominican Republic.

In addition to Brooks, Campbell recruited eight undergraduate dancers, a lighting designer and acclaimed guitarist-saxophonist Michael Chorney. Thematically, the program “questions the role of artists in society and the impact of early socialization through song and dance games.” Her company also learned several children’s song-movement games in Spanish as part of a plan to join a Dominican theater troupe in performance in Puerto Plata, a coastal city that Campbell has visited over the years.

Campbell and Brooks are both linked to Vermont’s avant-garde arts legacy. The two graduated from Bennington College, which established a dance program with the help of legendary choreographer Martha Graham in 1933. More than three decades later, Judith Dunn began teaching there with jazz trumpeter Bill Dixon. Dunn and Dixon were mentors to Campbell and Brooks.

“Bennington has been a crossroads,” says Campbell, who brought the school’s improvisational aesthetic to Middlebury in 1995. “I call it boot camp. We’re infusing students with a choreographic mind, always trying to remain in a discovery mode.”

- **WHAT:** “Proyecto República Dominicana”
- **WHEN:** 8 p.m., Jan. 22–23
- **WHERE:** Mahaney Center for the Arts, Middlebury College, Middlebury
- **COST:** \$10, \$8, \$6
- **INFORMATION:** (802) 443-6433 or www.middlebury.edu/arts

— Susan Green