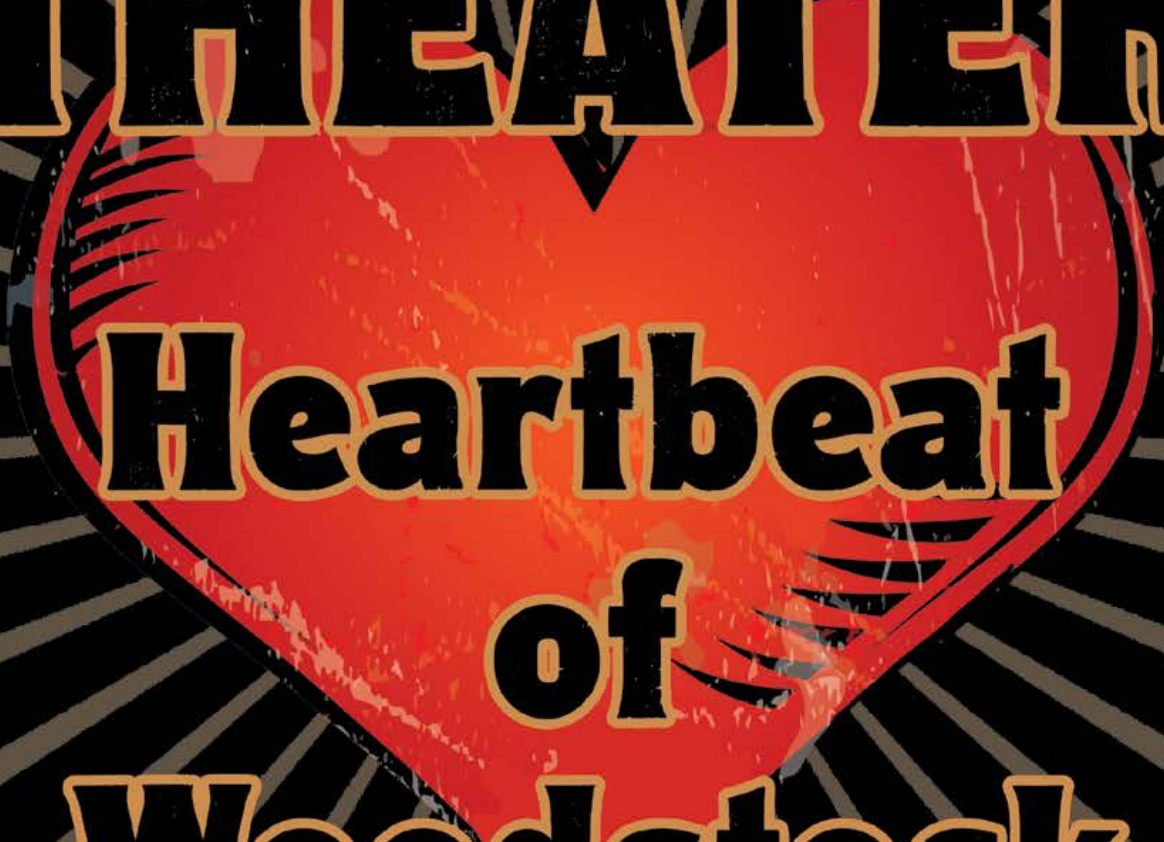


**BEARSVILLE**

**THEATER**



**Heartbeat  
of  
Woodstock**



# **Bearsville Theater**

**Bearsville Theater is the musical heartbeat of Woodstock.**

**It was in Woodstock that ...**

- **Bob Dylan re-wrote the rules of song-writing**
- **Janis Joplin broke the mold for female singers**
- **Todd Rundgren re-created the role of music producer**
- **The Band created the Americana genre**

**With these beacons to guide us, we will nurture and inspire future generations with ground-breaking and exciting new music. We honor the legacy of Albert Grossman, as well as the contributions of these and countless other Woodstock artists.**

**We offer up our acoustically perfect live theater stage, state-of-the-art streaming platforms, and the famed Utopia Sound Stage, to provide artists, songwriters and performers with writing, rehearsal, performance and recording facilities of every kind.**

**Bearsville Theater embraces all human rights, the diversity of our community, and equality of treatment for all. We oppose all discriminatory acts and any form of bigotry that would go against these principles.**

# Table of Contents

- 3** Foreword by John Sebastian
- 5** Bearsville Theater - A Celebrated History
- 10** The Grand Tour
  - 10** Welcome To Our World
  - 15** Roots, Rock, Reggae... Jazz & Americana
  - 19** Bearsville Records - 1970-1984
  - 21** Janis and Levon Transform the Bathrooms
  - 22** Chilling Out Behind Closed Doors - The Green Room
  - 26** Music Made In Woodstock
  - 31** The Van Morrison Dressing Room
  - 33** The Janis Joplin Dressing Room
- 36** Not Only a Theater ...
  - 36** The Sound Stage
  - 37** The Supporting Cast
- 38** How It All Began
- 40** Bearsville Studios
- 42** An Extensive Renovation in Lizzie's Own Words
- 47** Sound and Vision
- 48** Mike DuBois
- 52** Contact Us
- 53** Thank you ...Thank You... Thank You!



# Foreword

## BY JOHN SEBASTIAN

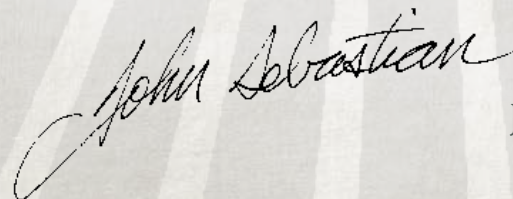
In 1964 I made my first of many trips to Woodstock, NY at the invitation of Bob Dylan and his manager Albert Grossman. I immediately fell in love with the tranquility of this bucolic little town. The solitude was perfect for writing and creating and I continued to visit old friends Fred Neil and Tim Hardin before finally settling here in 1975. As Albert developed Bearsville, it became the hub for us to congregate, perform, and collaborate. The music we performed here has infused every hardwood board laid down by Paul Cypert and his band of merry men.

I treasure the nights when the stage was illuminated with the likes of talents such as John Herald, Cindy Cashdollar, Larry Campbell and Teresa Williams, Jim Rooney, Pat Alger, Roly Salley and Bill Keith all expertly, yet inconspicuously, produced and directed by our head honchos, Happy and Artie Traum.

Following Albert's untimely death in 1986, his vision for the theater wasn't fully realized until Lizzie Vann began to breathe new life into the center some 30 years later.

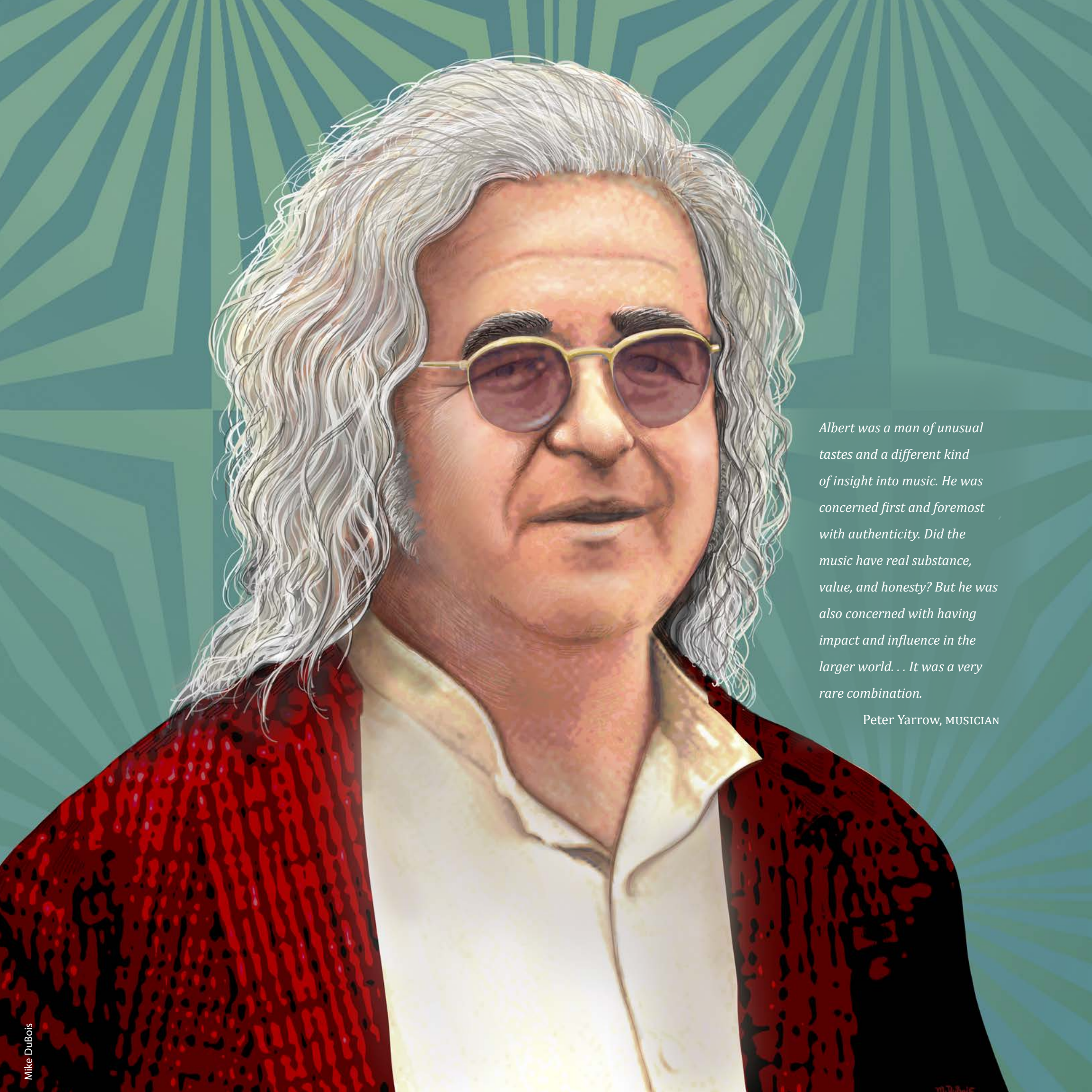
The music we performed here echoes in every board and beam of this hallowed hall. I can feel it every time I walk through the front door or set foot on stage. I hope everyone who enters feels that same spirit and takes a moment of silence to remember the dedicated musical souls who lived and worked here in Woodstock and Bearsville. Their music is the bedrock for Americana and their legacy will live on thanks to the creative community, townspeople and support of music lovers worldwide. To me, Woodstock will always be as significant and active an American music center as Memphis, New York, L.A., Nashville and Muscle Shoals.

The Bearsville Theater stands as a monument to our community, honoring and celebrating its musical heritage and as a platform for new artists to create and showcase their work, here in Bearsville, for generations to come.



John Sebastian, Woodstock, NY





*Albert was a man of unusual tastes and a different kind of insight into music. He was concerned first and foremost with authenticity. Did the music have real substance, value, and honesty? But he was also concerned with having impact and influence in the larger world. . . It was a very rare combination.*

Peter Yarrow, MUSICIAN

# Bearsville Theater

## A CELEBRATED HISTORY

**T**he story of Bearsville is the story of Albert Grossman, a son of Russian Jewish immigrants. Albert was a music entrepreneur and manager of musicians, first in Chicago and then in NYC. His management approach was to elevate the status of his clients from ‘entertainer’ to ‘artist,’ and he reinvented the role of personal manager.



Douglas Gilbert

*Bob Dylan*

Albert often became very close to his clients—the earliest of whom included Odetta, Peter, Paul and Mary and Bob Dylan—providing them with much more than simply career management. By the time he moved to Woodstock in 1963, Albert was already recognized as the most powerful music manager in 1960s America.

High in the Catskill Mountains surrounded by forests and streams, Albert established a creative and nurturing community in which his artists could live and work. He built cabins for them on Striebel Road, high-class restaurants in the Bearsville Center on Tinker Street, and a record label to showcase their new music. He also created a now-departed jewel - the Bearsville Studios, designed and built in 1970 by John Storyk, architect of Jimi Hendrix’s Electric Lady Studios in NYC.



*Peter, Paul and Mary*

Richard E. Aaron/Redferns



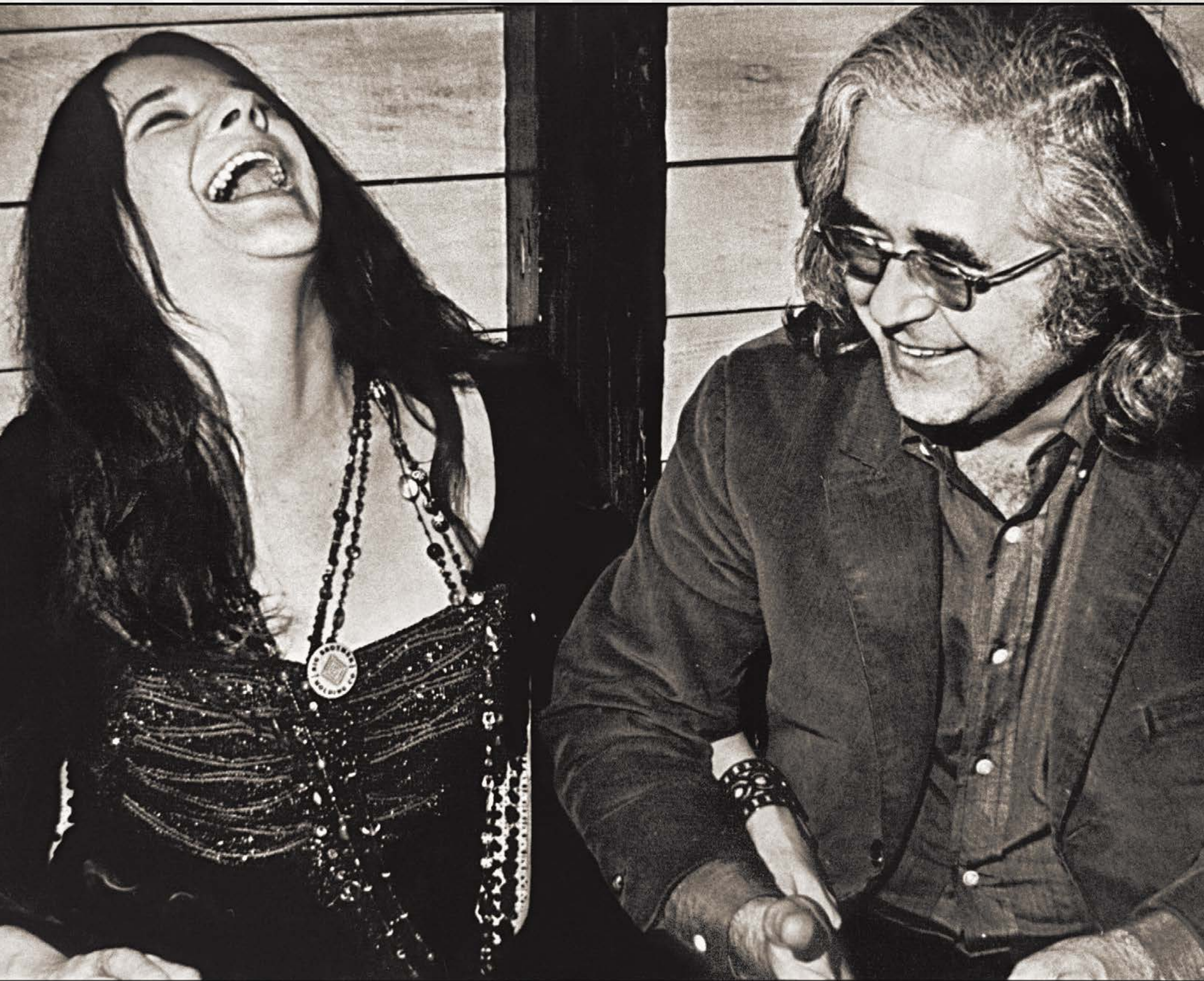


Photo by Elliott Landy





Paul Butterfield

The Bearsville Studios, a great sounding space in a beautiful, private setting, quickly became a focal point for musicians from around the world. Albert attracted international acts like Muddy Waters, Meat Loaf, R.E.M., Patti Smith, The Rolling Stones, The Isley Brothers, Rush, and The Pretenders.

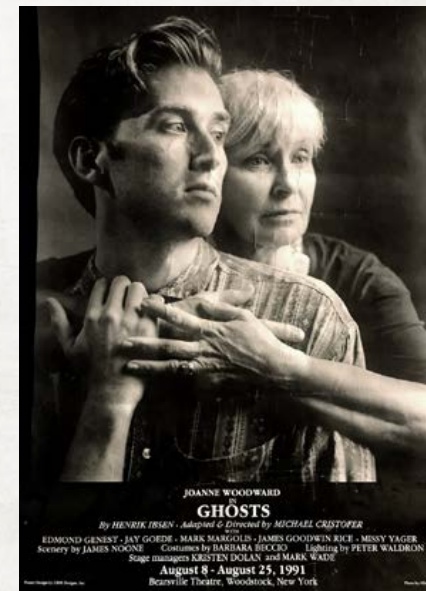
Bob Dylan moved to Woodstock to take advantage of Albert's vision of a creative oasis, and others such as The Band, Paul Butterfield, and Todd Rundgren followed his lead. Some arrived as houseguests of Albert and Sally Grossman, including

Janis Joplin, Allen Ginsberg, Johnny Cash and June Carter, and George and Pattie Harrison.

Albert went on to plan an acoustically perfect Bearsville Theater, where he could showcase his artists before audiences of music industry executives and radio station programmers. Work began on the Theater in 1984, though Albert's sudden death from a heart attack two years later meant he never witnessed its opening in 1989.

The theater stands today as a testament to Albert's vision for a 'whole life' experience for his artists. He knew how to encourage their creativity and productivity. The Theater is also a testament to Albert's widow, Sally Grossman: She finished the Theater, opened it to the public, successfully ran the Studio for many years after her husband's death, and brought a host of international stars to Bearsville and Woodstock.

One of the first events in 1989 was a concert by the Woodstock Mountains Revue. There followed performances by River Arts Repertory, an Equity company created by Pulitzer Prize and Tony winning playwright and actor Michael Cristofer. Three decades of legendary performances ensued, ranging from Roger McGuinn, Dr. John and Odetta, to theater acts by such luminaries as Joanne Woodward.





*Richard Thompson*

Many of the artists—local, national and international—who have performed at Bearsville Theater over the decades are celebrated on our walls. There have been concerts by Richard Thompson,



*Pete Seeger*

Leon Russell, Aimee Mann, Bunny Wailer, Tony Levin, Stephen Stills, Blondie, Judy Collins, The Winter Brothers, Steely Dan, Laurie Anderson, Booker T, Pat Metheny, Chrissie Hynde, Philip Glass, Dr. John, Odetta, Roger McGuinn and countless others.



*Odetta*

Bearsville has long been an essential date on artists' touring schedules because the enduring impact of Albert Grossman's artistic vision and roster is forever linked to the town of Woodstock, NY.



*Jack DeJohnette*

With the 2019 change of ownership, followed by extensive renovation,

Bearsville continues to place the needs of the artist above all else. This extraordinary estate offers well-equipped dressing rooms showcasing photographs of the renowned stars who have passed through; a relaxing and memorable green room; adjoining kitchen complete with laundry; and tour manager facilities.



*Donald Fagen*

To the public, it offers an intimate comfortable lounge, stunning atmospheric lighting, and a great sounding auditorium – one of the best performance rooms on the East Coast. In August 2019, following a few changes of ownership, British organic-food social entrepreneur and music lover Lizzie Vann purchased the



*Blondie (Debbie Harry)*

property and named it The Bearsville Center. She and her team carried out large scale renovations and improvements to restore the complex to its former glory, bring it into the 21st century, and celebrate its historic status and singular musical legacy.



*Tony Levin*



*Bob Weir*



Catherine Sebastian

*The Woodstock Mountains Revue held one of the first ever concerts at Bearsville Theater in 1989.*

# The Grand Tour

## WELCOME TO OUR WORLD

**W**elcome to Bearsville! As you pass through the front doors, you will see the carefully restored, large gilded mirror featured in a 1972 video, *I Went to the Mirror*, by Todd Rundgren. Todd's face and words from that song are ghosted onto the mirror as a tribute.

Moving through the curtained doors, you enter the lounge, which was in bad shape in September 2019. With rainwater coming in through the roof in more than a dozen

places, and radiator water buckling the floor when pipes froze and burst the previous winter, it was a sorry mess.

After a year of renovations, the room has been drained, dried and rebuilt from the ground up. Trying to imagine how Albert might have envisioned it, it is decorated in a Mid-century Modern style, with a starry ceiling, a geometric bar front, and a cool comfortable vibe. There is a small stage to host the jazz and folk artists who are such an integral part of the music scene in Woodstock.



Dion Ogust



Kelly Sinclair







Lizzie Vann

Important artists — Bob Dylan, Todd Rundgren and Paul Butterfield — now face more recent female musicians of Woodstock — in fresh contemporary portraits taken by Woodstock photographer Catherine Sebastian.

The stage is big, high and was designed in 1984 to impress music industry professionals. But this layout presented a challenge in thinking about how to use the theater as a community space. After recent upgrades, the theater comfortably seats more than 416 members of the public. It is an intimate space where fans can get up close to the music and really feel the performance. The addition of a new Danley Sound System, coupled with the drum-tight roof and the flying wooden wings over the sides of the room, created what we believe to be one of the best-sounding rooms in the country.



Embellished with crystal chandeliers, velvet drapes, comfortable seating, and views all around, the stage is illuminated by George and Stanley, two golden gods discovered in a dusty corner, polished up and finished with new antique art deco glass lanterns. They now stand guard over every show.



Dion Ogust





## ROOTS, ROCK, REGGAE... JAZZ & AMERICANA!

**B**ob Dylan first came to Woodstock in 1963 and began to hang out at the Café Espresso in town. Now the Center for Photography at Woodstock, in the '60s it had gingham tablecloths and live folk music every night. Bob made friends with the owners, the Paturel family, and Bernard let him use "the White Room," originally his workshop upstairs. Bob installed a small table and a manual typewriter and wrote some of his most famous early songs here, including *My Back Pages* and *It Ain't Me Babe*, which would later appear on the album *Another Side of Bob Dylan*. Dylan's Woodstock writing room has been recreated and installed in a showcase at the bottom of the stairs.

In 1966, Bob was in a motorcycle accident near the Grossmans' house and disappeared from public view for more than a year. There were rumors he had died, been disfigured or was simply in hiding. But the truth was he was recovering, during which time he would visit with The Band at Big Pink in West Saugerties, just eight miles away.

During this period, Bob and The Band created and recorded more than 100 songs, some of which turned up on a highly coveted bootleg before being released officially seven years later on *The Basement Tapes* LP. That album changed music forever and created what we now think of as Americana. As journalist David Kirby writes:

*"Homemade and handmade... The blues flowed into it, as did gospel, country... and Americana, a musical mélange that not only borrows from artists as different as Howlin' Wolf and Hank Williams but harkens back to the old, weird America of Walt Whitman and Johnny Appleseed."*



Douglas Gilbert



*Over time the fabric of Americana unravelled some—into the blues, country, rockabilly, rock 'n' roll—but the threads weave back together whenever a group of young musicians steps back a century or so and plays a music that may be hard to classify but sounds both hauntingly familiar and strangely new. The Band embodied every aspect of that music.”*

*“That was what I wanted us to sound like and here was somebody else doing it. It shook me to the core.”* — Eric Clapton, who envisioned the rootsy authenticity of *The Basement Tapes* for his work with Ginger Baker and Jack Bruce, disbanded Cream after he heard the bootleg.



Upstate Reggae Woodstock began in 1981, the year Bob Marley passed. The hundreds of shows, festivals and benefits that followed have been a truly “one love experience.” Produced for 40 years by Leah Boss, for whom reggae has been a lifelong inspiration, reggae will continue to feature strongly at the Theater.

Originally conceived as a map, the huge “Music Made in Woodstock” mural at the bottom of the stairs features more than 80 musicians who have made music in this small American town. Some, like John Sebastian, Happy Traum, Cindy Cashdollar and Jack DeJohnette, still live here, and many other artists have spent significant periods of time here. A thriving jazz scene has existed in Woodstock since the 1960’s. The Rolling Stones played Woodstock’s Joyous Lake club while prepping for a tour, Muddy Waters recorded an album at Bearsville Studios with Levon Helm, and Van Morrison created his sublime album *Moondance* while living on Spencer Road. We could not fit everyone onto a map, so we created this mural instead (see page 26 for details).



Cindy Cashdollar

Lizzie Vann

1984



**BEARSVILLE RECORDS**  
1970-1984

81 ALBUMS

MANY RECORDED AT  
BEARSVILLE STUDIOS

Todd Rundgren • Utopia • Foghat  
NRBQ • Randy Van Warmer • Sparks  
Bobby Charles • the dB's • Paul Butterfield  
Elizabeth Barracough • Johnny Average  
Jesse Winchester • Felix Cavaliere  
The American Dream • Gil Evans  
Great Speckled Bird • Jericho  
Jesse Frederick • Lazarus  
Jean Yves Labat • Tony Wilson  
Jonathan Cain Band • Nick Jameson  
Liar • Norma Jean Wright • Roger Powell  
Kenny Deas • Pam Windo & the Shades  
Brian Briggs • Donald O'Conner  
Willie Mitchell • Nichole Willis  
Human Body • Freida Parton



## BEARSVILLE RECORDS 1970-1984

**F**ollowing a deal with the Ampex Company, Albert Grossman started the Bearsville Records label in 1970, to work alongside his new recording studio. During its first year, the label produced five albums, including Todd Rundgren's debut, *Runt*, and Grossman's clients Ian and Sylvia's venture into country rock, *Great Speckled Bird*. Milton Glaser designed the label's logo, and the office ran from the farmhouse next door to today's Bearsville Center.

Over fourteen years, Bearsville released 81 albums (most distributed by Warner Bros.). The label's first big success was not a Grossman client, but British blues-rock band Foghat's 1973 debut, signed by Bearsville A&R man Paul Fishkin. The band would release ten LPs on Bearsville. In 1978, Scotsman Ian Kimmet took over as head of A&R.

Among other notable releases were 11 years of albums from singer songwriter Jesse Winchester, Paul Butterfield's *Better Days*; Louisiana songwriter Bobby Charles' self-titled album; Sparks' 1973 debut, *Half Nelson*; Felix Cavaliere's solo debut; Memphis soul legend Willie Mitchell's *Listen Dance*; and NRBQ's *Grooves in Orbit*. The eclectic label recorded jazzman Gil Evans; pop hitmaker Randy Vanwarmer's *Just When I Needed You Most*; power-pop combo the dB's; and even Dolly Parton's sister Frieda, whose LP *Two-Faced* marked the last of Bearsville Records' releases. The label closed down in 1984.



## JANIS AND LEVON TRANSFORM THE BATHROOMS

**T**he Theater bathrooms, pre-renovation, were notorious amongst regular guests for the level of festering mold and deterioration, which was gradually getting worse over time.

On inspection of a small patch of rusty baseboard in 2019, it was apparent that the supporting joists of the floor and also the dividing wall between the men's and women's rooms were rotted from water damage. A pipe had been leaking, perhaps for 30 years. The only way forward was to go back and rip it apart from top to bottom.

And then to decorate... Today the bathrooms are must-visit rooms rather than must-avoid! Alongside strong new construction and plumbing, the rooms showcase larger-than-life murals of Levon Helm and Janis Joplin and each stall features an important Woodstock musical legend.



# CHILLING OUT BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

## The Green Room

**T**he Green Room is the place where performers relax before and after a show. It doubles as a space for meeting VIP guests or for the band to share a meal together.

The entranceway features a small shrine to Albert Grossman and a collage of photographs of the hidden people behind his success, including the engineers, producers, administrators and builders who created the Bearsville Center and Studio. Unusual hand-knotted Turkish rugs and darkened pine-wood panels on the walls create a relaxed vibe. This is where VIP guests are accommodated for a 'Meet and Greet' event.

Off to the side, a fully outfitted kitchen with laundry, fridge and freezer, oven and microwave works well for caterers, and allows the band to take their time to recover from life on the road.

The heart of the room is the sitting area, which faces a golden shrine celebrating the spirituality of Woodstock. Here, a long luxurious velvet couch, floor cushions and easy chairs seat up to 15 people. A working fireplace and yet more antique rugs and pillows allow the band to sit back and relax, or prepare for their performance. A TV screen connects directly to the stage cameras, enabling the viewer to watch

performers as well as the audience.

Since the days of the Byrdcliffe arts colony, an intriguing dance between the spiritual and the material has existed in Woodstock. This room tells the story of the spiritual nature of the town. Many mystical leaders have been drawn to Woodstock. In the 1920s, India's Nobel Prize-winning



Dion Ogust





mystic poet Rabindranath Tagore announced Woodstock was *enchanted with magical vapors*.

A hand-hewn one-room church on Woodstock's Mead Mountain, built in 1891, became the sanctuary of Father Francis ("the hippie priest") in the 1960s – the Church of the Holy Transfiguration of Christ-on-the-Mount.

The same mountain was chosen in 1976 as the North American location of a Tibetan Buddhist monastery. Robert Thurman, a leading scholar of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, still lives here and invited the Dalai Lama to the area in 2006 to give a talk that was open to all at Woodstock's

Andy Lee Field. In neighboring Mount Tremper, the Zen Mountain Buddhist monastery founded in 1980 by John Daido Looi was originally called the Zen Arts Center.



Rabindranath Tagore

Wikimedia Commons

24



Dion Ogust





M • U •  
MAD  
WOODS

S I G  
E IN  
STOCK



Created by Mark Larson



MUSIC  
MADE IN  
WOODSTOCK

**T**he Bearsville-Woodstock music community has roots dating back more than 100 years, and the music scene was very active in the early 1960s. When guitarist/singer-songwriter/producer Larry Campbell first came to town 20 years later, he discovered “*a Utopian music scene. There didn’t seem to be any egos involved. There was an aura of the hippie scene that could actually come to fruition through music. And it seemed to permeate the whole town. Everywhere you went, there was this camaraderie and this easy flow of relationships.*”

28

Bob Dylan and Albert Grossman both began to live here in the mid-‘60s, serving as beacons to troubadours and instrumentalists alike. Since then, all genres of music have resonated throughout this community—folk, rock, blues, jazz, reggae, country, funk, gospel, punk—and much of it was performed

right here at the Bearsville Theater. Many people say the roots-hybrid Americana sound was born down the road at Big Pink, the West Saugerties house where The Band and Dylan created *The Basement Tapes* and The Band conceived their acclaimed debut album, *Music From Big Pink*.



Michael Friedman

The Band



Van Morrison



Artie Traum



Larry Campbell and Teresa Williams



Paul Butterfield



Cindy Cashdollar



Happy Traum



Karl Berger



Connor Kennedy



David Sancious



The Fabulous Rhinestones



Robbie Dupree



Kasim Sulton



Maria Muldaur



Betty MacDonald



Geoff Muldaur



Jimi Hendrix

Though millions of dollars have been generated from music derived from the area, the simple joy of creation is the regions' real musical legacy. As long-time resident Happy Traum said *"Let's do the music we love to do when we're sitting around at parties. So we made an album of songs that convey the sense of closeness, personally and musically, that we feel, as well as the fun of doing something for its own sake as opposed to doing it for financial or other ends."* He was talking about *Mud Acres; Music Among Friends*, the prescient Americana album recorded by the Woodstock Mountains Revue, but it could just as well apply to a great deal of music making in Woodstock by both local and national names.

Today this musical DNA is embedded in the rustic wooden walls of these Bearsville buildings. This creative spirit birthed 30-plus years of concerts and generations of musical communities. It continues to inspire the vision of the Bearsville Center today.





## THE VAN MORRISON DRESSING ROOM

**T**his room celebrates the years Van Morrison spent in Woodstock between 1969 and 1971.

Van arrived in Woodstock in 1969 to play the homespun Sound-Out festival on Pan's Farm in West Saugerties. He learned that a house on Spencer Road was about to be vacated by The Band's Richard Manuel and Garth Hudson. It was just off Ohayo Mountain Road near Bob Dylan's home. Van, his wife Janet Planet, and her young son moved in, and he began rehearsing in the living room with local musicians. The songs of his timeless and beloved *Moondance* came to life here.

The spectacular view of the Ashokan Reservoir from this house would have reminded him of Belfast Lough, in his native Northern Ireland, and was a likely catalyst for the references to mysticism and nature on the album. A full-size mural of the Ashokan fills two walls of the dressing room. Also on view are some of his song lyrics and photographic references to his life.

Though shy, Van recruited the Street Choir for his next album, *His Band and the Street Choir*, from singers who frequented the Sled Hill Cafe.

Van left town in 1971 and his final tribute to Woodstock was the song "Old Old Woodstock," a high point of his next album, *Tupelo Honey*.





## THE JANIS JOPLIN DRESSING ROOM



Janis & Rick Danko

Jim Marshall

33

*“Don’t compromise yourself. You’re all you’ve got.”*

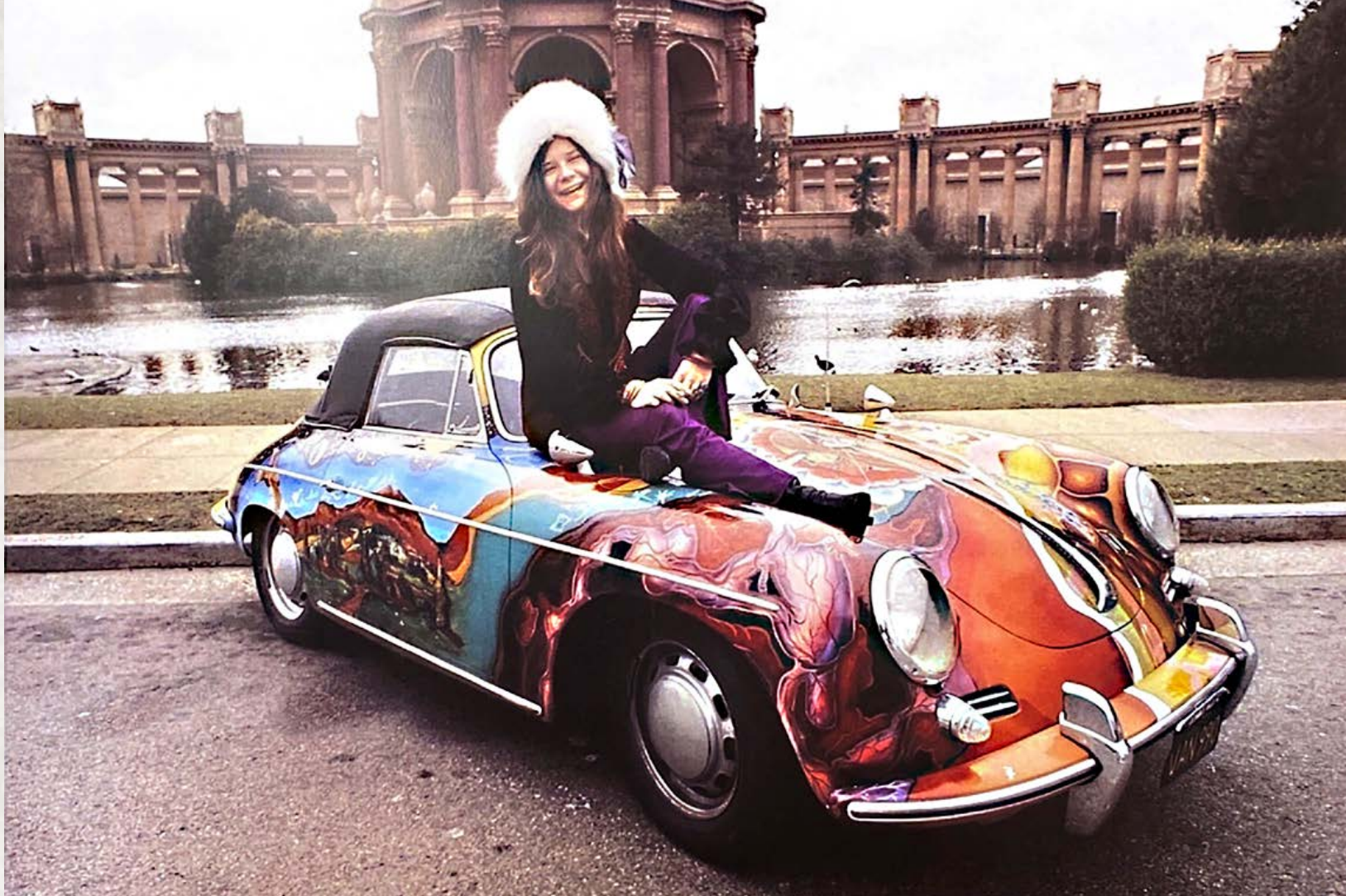
– Janis Joplin

**T**he Queen of Rock, Janis Joplin (1943-1970), was the first female rock star and one of our greatest singers. Her distinctive voice sounds as powerful today as it did when introduced on the airwaves in 1967. Most of her life was spent in Texas and California, but she was in and out of Bearsville after she signed with manager Albert Grossman, with whom she had a tight bond. A frequent visitor at the Grossman home and a regular partier at The Bear Café, Janis came to Woodstock to recover and relax after touring and recording. After her tragic death at age 27, Albert organized an intimate wake at The Bear.



*My love for Janis started at the age of 14 when I borrowed 'Pearl' from my local public library in a small town in England. It blew my mind and I decided to come to America and find where she had lived. I loved her voice, her attitude, her vulnerability, and most of all her kick-ass take-no-prisoners approach to her life and career. Janis was no slouch, she put in her 10,000 hours, crafting her voice and her musical chops.*

— Lizzie Vann



Jim Marshall

The room reflects the breadth of her life—her friends and family, the men, the albums, the bands, and the influences and inspirations that drove her to become a blues singer at an early age. We are fortunate to have Janis' biographer, Holly George-Warren, living nearby. Holly has told the story of Janis' life both in a respected biography published in 2019, and on a smaller scale in the narrative among the photographs displayed in this room.

Johanna Hall, lyricist for the nationally famous band Orleans, also lives nearby. In 1969, Janis asked her to write a song as a tribute to her beau, David Niehaus. Johanna obliged and the song "*Half Moon*" easily became a favorite of Janis'. They became friends before Janis' tragic death from a heroin overdose at the age of 27. The artwork by Lindsey Tipler contains the words of that song.



Also on exhibit is a photograph of Janis' distinctive Porsche, which she, and later Albert's artists, drove around Woodstock. It spent some time parked at the Bearsville Center in the small garage now used by The Little Bear as a storage space.

# Not Only a Theater ...

## THE SOUND STAGE

**T**he historic 15-acre Bearsville property surrounding the Theater offers excellent dining and other inviting amenities. In the 1960s, Albert Grossman bought and began to transform the acreage and its buildings, including a 19th-century farmhouse and vintage barns. Today, the Bearsville Center comprises two restaurants, a café and bar, the Utopia Sound Studios, and a number of residences.



Dion Ogust

Utopia Sound Stage

36

Directly across from the theater (and connected by a secret tunnel!) the legendary **Utopia Sound Stage** was originally commissioned by Albert Grossman in 1979. Constructed for the visionary producer and recording artist Todd Rundgren, the building was designed and engineered as an



Dion Ogust

innovative video studio by John Storyk. At Utopia, Todd filmed "Time Heals" (from his album, *Healing*), which became the second-ever video broadcast on MTV. The studio, with its distinctive internal green walls, was the location for numerous video and audio recordings in the 1980s. In recent years, the building has housed many music-related businesses, including Radio Woodstock.

## THE SUPPORTING CAST



The recently reimagined **Bear Café**, with its rustic interior and exquisite exterior garden, holds a special place in the hearts of longtime patrons. Carefully perched on the picturesque banks of the Sawkill Creek's dancing waters, its setting provides stunning views of the stream via floor-to-ceiling windows. Open to the public for dining, it is also the perfect space for private celebrations.



Next door to the Bear Café, the **Little Bear** has thrived for nearly five decades. Operated by Marlee Wang, our cozy neighborhood eatery has been serving up classic Chinese cuisine and cocktails since the complex's early days when Albert brought his own Chinese chef to town.

**Nancy's Artisanal Creamery and Café**, located in the celebrated Petersen House, boasts a strong following. Owner

Kathryn Spata, who debuted the ice cream shop on Tinker Street in 2017, uses

Hudson Valley produce and dairy, including Ronnybrook Farms' delicious cream and fine chocolate from award-winning chocolatier Fruition Chocolate. Teaming with Woodstock's beloved independent bookstore, **The Golden Notebook**, the spacious café offers a pop-up bookshop and a lovely meeting space for book clubs, organizations, and family get-togethers.





## How It All Began

**A**lbert Grossman commissioned Milton Glaser, one of America's most celebrated graphic designers, to create the Bearsville logo. Glaser's now-iconic, playful bear-face logo was used everywhere from the record label to signage on the buildings of the 15-acre farm Albert purchased in 1970 from the local Petersen family.

In addition to his expertise in spotting and engendering talent, Albert was a gourmand. He first turned the Petersen farmhouse into a French restaurant, then built a rustic, high-quality eatery, The Bear Café, alongside the Sawkill Creek. Its French and continental cuisine immediately drew musicians and artists as clientele. Next came The Little Bear, for which he flew in and auditioned chefs from Asia. Adjacent buildings housed Albert's Bearsville Records label and Utopia Sound Stage, an innovative, custom video studio with green screen built for client Todd Rundgren.

In the 1980s, work began to transform the 18th century 'Dutch' barn into a state-of-the-art theater for music and theatrical productions. The space was designed by a young John Storyk, the gifted architect who focused on acoustic spaces. In 1968, one of his first projects was the creation of the famed

Electric Lady Studios in Greenwich Village, NYC for Jimi Hendrix. With that underway, in 1969 John met Albert Grossman through a mutual friend, and a life-changing career started to take shape. He began designing a recording studio for Albert, and accompanied him to the Woodstock Festival. Bearsville Studios opened in 1970. In 1984 he began work on the Bearsville Theater, finishing it five years later — not for Albert, but for his widow, Sally.



*Albert (far Right), Ian Kimmet (left) and guests in front of The Bear Café*



After realizing that the barn was in a perfect location for Albert's dream theater dream, he figured out how to extend and enlarge it in literally every direction. Today, if you look upwards from the auditorium you see what remains of the original barn - its sprit and its shape are the secret sauce of the excellent sound. From the original structure, three levels were created:

- The basement, built to contain dressing rooms, bathrooms, a green room and an enormous space reserved for Albert's perfect kitchen (which never came to fruition)
- The adjacent lounge and auditorium spaces, with a slight drop from one to the other, and the stage, which sits five feet above the floor of the auditorium
- The bijoux balcony, with seating for 53 people.



Howard Sherman

John Storyk

The building is a testament to the skill of both architect and the carpenters who created it. Paul Cypert,



Paul Cypert

a master carpenter who took the huge project in his stride, used what is now the stage as his workshop. David Boyle, who learned the art of Japanese woodcarving while serving in the Korean War and described by Albert as "the best 18th century carpenter I know," was an expert in wood and stone. The way David worked, and the legacies he left us - for example, the

huge hand-hewed beam in the lounge - are yet another aspect of the way the theater was constructed - with care, multi-layered thought and an over-arching eye for the feel of the place. Don Marshall, a master carpenter working for Cypert, constructed the two matching spiral staircases, allowing for travel in both directions.



David Boyle

# Bearsville Studios

It's obvious but worth saying. A well-engineered recording sounds better than the raw material. The engineer teases out the heart of the song, accentuates its nuances, grooves and frequencies, and realises the intention of the artist. Bearsville Studios always had the best engineers. Here are some of the notable engineers and managers of Bearsville Studios, many of whom are internationally known.

**John Simon (1970-1997) Producer:** the studio's first-ever session, The Band (*The Band*), Michael Fanks (*Tiger in the Rain*)



**Michael Friedman (1970) Producer:** Professor Longhair and Snooks Eaglin, Jesse Fredrick (*Jesse Fredrick*)



**Todd Rundgren (1970) Producer/Engineer:** Todd Rundgren (*Initiation*, *Faithful*), Utopia; Meat Loaf (*Bat Out of Hell*); Patti Smith Group (*Wave*)



**John Holbrook (1973) Producer/Engineer:** Isley Brothers (*Go for Your Guns*), Paul Butterfield, Woodstock Mountains Revue, Mick Ronson (*Heaven and Hull*), John Sebastian (*Tar Beach*), John Hall, Natalie Merchant (*Tigerlilly*; *Ophelia*), Jewel, Don Byron, Brian Setzer Orchestra



**Aaron Baron and Larry Dahlstrom (1974) Remote Engineers:** Built and operated Location Recorders, a pioneer mobile recording truck. The Allman Bros. (*Live at Filmore East*), Todd Rundgren's Utopia (*Another Live*)

**David W Robb (1974-1979) Engineer & Crew Chief:** Designed and operated Bearsville Sound, an innovative touring sound system that supported artists such as Todd Rundgren, Utopia, Jerry Garcia Band, Grateful Dead, and Orleans.



**Ted Rothstein (1974-1980) Chief Engineer:** Studio B designed and constructed an innovative custom recording console



**Rob Davis (1975-1979) Engineer:** Monitor engineer for The Bearsville Sound System with artists Todd Rundgren, Utopia, Orleans and Little Feat

**Chris Andersen (1975-1980) Engineer:** Peter Tosh with the Rolling Stones (*Bush Doctor*), NRBQ; Touring House Mixing Engineer for Todd Rundgren's Utopia and the Bearsville Sound System

**Tom Mark** (1975) **Engineer:** Anthony Braxton and Muhal Richard Abrams (1976's *Duets*), The Isley Brothers (*Go for Your Guns*)



**Ian Kimmet** (1978) **General Manager:** Bearsville Records. (1988) **Studio Manager**

**Nile Rodgers** (1978) **Producer:** Norma Jean (*Norma Jean*)

**Mark McKenna** (1979) **Engineer:** Isley Brothers (*Between the Sheets*), the dB's (*Like This*), Isley, Jasper & Isley (*Broadway's Closer Than Sunset Blvd.*), Randy Vanwarmer (*The Beat of Love*), 'Til Tuesday (*Welcome Home*), Jesse Winchester (*Talk Memphis*), Psychedelic Furs (*Midnight to Midnight*), Simple Minds (*Once Upon a Time*), the Pretenders (*Get Close*), Aimee Mann (*Whatever*). (1999:) **Studio Manager**



**Ken McKim** (c.1981) **Engineer:** Michael Stanley Band (*You Can't Fight Fashion*), Charlie Sexton (*Charlie Sexton*)

**George Cowan** (c.1984) **Engineer:** Suzanne Vega (*Solitude Standing*), Metallica (*Injustice for All*), R.E.M. (*Green*, *Automatic for the People*) Danny Gatton (*88 Elimira Sreet*)

**Michael Barbiero** (1985-1995) **Producer:** Gov't Mule (*Gov't Mule*)

**Bob Clearmountain** & **Jimmy Iovine** (c.1986) **Producer/Engineer:** The Pretenders (*Get Close*), Simple Minds (*Once Upon a Time*)



**Robert Frazza** (1988 - 1994) **Technical Engineer:** Tony Levin (*Waters of Eden*), Artie Traum (*The View From Here*), Robbie Dupree (*All Night Long*), Bruford, Levin Upper Extremities (*Blue Nights*)

**Chris Laidlaw** (1988) **Engineer:** Sugarcubes (*Stick Around for Joy*), Jeff Buckley (*Grace*), R.E.M. (*Green*), Dave Matthews Band (*Crash*), Phish (*Billy Breathes*)



**Thom Cadley** (c. 1988) **Engineer:** R.E.M. (*Green*), Charlie Sexton (*Charlie Sexton*), The Waterboys (*Dream Harder*)

**Mike Reiter** (1989) **Engineer:** R.E.M. (*Out of Time*), 10,000 Maniacs, Toto (*Past to Present*), Psychedelic Furs (*World Outside*), Deep Purple (*The Battle Rages On*), Ace Frehley (*Second Sighting*, *Trouble Walkin'*), Joe Satriani (*The Extremist*), the B-52's (*Good Stuff*), Indigo Girls (*Rites of Passage*)

**John Siket** (c. 1995) **Engineer:** Phish (*Billy Breathes*), Dave Matthews Band (*Crash*)

# An Extensive Renovation

## In Lizzie's Own Words

“I will never forget the first time I walked into the Theater after purchasing Bearsville. It was the Friday of Labor Day weekend in 2019. The rain was pouring down. The electricity had been turned off during the previous winter. There were holes in the roof, water pouring down the walls. The floorboards were buckled from long-standing puddles. The pipes had frozen, and nothing was working. There was a bad smell everywhere.

I'd always loved the theater – had spent many evenings in the lounge and auditorium at concerts. Or enjoying the crackle of logs in the firepit on the bluestone patio outside. But today was different. Bearsville has a unique and magical history. And as I stood there, I instantly fell totally in love with my new baby.

42



Before we could invite people to enjoy it again, there was work to do. The theater was in need of a massive overhaul. The bones were good – everyone loves the shape of the ceilings, the feel of the stage, the sense of history and significance in the dressing rooms and the lounge. Every room needed a lot of TLC.

It's impossible to look back through 15 months of photographs and not be amazed by how much work we did. It was impossible to anticipate what we would find! Water was our enemy and it

was coming at us in many forms (dripping, running, seeping, as mold, as strange small rivulets)! It was a three dimensional puzzle, trying to get back to the source, and stop the rot from happening.

43



Lizzie Vann

*Step one, within a week of purchase in September 2019, was a new roof. Water was coming in from above and below ground, and from frozen and broken pipes inside the building too.*



Dion Ogust

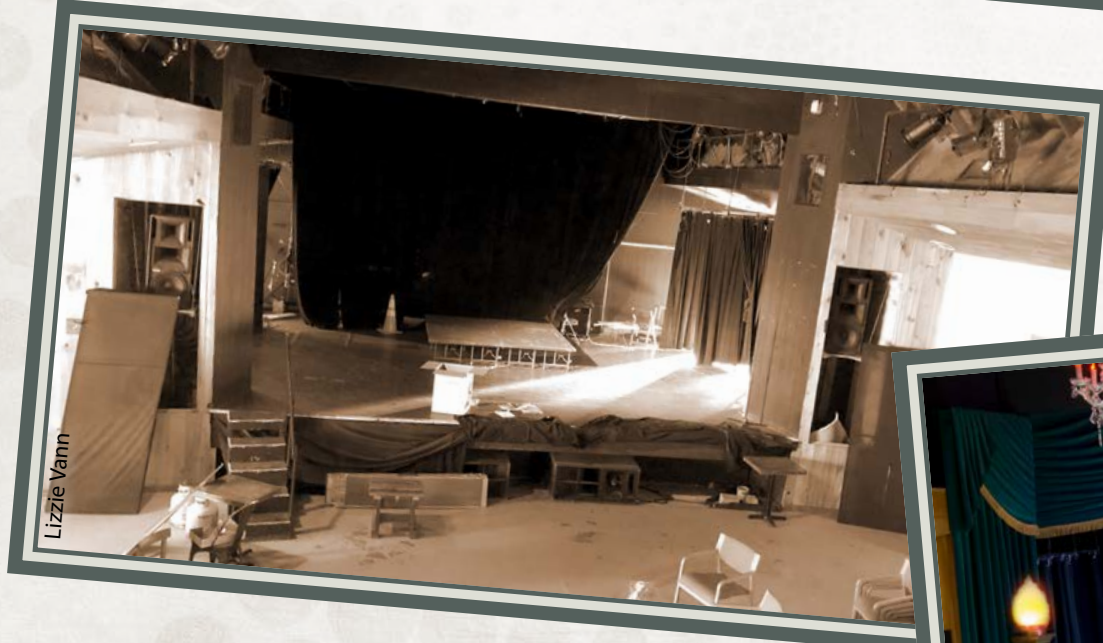


*The neglected lounge received a thorough make-over. The glass separating the lounge from the audience was replaced. We hand-sanded the floors, walls and extraordinary wooden acoustic ceilings.*

*We added beautiful new lighting over our fully renovated (and infamous!) bar and finished the lounge off with a stylish paint job and new furnishings.*



44



*Two golden gods, discovered in a dusty corner, now stand guard on either side of the stage.*

*With gold fringed drapes, art deco lighting, and modern technology, as well as a Yamaha C7 grand piano and lovingly restored C3 Hammond organ complete with Leslie speaker, the theater now has the centerpiece it deserves.*





Lizzie Vann

*From a must-avoid space to a must-visit room the bathrooms have been transformed by a ground-up re-build, enhanced with Mike DuBois' art.*



Dion Ogust



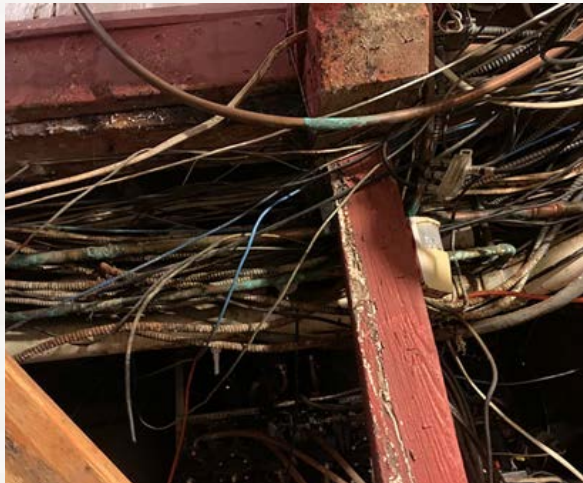
Lizzie Vann

*The green room, (where artists relax before and after the show) was in a sorry state. We ripped out the walls and ceiling, and rebuilt it into a palace.*

*Aside from practicalities essential for touring artists, like an adjoining laundry and fully outfitted kitchen, the main room is divided into two. A dining area can house a large dinner or double as a place for VIP meet-and-greets, and the comfy, cozy fireplace area with relaxed seating pays homage to Woodstock's spiritual roots.*



Dion Ogust



Lizzie Vann

That was the start of a long journey — the beginning of mold remediation, of demolition, of hand sanding floors, and repairing the treasured acoustic panels in the ceiling. Wiring and plumbing had to be completely replaced. We reinstated the damp, rotting velvet drapes with gorgeous new ones in black and peacock blue.

We replaced the sad and lonely hard seating with something more comfortable. We literally dried out, remediated, scrubbed, polished, painted and in many cases replaced every inch of surface in the 8,000 sq. ft building.

It's hard to figure out all the parts of a building that have to be repaired after 30 years of Catskill weather and water damage. So we just kept going. Each day threw a new surprise at us, but we



Lizzie Vann

had a great crew who were energetic and enthusiastic no matter how cold or damp the work was. The building is a testament to their skills and professionalism.

And now it's a jewel again. Regardless of how much you pay for a ticket, you deserve a great performance. The changes we have made enhance, improve and democratize the sound so that **everyone** gets an amazing experience. I want you to

love it as much as I do – please come and judge for yourself.”

Lizzie Vann  
Steward



Barbara Banks



Lizzie Vann



# Sound and Vision

The Theater sound and light system had not been modernized since 1989, and despite the acoustically designed auditorium, the sound quality had degraded. The original sound system had old technology, which no longer functioned well. Everything sounded fuzzy.



Dion Ogust

The auditorium – devised with no right angles, no boxy corners – is designed for sound. Architect John Storyk added flying wings over the house area to disperse sound waves coming down from the low gable roof, which itself serves to enhance reverb as if it were a drum skin.



The theater's Production Manager Robert Frazza researched and installed a Danley SH46 Point Source powered by DNA 20k4 PRO with built in Digital Signal Processing, aided by veteran sound engineer Stan Dennis. Danley is a sophisticated, powerful system, designed to fill the uniquely shaped room with mellow, muscular tones. Its technology reads the shape and content of a room and pitches sounds in exactly the right combinations to produce the best aural result for every seat, including the often-forgotten back rows.

The intimate VIP balcony at the rear of the room received special treatment. Sound now hangs in this area and does not bounce back or become fuzzy. Every seat in the theater now offers the audience an all-round immersive experience of sound, light and creature comforts.



Dion Ogust



**BEARSVILLE  
THEATER**

**WOODSTOCK, NEW YORK**

# Mike DuBois

**W**e are very fortunate to have the graphic artist Mike DuBois living nearby. Mike works in mixed-media, oil painting, and computer graphics, and is a pioneer in the creation of contemporary music art, with commissions from many famous artists running the gamut from The Rolling Stones and Tom Petty to The Grateful Dead and Santana.

Born in 1963, Mike grew up in Syracuse, NY, and began drawing as soon as he could hold a pencil. By age 12 he was designing t-shirts for local organizations; at 15 he was in several bands and designing posters for regional punk and new wave bands, and at 18 he was painting murals on the sides of city buildings for the Syracuse Art Squad.

Mike has studied and created art around the country, and his skills include metalsmithing, jewelry design and mural painting. As a rock drummer playing from San Francisco to Woodstock, Mike has continually kept close to the music scene, reaching worldwide audiences through his art and licensed products. Mike's story of his involvement in Bearsville, in his own words, is overleaf.



Kelly Sinclair





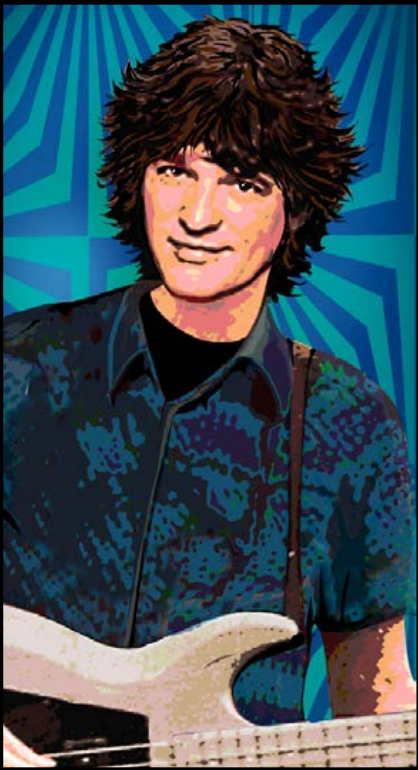
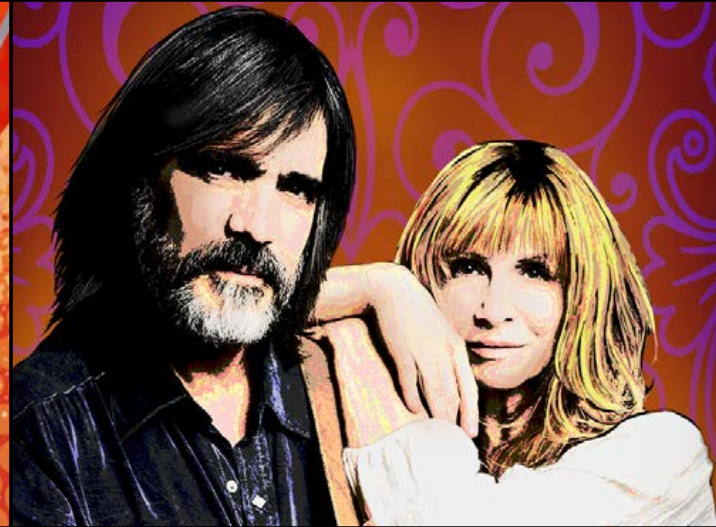
*I started visiting Woodstock in 1982 making frequent trips to see live music, visit shops, and hike.*

*In 1986 I moved into a mountaintop house overlooking the Ashokan Reservoir built by the artist Clarence Schmidt and previous home to Bob Dylan, The Band, and Van Morrison. The five years I spent there gave me an insight into the muse and sublime magic that inspired Van Morrison to write three of the best albums of his career: Moondance, His Band and the Street Choir, and Tupelo Honey.*

*Over the years I have frequented the Bearsville complex countless times, attending shows at the theater, and eating at the restaurants there. Throughout the decades, I have seen it transform through several incarnations and multiple owners. I always considered it a cultural icon and centerpiece of Woodstock history.*

*Around 2018 the entire complex was in need of some serious TLC. I was excited and happy to hear that Lizzie Vann had purchased the property with the intention of restoring it in accordance with Albert Grossman's original vision. I got a call from Lizzie with the idea of updating the original Milton Glaser logo with my own interpretation. As things progressed, I became part of the team of interior designers working on the inside and outside of the theater. I created a*





*variety of portraits of musicians who lived and recorded in Woodstock and played at the theater. We used these along with some new wallpapers I designed to grace the walls of the bathrooms, hallways, and doors throughout the theater. My time living in Van Morrison's house was helpful in the designing of "The Van Room ." During this process it was important for me to keep in mind Albert's vision and the historical importance while updating the theater for the 21st century. Maintaining the integrity of the theater's design while paying homage to the rich musical history was my goal.*

*The second phase of the design process was branding and creating merchandise for the newly renovated venue. This is an ongoing and evolving process which will continue as we move forward.*

*After 30 years in music industry image creation, it has been gratifying and an honor to be able to offer my skills and services to a cultural gem here in my hometown of Bearsville.*

*M. D. Sois*



## CONTACT US

**T**he Bearsville Theater offers concerts, and live-stream events, and is available for filming and video production. Some rooms can also be booked for special occasions such as weddings and other private/public social gatherings.

The Utopia Soundstage has studio spaces available for recording, filming, workshops, classes, and theater production.



**Robert Frazza** Director of Programming and Production

A sound expert with more than 40 years of experience supporting more than 200 bands worldwide, Robert has worked at Bearsville since the 1980s.

[robert@bearsvillecenter.com](mailto:robert@bearsvillecenter.com)

**Kim Lockrow** Director of Operations. Kim lived in Bearsville as a child, and is now responsible for both financial and property management.

[kim@bearsvillecenter.com](mailto:kim@bearsvillecenter.com)



**Zoe Keech** Marketing Director

Zoe handles advertising, PR, social media and promotions at Bearsville. She and Lizzie have worked together for 25 years, and they previously ran an organic babyfood company in the UK. [zoe@bearsvillecenter.com](mailto:zoe@bearsvillecenter.com)

**Jim Della Croce** Public Relations via his company Pathfinder Artists

Jim wears many music industry hats (manager, producer, publicist, concert promoter/talent buyer) and handles our PR and industry relations.

[jim@pathfindermanagement.com](mailto:jim@pathfindermanagement.com)



## Thank you ...Thank You ...Thank You!

**Construction Team** Tom Mignone, and Jesus Alarcon and his terrific hardworking team of carpenters – fundamental to the whole renovation. Plus the crews of electrician Tony Gallo, Joe the Plumber, Steve Costello's stonework team, Scott Arnold at Rycor HVAC, Steve Saguid at Countywide Gutters, Engineer Bill Scribner, Jesse Haliburton, and Project Manager, Gerry Silveira. More special shout-outs go to Paul Beichert of Timely Signs and Bo Landy for the beautiful murals, and to Fletch Landesman, Kingston Fire Equipment, Rest Assured and Loscksmithery, First Alliance Protection, Susie and Alfie Darrow at Leather, Lace Gallery for the lounge drapes and Richard and Santa Schlesinger of the Woodstock Cleaning Company.

**The Town of Woodstock** for your encouragement and support.

**Debra Bresnan** A writer, editor and communications consultant based in the Hudson Valley.

**Holly George-Warren** A two-time Grammy nominee and the award-winning author of 16 books, including *Janis: Her Life and Music*. At Bearsville she works on communication, including text about the artwork and the long and storied history of the area.

**Mark Larson** An artist and art director with a distinguished career in the music business including Art Director at CBS Records and Design Director at Arista Records under Clive Davis.

**Naomi Schmidt** Worked for Albert Grossman in the early 80s and now, nearly 40 years later, came back to be an important part of the graphics team that produced this brochure.

**Gwen Snyder Siegal** Owner of The Nest Design a home staging and designs company. She did a remarkable job sourcing all aspects of the theater's new soft and hard furnishings.

**Lindsey Tipler** and **Frank Anselmo** Experts in finishing, restoration and renovation. They enhanced the Mid-century Modern feel throughout the theater, and decorated the room and created the artwork in the Janis Joplin dressing room.

**Tad Wise** A writer and networker who grew up in Bearsville as a member of the Ballantine family. As an early chronicler, Tad helped identify innumerable historic threads in the interwoven web that is Woodstock.

**Photographers** Mike DuBois, Robert Frazza, Michael Friendman, Douglas Gilbert, Elliott Landy, Jim Marshall, David McGough, Dion Ogust, John Scheele, Catherine Sebastian, Niel Segal, Jim Shea, Howard Sherman, Kelly Sinclair, Happy Traum, Franco Vogt



In the early 70's, famed artist manager and impresario, Albert Grossman, purchased a 15 acre estate on the edge of the town of Woodstock. His vision was to create a bucolic and creative home for his artists, who included Bob Dylan, Janis Joplin, The Band, Peter Paul and Mary, and Todd Rundgren. He built recording and video studios, a beautiful theater, fine restaurants, housing, and a record label, Bearsville Records.

Now, many years later, and after a complete ground-up restoration, the Bearsville Center rises up like a phoenix and opens its doors again to the public.

*"To me, Woodstock will always be as significant and active an American music center as Memphis, New York, L.A., Nashville and Muscle Shoals. The Bearsville Theater stands as a monument to our community, honoring and celebrating its musical heritage and as a platform for new artists to create and showcase their work, here in Bearsville, for generations to come."*

John Sebastian

*"The Bearsville Theater has presented 30 years of extraordinary performances, many of which I've had the good fortune to experience. What a blessing that it's been restored so beautifully with a focus on the area's rich musical history!"*

Holly George-Warren

AUTHOR, JOURNALIST, AND MUSIC HISTORIAN

*"The Bearsville Theater has always been the venue of choice for great gatherings of the jazz and world music community. I can't wait to see it open again, featuring the broad spectrum of musical creativity that is so special for our area and time."*

Karl Berger

CO-FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF THE CREATIVE MUSIC STUDIO

*"I grew up in Woodstock, absorbing its magic & music. I worked in the office at Bearsville Records and saw what Albert Grossman and his vast & varied team of people created over time, once upon a time. The Bearsville Theater has thankfully risen once again, bright with beauty & creative integrity at every turn, a perfect spoke in the wheel that moves in tandem with the musical heartbeat that is Woodstock."*

Cindy Cashdollar

### **BEARSVILLE THEATER**

277-297 Tinker Street • Woodstock, NY 12498

[BearsvilleTheater.com](http://BearsvilleTheater.com)

