

# Family-friendly fun in Fredericksburg

By **KELLY CARPER POLDEN**

After experiencing a performance at the Rockbox Theater, attendees will find themselves humming a tune, tapping their toes, and reminiscing with a smile about this high-energy, family-friendly entertainment venue now available in the Hill Country.

Nearly 18 months ago, the Rockbox's cast of entertainers moved to Fredericksburg, opened the 392-seat theater, and introduced residents and visitors alike to a unique mix of live music, comedy and entertainment. The nine-person, multi-talented cast collaborates to create a fun-filled performance that changes on a weekly basis.

"As both producer and cast member, I am very proud to be part of this talented group of characters," says Russ Hearn, who is also co-owner of the Rockbox Theater.

"We've worked together for nine years, creating and delivering more than 1,800 performances in front of more than a quarter of a million people. That's both a challenge and an honor," he explains.

"We work hard to create a multi-dimensional experience for the enjoyment of each person in our audience, no matter the age," Russ continues. "Our goal is to have fun doing what we love to do while providing a high-quality variety show that encourages audience participation in a unique venue."

"We create a mix of musical, comedic entertainment that is 'funtabulous.' By that play on words, we guarantee good, clean fun that will not embarrass anyone or cause them to explain a delicate situation to a child or anyone else."

As Russ explains, that promise is important to all the cast members, as is the guarantee of "giving it our all, as if it is the last show we will ever perform."

A performance at the Rockbox is like a dream excursion to Tiffany's — every showcase features high-quality gems.

Audience members of all ages will enjoy the variety of music — from swing to '50s, and hip-hop to rock.

Musical numbers include heartfelt solos, snappy group doo-wops, and foot-stomping rock and country tunes.

Many musical segments are combined with a mix of comedic skits that surprise the audience and leave them rolling in the aisles with laughter.

Rockbox cast members include husband and wife duos Russ and Wendy Hearn, and Carey and Dena Dyer, plus Linda Morgan and T.J. Smith. Musicians include Cass Moore, Mark Best, and Jacob Longoria.

Tapping into a mix of talent, experience and camaraderie, the cast delivers an energetic performance that suggests spontaneity, yet is brilliantly timed.

"Despite our many years in the entertainment business, the cast knows that we are only as good as our last show," Russ explains. "That's why we work hard each week to deliver a high-quality performance that we hope leaves the audience enthused about coming back for more. I feel blessed to be part of such a dynamic and talented group of performers."

The Rockbox is quickly making a name for itself as a Hill Country destination. The

theater was recently voted "the number one thing to do in Texas" at tripadvisor.com.

"It's a privilege to know that our audience has voted us number one," Russ says.

"We feel especially honored when we get calls such as the one from a return audience member who booked tickets for herself and her sister who has cancer. The woman said she wanted her sister to be able to share in an uplifting, entertainment experience. Hearing compliments like that means a lot to the cast."

According to Russ, the box office frequently receives calls inquiring about an upcoming show, requesting to see a skit they enjoyed at a previous performance.

Musical parodies such as "Doehemian Rhapsody" are occasionally brought back to stage as an encore performance. A take-off on the 1970s mega-hit "Bohemian Rhapsody" by the rock group Queen, the skit spoofs the annual tango between drivers and deer in the Hill Country.

The 2009 season runs through the final Saturday of December.

Get ready to be hooked. An experi-



**Russ Hearn and Carey Dyer as "Mo and Bro, the Blue Suede Brothers" at Fredericksburg's Rockbox Theater.**

Photo courtesy Rockbox Theater.

ence at the Rockbox is a lot like a favorite carnival or theme park ride; once it's over, the audience can't wait to queue up for another round.

**FYI** • Rockbox Theater is located at 109 North Llano Street in Fredericksburg. Show times are Fridays at 8 PM, Saturdays at 4:30 PM and 8 PM, and Sundays at 1:30 PM.

Performances are approximately two hours in length, with intermission. All seats are reserved. Tickets for adults range from \$28-40; tickets for youth ages 17 and under are \$15. Special rates for groups of 25 or more, as well as discounts for seniors and active military, are available.

The Rockbox is expanding its talent base. Those interested in auditioning can send demo tapes to Russ Hearn or email him at [info@rockboxtheater.com](mailto:info@rockboxtheater.com).

For more information, call 866-349-6688 or visit the web site at [www.rockboxtheater.com](http://www.rockboxtheater.com).



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