

Children's Theater Premier

Amy Janson is integrating her passion for acting and public speaking to build young children's confidence.

by Nicole Jenet
Editor

Growing up, Amy Janson "always had a mic" in her hand. She would practice speeches and had a "dramatic" and "emotional" personality. She did various commercials as a child and even went on to act in some civic theater productions in Spokane.

Both her personality and passion lead her to pursue a higher education at Washington State University, where she received her bachelors in public speaking. From there, Janson held various jobs.

"I knew there was something that I was supposed to do and I could never pinpoint it," she said.

One day, Janson was having coffee with the owner of the Eagle Early Learn-



ing Center. They were talking about how Janson wasn't sure what the next step in her life was. It was then and there that the preschool owner suggested that Janson open a children's theater.

"In my head [that idea] never clicked...she put it together," Janson said. She explained that she had various ideas, but it was the preschool owner that helped the idea of a children's theater come together in her mind. "I wasn't the best student academically, but my father told me that you always need to know how to articulate and express what you want," Janson said. In the day and age of iPads and cell phones, she said that children don't know how to use their emotions to ask for what they want.

And that is the underlying goal of the Eagle Children's Theater. The owner of the Eagle Early Learning Center donated the use of the building to Janson to run the theater program, which she explained is not as much about acting as it is "the

building of confidence to ask for what you want" for children ages 4 - 6.

The mission of Eagle Children's Theater is "to build confidence and imagination through play." The goal is to teach and enhance the craft of public speaking, problem solving and listening skills as well as self-esteem.

"Children who learn to speak out clearly and relate confidently with others are on the track to lifetime success," she stated.

When children come to the Eagle Children's Theater, Janson explained that she has the children play a few games that involved team building and two games or activities that involve acting in each session. Then, they work on a play that they will perform in the last 15 minutes of the last class.

Because the children are so young, they can't read yet, so Janson narrates the play and the children act along with what she is saying.

Some of the games they play involved putting the child "on the spot." When they do this, Janson encourages the rest of the children to cheer them on to make them feel comfortable and build them up while they're on stage.

"I want it to be serious, but not too serious," she said, adding that she wants the children "to have a great time, without them knowing" what her major goal is.

"My goal isn't about teaching them to be actors or train them to be an actor. My focus is on public speaking, confidence and being articulate," she stated. Children want to imagine and pretend, so Janson said sometimes the classes can get "a little silly."

"They only have that creativity for a short time and this is great way for them to get it out," she said.

Eagle Children's Theater holds one or two class sessions each season, with each season lasting about three weeks.

Classes meet twice a week for 45 minutes and the final class features a special parent day presentation, where the children will perform the play they have been practicing with Janson.

For more information, visit eaglechildrenstheater.com.



Top: Amy Janson is the founder of Eagle Children's Theater

Bottom: The Eagle Children's Theater drama activities are specially designed to help children 4-6 years old gain greater confidence and self-esteem while improving their verbal skills.

Photo courtesy of Eagle Children's Theater

The Future of Idaho Wines

Local wine expert Leil Cardoza discusses how Idaho winemakers and wineries have the potential to make a name for Idaho as a top wine-making region.

by Leil Cardoza
Community contributor

Every new winemaking region needs to find which grapes perform best in their climate. The unpredictability of the growing season is one of the unique challenges of wine growing in Idaho, particularly for cultivating red grapes. Some grapes such as Cabernet and Merlot can display very strong 'green' or 'weedy' characteristics when not ripe enough, meaning the vineyard manager has to work very hard to make sure their grapes get enough heat, especially in years like 2011 when we saw snow in Boise on Memorial Day weekend.

While many Idaho winemakers are already experiencing great success with Syrah, which is a variety that is already widely cultivated not just in the United States, but also in France, Australia, South America and South Africa. The key to national recognition for Idaho's winemakers may lie with the Spanish variety Tempranillo.

Tempranillo is most well known as the dominant red grape of Rioja. Native to the hot, dry vineyards of northern Spain, Tempranillo is well-suited to cultivation in our high mountain desert. And while there is some Tempranillo planted in the vineyards of Washington, Oregon and California, there is no major wine growing region in the United States that is well-known for cultivating this varietal, leaving a niche open in the market that Idaho wines could be uniquely positioned to fill.

Idaho also has tremendous potential for cultivation of white wines. White wines are often a safer bet in marginal growing areas, since they are generally harvested earlier than reds, and most often do not show any of the off-put-



Photo courtesy of hibu

TEMPRANILLO

IS A VARIETY OF BLACK GRAPE WITH A THICK SKIN GROWN TO MAKE FULL-BODIED RED WINES.

Its name comes from the Spanish word "temprano," meaning early. This refers to the fact that these grapes ripen earlier than most Spanish red grapes.

It is often referred to as Spain's "noble grape." The wines produced from this grape often have the aromas and flavors of berries, plum, tobacco, vanilla, leather and herb.

ting characteristics that some red wines can show when not ripe enough. The large day-night temperature shift of southern Idaho means that the grapes cool overnight, allowing them to retain acidity and balance. Idaho already produces some truly excellent Chardonnay, Viognier, Pinot Gris, and Riesling (in both sweet and dry styles).

Another important next step for the continuing growth of Idaho wine is the

establishment of additional American Viticultural Areas (AVAs). The Snake River Valley AVA was established in 2007, and has seen a tremendous increase in the number of wineries producing in southern Idaho, however it is extremely large; the fifth largest in the country in fact.

One of the primary purposes of an AVA is to identify an area whose soil and climate create unique growing conditions that should be legally recognized. While the Snake River Valley AVA does cover the area of the prehistoric lake bed that once took up much of southern Idaho, it is clear that today there are multiple climate and soil differences between Ontario and Bliss.

Additionally, there are suitable grape-growing areas outside of the Snake River Valley AVA which are currently being explored. The area around Lewiston was home to some of the first wine grape cultivation in the state, and has seen a resurgence of wine cultivation recently.

Leil Cardoza is a Boise native and 9-year veteran of the wine industry. He began his career in an Italian wine bar in New York City at the age of 23 and since then has traveled extensively through the wine regions of the west coast. He has also traveled and worked as a winemaking intern in France. He has also studied and received certification from the Court of Master Sommeliers and the Society of Wine Educators. After working with the Boise Co-op Wine Shop for more than five years, he recently took a position with Idaho Distributing, and currently works in wholesale sales. You can read more of Cardoza's thoughts on wine at ithinkaboutwine.wordpress.com, or by following him on Twitter, @ithinkaboutwine.

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