

## Susan Frontczak & Jacqueline Schwab: Combined Music and Story Concert

October 16, 2016 at the Avalon Ballroom in Boulder, Colorado

\$1,100 Grant from the Alex "Tink" Wilson Legacy Fund - April 2016

### "Mark Twain's America"

Boulder Storyteller Susan Marie Frontczak and visiting pianist Jacqueline Schwab presented "Mark Twain's America," a concert of Story in Music and Music in Story, at the Avalon on Sunday, October 16, 2016, at 2:00 p.m.

The concert included a panoply of traditional American tunes—Civil War and Stephen Foster parlor songs, Victorian dance tunes, Scots and Irish immigrant dance tunes and airs, African-American spirituals, and ragtime—interspersed with both folktales and literary gold nuggets from Mark Twain's humor to Robert Service's "Shooting of Dan McGrew," which features the piano as a central character.



"The audience was warm, welcoming and attentive," Frontczak wrote in her post-event report. "We would gladly have had more people. Paying attendance: Estimated 44 adults, 4 children; 8 volunteers; Total attendance 56. From the point of view of having 90 people at The Barn [a venue in Longmont run by Dorothy and Frank Vernon] last year, this number is a disappointment. But the response by the audience was most encouraging. After the show we got comments such as, 'You have created a whole new art form,' and 'What you do together is absolute magic. It is something new.'

"This concert represents an important milestone in our joint artistic development," Frontczak continued. "Jacqueline and I are deeply grateful for the support of the Alex 'Tink' Wilson Legacy Fund. You made it possible for us to explore new artistic territory in blending our repertoires, to offer the audience a truly unique way to enjoy our shared and diverse folk heritage. One audience member wrote:



*"I am writing to tell all the amazing characters that appeared in Mark Twain's America how-over-the-top amazing it was to be in the audience yesterday. ...You and Jacqueline match one another's energy. You shine individually and in concert. Congratulations!"*

*Ann Hayes*

"This came from an audience member who had never been to the Avalon. She was neither from the dance community nor the storytelling community. In fact, this program, even with its small audience, gathered a number of new people to the Avalon, and reached across art forms generally thought of as distinct and separate. I believe Tink's spirit was present.

"Jacqueline and I hope and intend to build on the opportunity you gave us to bring this blend of Music & Story to a wider audience. Thank you!"

Massachusetts-based pianist Jacqueline Schwab holds a Bachelor's degree in piano improvisation from New England Conservatory of Music. She has focused her career on performing traditional Celtic and British Isles and vintage American music, both as a solo concert pianist and a longtime dance musician. Her evocative improvisations on vintage American tunes have been heard on over a dozen of Ken Burns' PBS documentaries, including "The Civil War" and "Mark Twain." Visit her website: [jacquelineschwab.com](http://jacquelineschwab.com).



Susan Marie Frontczak has built her storytelling and living history career on a combination of historical research and an ability to bring to life stories from both folk and literary traditions. She is particularly known for her delivery of narrative verse, which carries a music of its own. Her work has taken her to 39 of the United States and abroad. Visit her website: [storysmith.org](http://storysmith.org).