



Montpelier Alive

• ENRICHING A VIBRANT DOWNTOWN •

PRESS RELEASE

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Montpelier Alive's Vision:
Montpelier is a vibrant
community center with a
thriving downtown and unique
sense of place.

WHAT'S NEW AT FIRST NIGHT MONTPELIER

Montpelier Alive's New Year's Eve festival celebrates with lanterns, disco, and puppets plus 89 hours of artists and activities in 14 downtown locations, from noon to 10 pm on December 31st

MONTPELIER – **WHAT'S NEW AT FIRST NIGHT MONTPELIER?** Montpelier Alive celebrates the friendly community of downtown Montpelier and the creative spirit of Central Vermont with First Night - the popular New Year's Eve Celebration. On the last night of 2010, we celebrate the First Night of 2011. Join us for a whole lot of fun things to do and great artists to experience.

HERE ARE FIVE HIGHLIGHTS...

Highlight #1:

GRAND OPENING WITH MARKO AND MR. WOODHEAD

Activities begin at 1:00 pm with a Grand Opening in City Hall's Arts Center. The mesmerizing and comedic talents of Marko the Magician and Wells & Woodhead lead a cast of celebrities helping us "cut the ribbon" for First Night 2011!

The first show feature ever popular **Marko the Magician** dazzling with prodigious feats of prestidigitation (that's magic for you and me) delivered with lots of laughs, in fact *Marko* is as much a Comedian as he is a Magician. He mystifies, entertains and makes the crowd laugh. Marko's magic transcends age, economic and social barriers, bringing people together through laughter and amazement. He has an uncanny ability to mystify and entertain all audience members at different levels at the same time. Performing since 1970, Marko makes every show an event to remember. There are always plenty of opportunities for audience participation. For more about Marko's performances, visit www.markomarko.com.

Following Marko is **Wells & Woodhead's Vaudeville Revue** a 90-minute variety show of comedy, juggling, music and mayhem. Wells & Woodhead aka: The Sons of Vaudeville! Wells (of Denmark) and Woodhead (Charlotte, VT) are world-renowned vaudevillians who have performed their masterful tricks (Wells) and bumbling earnestness (Woodhead) for appreciative audiences on 6 continents. Wells, guest celebrity on Jay Leno, Comedy Central and Prairie Home Companion, and Woodhead, the star of four award-winning family videos, team up to host this special all-star revue! Ricky Wells, fluent in four languages, is a Danish juggler with enormous dexterity and casual ease, while his partner Woodhead weaves a tapestry of chaos, slapstick and 'eclectic' music with the menacing uncertainty of a tornado. The signature grand finale is a one of a kind, frenzied, frenetic juggle montage using a consortium of absurd objects (chairs, guitars, bird cages, umbrellas, rubber chicken, etc.). Never two shows the same, expect the unexpected.

Highlight #2:

RE-BOP RECORDS CELEBRATES 21 YEARS

"Motor City Music for Minors" and More! Celebrating 21 Years of Re-Bop Kids

Marshfield's Re-Bop Records celebrates 21 years of bringing together outstanding Vermont musicians with an ever-revolving group of talented kids. Montpelier High's Smilie Auditorium will host a Re-Bop Family Concert, Alumni Showcase, plus concerts by Re-Bop friends Anais Mitchell and Tammy Fletcher. Smilie Auditorium is the site – our host is the Montpelier Public Schools; our sponsor is VSECU; our community partner is Montpelier's Rotary Club; our program is Re-Bop Records & Friends.

Re-Bop Records New Re-Bops Family Concert at 3 pm:

In the first show, Re-Bop Records delivers a full hour of hits, featuring Motown favorites and an entertaining story line, off its multi-award winning CD, "Motor City Music for Minors." Opening with **Gregory Douglass** singing his new holiday original, "Imagination," he and other accomplished former Re-Boppers will be joined on stage by the latest crop of Re-Bop kids to celebrate 20 years of fantastic family-friendly entertainment from Vermont's own independent children's music label. Special guests include television personality **Paul Zaloom**, who reprises his role of the gargling Re-Bop radio announcer from the "Motor City" recording, Central Vermont super-producer and musician **Colin McCaffrey**, who heads up the Re-Bop band line-up, and everyone's favorite Vermont diva, **Tammy Fletcher**. Essex Junction's **Evelyn Kwanza** slips into the shoes of the Singing Postperson--originally voiced by the incomparable Sandra Wright and performed on First Night in her memory--who dispenses words of wisdom to kids and dogs alike on her mail route. Motown classics such as "Please Mr. Postman" and "Stop! In the Name of Love" move the story along, and kid singers like 11-year-old **Allana Forti** cut loose on timeless tracks like "I'll Be There," "Think!," "ABC," and "I Want you Back." Audience participation is encouraged at the 3 p.m. show, which kicks off four hours of music for all ages presented by Re-Bop Records at Montpelier High School's Smilie Auditorium.

Anais Mitchell in Concert at 4 pm: A phenomenal singer-songwriter, Anais Mitchell has emerged as a brilliant poet and playwright with her folk opera *Hadestown*, released on Righteous Babe records in 2010. Based on the Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, *Hadestown* was written in collaboration with Michael Chorney and **Ben T. Matchstick**. Anais is also a regular collaborator with other First Night artists, appearing on albums by Gregory Douglass and Myra Flynn, and on **Re-Bop Records**.

Tammy Fletcher in Concert at 5 pm: Have you heard blue-collar soul? Tammy sings it, and Tammy Fletcher can sing...it's as simple as that. Her voice is extraordinary and she is truly an original soul singer. Deeply rooted in the American traditions, Fletcher is also a gospel singer in the vein of Mahalia Jackson and The Barrett Sisters. She has an uncanny ability to adapt to different genres and sing with ease, be it rock and roll or opera, country or the blues; she's done it all. For First Night Tammy presents a four piece acoustic group: Tammy on vocals, Dakota Foley on Mandolin and Guitar, Jim Pitman on Dobro, and Bob Hill on Guitar.

Re-Bop Records Young Alum Musicians Showcase at 6 pm: Since 1989, Re-Bop Records has been bringing together scores of outstanding Vermont musicians with musically motivated kids, both on stage and in the studio. Several of those early child recording-artists have gone on as young adults to their own impressive projects and careers in music. Re-Bop Records and Miss Demeanor Music proudly present Indie Bands with Re-Bop Roots. Performers include Max Bronstein-Paritz, Robinson Morse, Dan Ryan, Christiana Usenza, Jessamine Levine, and Heather Bartlett.

Highlight #3:

THE HUNGRY RAT REVUE LEADS THE CAST IN OUR UNDERGROUND CAFE

Among other new additions to the program are an "underground café" with The Hungry Rat Revue and Kris Gruen, plus a Poetry Slam and writing workshop led by Geof Hewitt.

Hungry Rat Revue with Kris Gruen: The Revue is a collaborative effort of emerging poets and musicians to bring poetry beyond the page and into the audience by meshing words with music and sound effects. Poet and teacher Kerrin McCadden and singer/songwriter Kris Gruen mentor this project. Youth + poetry + music = Hungry Rat Revue.

Kerrin McCadden: Kerrin's poetry has appeared in *American Poetry Review*, *Hunger Mountain*, *RATTLE*, *Poet Lore*, and others. She was a finalist for the 2010 Ruth Stone Poetry Prize, a semi-finalist for the "Discovery"/*Boston Review* 2010 Poetry Contest, the 2010 Ralph Nading Hill Award and the 2009 *RATTLE* Poetry Prize. She was nominated for *Best New Poets* 2010. She teaches Creative Writing at Montpelier High School and at The New England Young Writers' Conference at Bread Loaf.

Kris Gruen: Kris Gruen is a Vermont-based singer-songwriter often compared to Andrew Bird, The Arcade Fire, and The Decembrists. His ethereal mix of acoustic guitar, beautiful melodies, and lush harmonies is an undercurrent to poetic lyrics that reach far beyond average songwriting. Gruen has toured the US, sharing the stage with Sean Lennon, The Avett Brothers, Bishop Allen, Jesse Malin, Nicole Atkins, Anais Mitchell, The Bowmans & more.

Geof Hewitt Writers' Workshop & Poetry SLAM for All Ages

Poet, Teacher and Slam Champion Geof Hewitt will lead a workshop addressing IDEAS, HUMOR, POETIC FORMS, and of course SLAMMING. Exercises in metaphor, observation, rhythm, narrative and collaboration will stimulate the poet in everyone! Then join Geof in the Poetry SLAM - a lighthearted competition that is open to everyone, and can incorporate elements of storytelling, hip-hop and stand-up comedy. Audience members chosen at random act as judges. Bring original writing that you can read or recite in three minutes or less. Our "slam-master," Vermont slam champ Geof Hewitt, will provide modest prizes. *Hewitt's Guide to Slam Poetry and Poetry Slam* won the Mom's Choice award for poetry in 2008.

Highlight #4:

FIRST NIGHT CENTRAL AT CITY CENTER

City Center will be transformed into First Night Central - a convenient stop for buttons, information, volunteer check-in, glow necklaces, face painting, hat and lantern making, hot chocolate and our International Food Court. Folks can make fun stuff and dress up for the Parade of Lights and Disco! Or just take a break to relax and refresh.

Highlight #5:

PARADE OF LIGHTS & DISCO PARTY ARE THE FIRST NIGHT FINALE

The famous disco ball will dazzle from atop City Hall as Montpelier joins in celebrating the New Year with a fantastic Parade of Lights, Disco Party and Lantern Launch. Puppets, lanterns, drummers, dancers, torches, and fire spinners will join The Lantern Choir, our celebrity D.J. Don P, The Fire Organ, and a crowd of revelers in the spinning lights of the disco ball from 9:00 to 10:00 pm. Bring YOUR Light to First Night!

FIRST NIGHT BUTTONS ARE ON SALE NOW

ONE BUTTON GETS YOU EVERYTHING!

For one admission price, First Night button holders will have their choice of more than 89 hours of programming throughout the Capital City. Named one of the Top Ten Winter Events in Vermont, First Night Montpelier includes perennial favorites plus many exciting new artists and activities.

PERFORMERS OLD AND NEW include **favorites** such as Willem Lange, Burr Morse, No Strings Marionettes and Rob Mermin's Soap Bubbles Circus plus the Green Mountain Youth Symphony, the Vermont Philharmonic, The Wood's Tea Co. and a Lost Nation Theater Cabaret. **Newcomers** include Elisabeth von Trapp & The Blue Train, Paul Asbell, Myra Flynn & Justin Levinson, Bread & Bones, After the Rodeo, Lisa Piccirillo, and the hilarious Aardvark Malarkey.

A First Night button provides entry to The Vermont History Museum including a Noisemaker Workshop. Also to a Family Contra Dance with Old Sam Peabody, a dance with Nisht Geferlach Klezmer Band, and a Community Crostic Puzzle.

As in the past, button holders can take advantage of free ice-skating at the Central Vermont Civic Center, cross-country skiing at the Morse Farm Nordic Center, swimming at First in Fitness Berlin, and now Zumba at First in Fitness Montpelier.

First Night buttons are on sale at locations throughout Central Vermont. Buttons purchased before December 31 are \$12 for a single button and \$40 for a family pass (4 buttons). Buttons purchased the day of the festival will be \$15 for a single button and \$13 per button for groups of four or more. Children 3 and under are admitted free of charge.

MORE THAN 200 VOLUNTEERS are needed for button sales, set-up, clean-up and office help. There are positions for individuals, couples and families. In exchange for working a two-hour shift, volunteers receive a button for admission to all events plus a meal ticket for the First Night Cantina. Contact Charlene McCarney at 229-3228 or 485-8072 for information.

NATIONAL LIFE UNDERWRITES! The New Year's Eve celebration is presented by Montpelier Alive and underwritten by the National Life Group, with support from the City of Montpelier, and contributions from nearly 100 local businesses.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on First Night Montpelier including a list of button locations and a complete schedule of events, visit www.MontpelierAlive.org.

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