

Speaker 1: This Beth Smith. I'm going to interview Jean Hanfelt this morning at her home at 237 Shavano, and we're going to be talking about the Aspen concert series which became the Salida Concert Incorporated, and the historical things that have happened to make this an important part of the Salida community. How are you this morning Jean?

Speaker 2: I'm fine Beth, how are you?

Speaker 1: I'm doing great. What are we going to talk about?

Speaker 2: We're going to talk about the early history of Salida Aspen concerts.

Speaker 1: That's great.

Speaker 2: The contribution that they have made to Salida. I'm going to start out by explaining what the Salida Aspen concerts is. Salida Aspen concerts is a non-profit organization which was established in July 31, 1980 in the state of Colorado to bring live, serious music to Salida and its surrounding communities. The official name of the non-profit corporation is Salida Concerts Inc., although it is referred to as Salida Aspen concerts. The period of its duration is perpetual. The business affairs of the corporation are conducted by a board of directors which initially numbered 5, that number was later changed to 7, and much later 2 more board members were added for a total of 9 persons who currently serve on the board. The founders are listed in the articles of incorporation and include George Howerton, Raymond O. Hosford, Joe E. Lionelle, all from Salida, and Edgar B. Stern, S-T-E-R-N, and Janice Collins, C-O-L-L-I-N-S from Aspen, Colorado.

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In addition to its volunteer governing board of directors, the organization's concert committee volunteers which are recruited each spring are the working force. They sign up for jobs which include selling ads for the program book, distributing posters and rack cards. They sell tickets at the door, usher, meet the artists and the piano tuner, and host after-concert parties for the artists and their friends. These are just a few of the jobs performed by the volunteers. The board of directors contract with the secretary who's duties include bookkeeping, preparing all of the mailings and responding to special requests of the board incident to the smooth, effective, and economical operation of Salida Concerts Inc.

Speaker 1: Is that what you're doing right now?

Speaker 2: That's what I'm ...

Speaker 1: You're the secretary.

Speaker 2: That's what I'm doing right now, yes. In its 28-year history, 3 persons have held this position. The first one was Mynette Fagala who was secretary from 1983 through 1988. Her husband was named Bill, he worked for the US Soil. I think he

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[00:05:00] was their comptroller, and later on he worked at the Salida ... part of the Rockies Regional Medical Center. Bill also played a pretty important role in the Salida Aspen Concerts. He served as the accountant for the concerts until the computer age when accounting software programs became available, at which time I took over the operations of the accounting. Another secretary was Barbara Snyder who served from 1988 through 1989. I began my job in 1990 which I'm still serving as.

[00:06:00] Funding for the Salida Aspen Concert Series is through ad sales, contributions, and door sales. It is through the monetary generosity of the community that ticket prices can be held to a minimum. The price of tickets was raised in 2004 to \$8, 15 free tickets are made available to students at each concert on a first come, first served basis. 4 years ago, the board set up a scholarship committee to award scholarships to deserving music students in the amount of \$2000. The concerts are held at the John Held auditorium, except for the 1981 concert series season when the concerts were held at the United Methodist Church, and the reason that they were held at the UMC was because high school auditorium was being renovated and we were not allowed to use the facility that summer.

[00:07:00] How did the non-profit organization get its start? A single program in the summer of 1977 ushered in the first Aspen Music Festival concert in Salida. This one concert was sponsored by Joe E. Lionelle, vice president of US Soil, who envisioned a yearly series of Aspen concerts so that those persons living in our comparatively isolated community could hear the finest in music. Mr. Lionelle also reasoned that both Salida and Aspen would benefit. The Monarch String Quartet played to about 175 persons on Friday, July 22, 1977 at 8 o'clock PM at the Salida High School, giving the audience a rare opportunity to attend a classical music concert.

[00:08:00] What is the Aspen Music School and Festival? The Aspen Music School and Festival, Music Associates of Aspen Inc. referred to from now on as MAA had its origins in 1949 as part of the Aspen Institute for Humanity Studies. Today, the festival is recognized as one of the finest, if not the finest, combination music school and festival in the country where students of the highest caliber continue their training during the summer months. Approximately 700 students from around the world are chosen from over 2000 applicants, received applications, received each year. Many of them will become the performing stars of tomorrow. Many will join symphony orchestras and other musical groups throughout the country. The distinguished faculty members are recruited from the nations finest schools of music and most of the faculty members are fine performing musicians themselves. The festival is funded through student fees, ticket sales, and contributions. Federal grants have permitted them to organize the Chamber Orchestra and Conference on Contemporary Music. In 1977, Gordon Hardy was president and Dean of School and maintained an office in New York which was responsible for organizing the school and festival and various other programs.

[00:10:00] This office in New York City I think finally closed its doors in 2000. The person in

[00:11:00] charge of the New York office was also our program director, Robert Biddlecome. Robert Biddlecome would contact Salida in January to begin planning the concert series for the upcoming season, and he handled this out of the New York office. I think finally in 2000 because of the finances, financial situation, they finally closed the office in New York, but Robert Biddlecome did not return to Aspen for the summer of 2000.

[00:12:00] In 1977 as a result of a successful local program, MAA applied and received a grant from Colorado Council of the Arts and Humanities which enabled them to implement a pilot program which took music and lecture series to 4 small towns on the western slope. When the Colorado Council of the Arts and Humanities was formed in 1967, its Senate Bill read, "The general welfare of the state will be promoted by giving further recognition to the arts and humanities as a vital part of our culture and heritage, and as an important means of expanding the scope of our community life."

[00:13:00] Outreach began to pick up where the council left off. A population analysis which was conducted in 1977 covered 26 communities from around Colorado such as Steam Boat Springs, Grand Junction, Silt, and Salida which listed its population at 4355. Outreach had been a dream for MAA, and Salida was the first community to propose a series of MAA outreach. In 3 years, a 6-week concert series developed in Salida and was the model which MAA used to demonstrate the success of outreach. They also had outreach programs in Hardendale, Glenwood Springs, and I believe Grand Junction, but we are the only outreach program still in existence.

[00:14:00] In the year 2000, the board of directors and I made a trip to Aspen to talk to the President and CEO of MAA, Robert Harth, and he was very complimentary on the results that our community had achieved, expressing that we were the only outreach that financed our own series. He was interested in continuing the relationship.

[00:15:00] 6 concert series for summer 1978. The Salida Aspen Music Festival, Salida Concerts scheduled 6 concerts in 1978 with the financial support of US Soil, and the sponsorship of the Salida Heart of the Rockies Chamber of Commerce. Because of modest attendance and meager contribution, the burden of financial assistance rested with US Soil who transported the musicians to Salida and back to Aspen on their own Leer Jet plane piloted by Jerry Summers. US Soil also assumed most of the cost of the musicians housing. Considerable resistance was encountered from the local motels who claimed they could not afford to furnish free rooms during the busy summer tourist season. Dinners for the musicians were furnished at a discount by the Salida Inn which was owned by Will and Joan Thomas, still in our community. It was the consensus that there had not been adequate preparation for the 1978 season and that the publicity had not been well planned.

[00:16:00] The key players, Aspen, Colorado. Edgar B. Stern, Jr., Board Chairman, and Janice R. Collins, Business Director from the MAA were invaluable in their

pursuit to make this outreach succeed. Forrestt Miller, F-O-R-R-E-S-T-T, was the first outreach program coordinator of the Music Associates of Aspen, MAA, working with Salida. It became his job to transport artists from Aspen to Salida over Independence Pass, and that was no small feat in those early days, and to work out the logistics and arrangements for the artists. Now retired, he currently lives in New York City.

[00:17:00] Robert Biddlecome began creating the 6-week program for Salida Aspen concerts in 1980. The local audience knew him as a long-time member of the American Brass Quintet which he joined in 1963. Robert Biddlecome remained with the ABQ until 1980 and returned occasionally to Salida as a guest artist. He is an active performing musician and bass trombonist at the New York Ballet Orchestra and resides in New York City. While in New York City, communication began in January between Mr. Biddlecome and the Salida liaison to begin to put a concert series together. Upon his arrival in Aspen in mid-June, he served as Salida program director.

[00:18:00] Talking about the American Brass Quintet, the Quartet has been the longest running concert in Salida. Last year, 2 years ... In 2003 we celebrated their 25th anniversary of performing in Salida. They love coming to Salida and have become acquainted with a lot of the citizens.

Speaker 1: Salida enjoys having them come.

Speaker 2: Yes, they do.

Speaker 1: They're very popular.

Speaker 2: Yes, they are.

[00:19:00] The key players, Salida, Colorado. As a young man, Joseph E. Lionelle enjoyed attending classical concerts in Aspen and became a friend of board chairman, Edgar Stern of the Music Associates of Aspen. A Salida native, Mr. Lionelle was co-owner and vice president of US Soil and envisioned classical concert series in Salida. In 1977, he and Mr. Stern initiated the first Salida Aspen concert. Not only did Mr. Lionelle underwrite the Monarch String Quartet, but he flew them to Salida in the company jet. In subsequent years, he arranged and helped finance the summer concert series until it got on its own feet. Throughout those early years, he continued to transport the artists to Salida and took care of their hospitality. In 1980 when the Salida Concerts Inc. was formed, he became its first president. He and his wife Sheila were honored on the 25th anniversary of the Salida Aspen Concert series in 2001.

[00:20:00] Raymond O. Hosford and his wife, Henrietta, who are both artists, he painted in oils, she in water colors, retired to Salida from Chicago. He was hired by Joe E. Lionelle to work for US Soil and do their advertising. His one page ads in the program book stand as testimony to the beautiful art he created. Mr. Hosford's tireless work as coordinator of the Salida Aspen concerts from 1977 through

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1979 was conducive to the formation and development of the Salida Aspen Concert Series. The organization was incorporated in 1980 largely through his efforts. Mr. Hosford served on the board as secretary treasurer until 1983. He designed the first program book cover using the heart and the aspen leaf as a symbol of cooperation between the Aspen Music School and Festival and the Heart of the Rockies Chamber of Concert Sponsors. The red heart and the golden aspen leaf have become the logo for the Salida Aspen Concerts.

[00:22:00] Dr. George Howerton retired to Salida from Northwestern University where he had been Dean of the School of Music. He was a meticulous scholar and avid promoter of classical music. He proudly served on the board for 15 years and was the board's first vice president. He worked closely with Robert Biddlecome, Aspen program coordinator, to put together the 6-week concert series. Dr. Howerton wrote excellent program notes for the program book, drawing from his vast background in music and the volumes of material he had on hand. He and his wife, Alouise, loved to entertain, and during the Christmas holidays, the invited board and concert committee members to their Spanish-style adobe home on the mesa for food and drink. The Salida Aspen concerts remained dear to his heart, and during his declining years at the nursing home, he loved talking about the concert series.

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[00:24:00] Mr. Charles A. Melien spent 33 years with the Salida school system as coach, teacher, counselor, and superintendent. In addition to his many civic works, including the hospital board, Mr. Melien played a vital role in the Salida Aspen Concerts. Appointed to its board in 1982, he served as treasurer and fund raiser. He also served as board president for 9 years from 1984 until his death in 1992. Mr. Melien was adept at fund raising and always kept the concert series in the black. He began making lists of potential contributors early in the year, and prepared the letter and mailing lists for the secretary to type in final form. His one hour limitations on the length of board and concert committee meetings kept members on their toes. His wife Jane continues to support the concert series.

[00:25:00] Other key players. As the much loved and respected music director of Salida and Junior High School, Mr. John Held built a school program that achieved state-wide recognition. One of the events he initiated was Spartan Sparkles, a variety program in which the entire high school glee club had a part. He also started the singing Christmas tree with the Salida Choir. He served on the Salida Aspen Concerts Board from 1985 until his death in 1996. Mr. Held served as the liaison contact with the Aspen Outreach Coordinator. He and his wife, Mary, spent many Saturday afternoons waiting at home for a call from the Aspen artists since he made all of the arrangements for their rehearsals and stage presentation. He also met the piano tuner. Later on, the auditorium in Salida was named John Held Auditorium in honor of Mr. Held. His wife, Mary, moved to Iowa just recently, 2004, to be close to one of their children.

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A Colorado native, Howard Goff and his wife, Joannette, settled in the Arkansas Valley after he retired from MW Kellogg Company as a chemical engineer. His

[00:27:00] career took them abroad where they spent time in Germany and Africa. Serving 11 years on the board, Howard Goff brought sense of humor and creativity. As an amateur violin player, he was one of Alpine Orchestra's original members. An international engineer, Mr. Goff also brought a unique perspective to the board. It was he who designed the kiosk for the lobby. His ability to sell concert advertisements for the program book inspired many Buena Vista merchants to support our concert series.

3 other key players that I feel are important to be mentioned as part of the Salida Aspen Concert Series are Georgiana Smith, Jeff Snyder, and Lori Denoyer. They all served many years on the board and then held different positions. Hopefully, later on I can have some bios on these 3 people.

[00:28:00] Letters of affirmation, 1979. With the advent of the 1979 series, more preliminary planning and work was done. A loosely organized committee met several times and duties were assigned. US Soil was again obliged to furnish the preponderance of financial support, however, lodging and meals for the musicians were assumed by the Salida Concerts, and 6 families volunteered to entertain the musicians. Letters of affirmation were received by various local offices and/or individuals which have been made a part of this report because these letters still exist in the files.

[00:29:00] Mayor Edward Touber, T-O-U-B-E-R, wrote on August 31st that, "The concerts this year have been well received by the community and were a valuable cultural asset and filled a gap in the community affairs which needed to be filled." Attorney Alan Sulzenfuss wrote on August 21st that having attended the majority of the concerts he commented that, "The performances here were certainly as good as performances he had attended in Aspen proper." He thought the series were especially valuable for the elderly and the disadvantaged who cannot travel to Aspen, Denver, or to Colorado Springs to hear good music.

[00:30:00] Simonette C. Koenig, K-O-E-N-I-G, vice president of the Salida Juniper JC, Jaycettes, J-A-Y-C-E-E-T-T-E-S, wrote on August 31st that they are looking forward to promoting the concerts during the 1980's season. Dr. Andrew J. Kahan, programs director and Gail Kahan, MED, educational director of Salida's pre-school daycare center, known as the Strawberry Door, wrote on September 1 to extend their support and expressed that children would have the opportunity to experience and enjoy beautiful music. Reverend Edward A.

[00:31:00] Roofie of the Church of the Ascension wrote on September 1st to say that it has been a great source of pride and joy to have the pleasure of hearing the artists who have performed in Salida over the past several summers and hope that this series would continue on an even greater scale in the future. George Howerton, Dean Emeritus, School of Music, Northwestern University wrote on September 3rd 1979 to say what a great concert had been to the life of the surrounding area. He stated in this letter that he and his wife have been summer visitors annually since 1943 and property owners and summer residents since 1949. He felt that these concerts have been the most stimulating, cultural feature in all

the years that they have been coming here. As you probably heard earlier in my report, he became a very active board member.

[00:32:00] Resident Shannon Patterson wrote on September the 4th to say that the 1979 concerts have been very enjoyable and that she really appreciates the opportunity to enjoy the kind of music that is seldom performed outside the metropolitan cultural centers. President and chairman of the board of the Buena Vista Bank and Trust, Roy Bowen, B-O-W-E-N, wrote on September 4 to say that he had been associated with the series since its inception and felt that the Chaffee County Community greatly benefits from the concerts, and he would continue to support it. John Held from Held's Half Acre wrote to express his thanks to the Aspen Music Festival for bringing such excellence to our community. He went on to say that for 35 years he had maintained a fine high school choir in the public schools of Salida and that the Aspen concerts have provided a continuing experience for the young as well as for the old and encouraged the continuation of the series. He also became a board member, and you previously heard about Mr. Held's involvement in the concert series.

[00:33:00] Superintendent of Schools, C.L. Robertson wrote on September 10 to express his congratulations and to thank the Aspen Music Festival for the broad scope of programming and the excellence of artistry which was chosen. He goes on to say that, "From the standpoint of the public schools, this series of fine, classical musical productions fills an area of otherwise void exposure. Our curriculum offering in the arts leans more towards the contemporary. Consequentially, we are pleased that the opportunity exists whereby a wider spectrum of musical experience is available."

[00:34:00] Salida Concerts Inc. is established in 1980. Things began to look up in 1980, and the Salida Concerts was able to assume all expenses including meals, transportation, lodging for musicians, as well as printing, advertising, and other business costs. US Soil contributed office space and telephone and some clerical help. Through the efforts of Janice Collins, business director of MAA, and help from the Salida community, a grant was received in the amount of \$6000 from the Colorado Council for the Arts and Humanities. Legal steps were initiated to incorporate the Salida concerts as a tax-free entity, no longer under the wing of MAA. The original articles of incorporation were issued on August 14, 1980 to Salida Concerts Inc. by the Colorado Secretary of State on July 31, 1980. On June 29, 1981, a checking account was opened at Chaffee County Bank, now Community First Bank. That is the early history of the Salida Aspen Concerts.

[00:35:00] Speaker 1: Who in the community is very active now in putting the concerts together?

[00:36:00] Speaker 2: We have a new board of directors. Presently, David Clark, President. Virginia Imig, Corresponding Secretary, Russell Collin, Ad Sales Chairperson. Jennifer Davis from Buena Vista, County Attorney, I believe. Martin Ebel, Treasurer. Earl Kittleman, David Schultz, and Barbara Evans.

[00:37:00] Speaker 1: Now you're getting ready for the 2005 concert summer.

Speaker 2: Yes, we're getting ready for the 2005 concert series, after Robert Biddlecome's departure from MAA, the Aspen Music School and Festival assigned Debra Barnico, who is their program outreach coordinator to be our liaison. The board of directors and I met with Debra Barnico September 30th in Salida at the Century Hall of the United Methodist Church as a working luncheon meeting to discuss ideas for the 2005 concert series. With that in mind, she's going to start lining up the concert series for the upcoming season.

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Speaker 1: Well good. About how many people enjoyed the concert series last summer?

Speaker 2: We have ... I have records of attendance from 1978, and attendance has, I think been somewhat of a disappointment to some of the board members. That has always been discussed. Many things have been tried to up the attendance, but I think there is so much else going on in the community that we have not really met the goals, and yet we can't really complain because we average about 375 persons that attend the concert series weekly.

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Speaker 1: Many of those people come down from Buena Vista.

Speaker 2: Many of those people come from Buena Vista. We also have people coming from Canon City, and we've got some folks that come from Colorado Springs.

Speaker 1: Now over the last couple of years you've held one concert that goes to Buena Vista to be heard.

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Speaker 2: Yes, about 8 years ago, the board of directors at that time talked about having one of the concerts in Buena Vista for the sake of the persons living up on the northern end of the country. We decided to have one of the concerts in Buena Vista, and so I think we will probably be getting our 9th year next year. They have been very well attended, and we've received a lot of nice comments.

Speaker 1: I think that's great. What do you see for the coming years now? Are you got a good steam up? Are you ready to go and make these concerts continue?

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Speaker 2: I think it would be nice, and this 2005 will be our 29th concert series. A year later we will be celebrating 30 years. Hopefully, there seems to be a lot of interest in the community to continue these series because we are the only venue that continue to offer classical music.

Speaker 1: I know there's a lot of interest in the community. Can you think of anything else you want to tell us?

Speaker 2: We have had some wonderful contributors, wonderful supporters which this series would not exist without them. These are contributors that come through year after year after, and if it weren't for them, we could not afford to do a

[00:42:00] concert series. Aspen, excuse me, the Music Associate of Aspen charge an annual fee, and every year they increase this fee by \$500.

Speaker 1: How much was it for you last year?

Speaker 2: The fee last year was \$17500.

Speaker 1: The concert series here in Salida pays the whole thing?

Speaker 2: We pay the whole thing, yeah, so we operate on a budget which includes our advertising and other expenses. The program book is an expensive book, but the advertisers help pay for the program book.

Speaker 1: I think you certainly have the backing of the people of Salida.

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Speaker 2: We certainly do. We certainly do. We have contributors from Buena Vista, Salida, we got a contributor from Denver who, I think he went to school in Salida, Dr. Edwin R. Smith is a very generous contributor, and we appreciate the support that he and his wife, Vicky, give us year after year.

Speaker 1: That's good. Can you think of anything else to add?

Speaker 2: I can't think of anything else. I just hope that this series will continue and that the community will continue to support it.

Speaker 1: I hope so too. Thank you very much for talking to us about the Aspen Concert Series.

Speaker 2: You're welcome, Beth. Did I run out of tape?

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Speaker 1: I don't think so. I think we're through. No we're not.