

## Review of 11/19/23 Mel Dalton Concert at the Harrington Opera House

By Jeri' Kanally

The Harrington Opera House audience was caught up and whisked away by Mel Dalton's "Adventurous Americana" story time! What a fantastic trip it was! Mel is a very talented singer-songwriter from Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Her guitar and singing performance touched all of our senses. She sang stories that had very vivid, picturesque themes. The rich tones and textures of Mel's voice and her emotionally interpretive singing style, carried us along as we traveled with her.

Most of her songs were beautifully decorated with images of nature. We envisioned those places and all the characters in her stories coming to life in our imagination. Some of the characters in her songs re-emerged from our own memories of loving, longings and losses. Other figures were strangers we longed to meet. Her dynamic singing voice and dramatic facial expressions mirrored her stories to perfection. We were completely captivated by her charisma!

Mel has a very powerful and tender way of putting her audience in places and situations that fill us with love, romance, joy, freedom and hope. On the flip side, she made us uncomfortable and sorrowful with her more brooding, boozy, dark and tragic tunes. She can sing her stories in a way that's very light, airy, and soft, or she can thunder up some gritty, gravelly, assertive singing, while strumming and drumming her guitar. Impressive!

During many of Mel's songs, she surprised and amazed us with the most beautiful and ethereal whistling. Her soulful whistling had a purpose. It gave us a pause in her stories, a break in the action, wistful moments of calm that helped us gently process what we were envisioning. Brilliant choreography!

At one point in the concert, she must have noticed how thoroughly engaged we were. After a rousing round of our applause, she paused, seemed surprised, and thanked us for being so attentive and focused on her. Well, we didn't want to disengage from her excellent renditions of adventure! We were totally caught up in her stories and transfixed by her performance!

When Mel's very rich and colorful concert ended, I felt as though we had all shared in some ups and downs of life together. It gave me a feeling of collective intimacy, connectedness and camaraderie. It was surprisingly therapeutic and healing for me. Perhaps that kind of growth can only happen in a live performance with the real life energy and frequencies of those all around us. In the past few years we've been discouraged from gathering. That feeling still lingers. Filling the Harrington Opera House, or anywhere else, can ground us all together with unity and healing. Mel Dalton did that. Bravo! Thanks Mel! I'd go anywhere with you!

Check out Mel's music at [meldaltonmusic.com](http://meldaltonmusic.com). For more information on the beautiful and nostalgic Harrington Opera House, please visit [harringtonoperahouse.org](http://harringtonoperahouse.org).