

## Profile of Sheilah Rae, Lyricist/Librettist and Innovator



By Anne Hamilton, M.F.A.

Sheilah Rae, a singer, songwriter, and recording artist, works all over the country. She is also a lyricist and librettist whose two musicals *FUNNY, YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE A GRANDMOTHER* and *I MARRIED WYATT EARP* were recently produced at the Bristol Riverside Theatre on the Delaware in Lower Bucks County.

Sheilah's first experience at BRT came in 2003 with a production of *GRANDMOTHER*, based on the #1 NY Times

bestselling book by Lois Wyse. Co-written by Wyse, and with music by Robert H. Waldman, the humorous, heartwarming revue looks at grandmothers in a whole new light.

"Bristol Riverside is a dream theatre," says the Westchester County, NY resident. "It's gorgeous, and at 300 seats, it's a dream size for new work. The grounds surrounding it are beautiful. And it's close enough to New York to draw top talent."

She gives a great deal of credit to Founding Producing Director Susan Atkinson, who directed the piece. "The theatre balances its season and includes both new work and tried and true plays. I would go back there in a heartbeat if I had something new to develop. They give it all their heart," says Rae. She has just gotten a publishing deal with Samuel French, which will be able to reach many more theatres with the revue.

Rae returned to BRT in 2005 with *I MARRIED WYATT EARP* (Lyrics by Rae, Book by Rae and Thomas Edward West, and Music by Michele Brouman).

The all-women musical set in Tombstone, Arizona, features Josie, widow of legend Wyatt Earp, and Allie, widow of Wyatt's brother Virgil. A Jewish woman, Josie left her well-to-do family in San Francisco to join a travelling production of *H.M.S. PINAFORE*. She ended up one of very few women in Tombstone, and in love with Earp to boot. Artistic Director Edward Keith Baker helmed the musical.

The unique story of the women's lives is told through their own eyes, and highlights their contribution to the development of the West. "Josie was provocative and gorgeous," says Rae. Graciela Daniele recently directed a reading of *EARP* with the New York Theatre Barn in NYC which starred Tovah Feldshuh.

Rae also conceived the idea of an exhibition on women designers which found fruition in the New York Public Library's, "Curtain Call: Celebrating a Century of Women Designing for Live Performance". This landmark exhibit at Lincoln Center, co-sponsored by the League of Professional Theatre Women, will close on May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

"As theatre people, we look at things that are happening in a different way," Rae reveals. "We're forced to view the world freshly and it keeps us young."

Anne Hamilton, principal of Hamilton Dramaturgy, has eighteen years of experience in the professional theatre in New York City. *STAGE DIRECTIONS* magazine named

her a trailblazer in her field. She is an award-winning Columbia University graduate and teaches at Muhlenberg College.

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## Time Travel Novel Mirrors a Writer's Life



By: Linda Wisniewski

Carmen Ferreiro-Esteban loves to tell a story. Her young adult novel *Two Moon Princess* takes readers to places and events from the author's life in her birthplace of Galicia, Spain, and her travels to California as a young woman. Born in a land thought in medieval times to be "Finisterre," the place where the world comes to an end, the author time travels her characters through a stone arch just like one on Spain's Cathedral Beach, an area with a Celtic history and green hills and fog reminiscent of Ireland. Ferreiro-Esteban

found another arch like it on Northern California's Goat Road Beach, and uses both in her story.

Andrea, the headstrong princess of the title, is a version of the ugly duckling, born in the wrong place and time, not fitting in with her peers. Longing to be a knight, she has many adventures traveling between medieval Spain and modern California.

Ferreiro-Esteban says she pretended to read to her children from their books but found them so boring she made up her own stories. After moving to Bucks County fifteen years ago, she studied for two years with the Institute for Children's Literature and attended the Chatauqua conference on children's writing with the Highlights Foundation.

Ferreira-Esteban has published nonfiction articles and four books for high school students through Chelsea House books. She also translates and writes press releases for pharmaceutical companies. After earning her PhD in

biology from the University of Madrid, she worked for ten years as a researcher in Spain and California.

This author says she has found young adults to be "a more receptive audience. I write the kind of story I like to read, the coming of age story," she says. "And the letters I receive from readers of that age are so open and intense."

For would-be writers, her advice is simple and direct: "If you want to, you can!" She points out that English was not her first language and she almost gave up trying to learn it well. Still, she persevered in following her dream. "I don't listen to 'I can't,'" she says with a laugh. "My daughter says I am stubborn, but I prefer persistent." Indeed, her daughter thinks Andrea, the *Two Moon Princess*, has many of the author's personality traits.

The Doylestown mother of two has found Bucks County "a wonderful place to raise children because of the strong feeling of community."

Visit her website at [www.carmenferreiroesteban.com](http://www.carmenferreiroesteban.com) and watch the book trailer at [www.youtube.com/user/cferreiroesteban](http://www.youtube.com/user/cferreiroesteban). *Two Moon Princess* is published by Tanglewood Press and can be ordered at any bookstore or from Amazon.com. A sequel called *The King in the Stone* is forthcoming.

Linda C. Wisniewski is a writer and teacher of memoir workshops. She is available to speak to groups about the healing power of writing. Her book, *Off Kilter*, can be ordered through Amazon, your local bookstore, or the publisher at [www.pearlsong.com/offkilter.htm](http://www.pearlsong.com/offkilter.htm). Visit Linda's website at [www.lindawis.com](http://www.lindawis.com) or call her at 215-297-5104.



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