

New show focuses on a quest for ‘inner peace’

By Megan Bennett / Journal North Reporter

Friday, August 25th, 2017 at 12:02am



Analesa Berg said she was called by God to solitude and creating drawings based on the Hebrew alphabet. Her drawings include with references to other religions in addition to Judaism, like Hinduism and Christianity.

SANTA FE, N.M. — It was in Santa Fe where Analesa Berg had an “aha” moment that dramatically changed her life, and it’s where she’ll return to tell her story in her upcoming one-woman show.

Berg’s “The 23rd Letter,” opening tonight, tells the story of her life after she decided to file for divorce 30 years into her marriage and how she searched to find the peace she desired.

Her tale involves dreams, hearing from God, learning the Hebrew alphabet, mystical teachings and turning to art.



Analesa Berg, a New Jersey native who lived briefly in Santa Fe, is returning to perform her one-woman show “The 23rd Letter.”

“I really hope people say, ‘If she can go out and do one of these things, I can go out and be more courageous or go out and find my own inner peace,’” said Berg. “I want people to be inspired to live their lives more courageously, peacefully and spiritually.”

It wasn’t Berg’s history with Santa Fe that led her to have the show here and not in her hometown of West Orange, N.J.

It was experience with local personal storytelling coach Tanya Taylor Rubenstein, who Berg hired to help mold the story and script, that brought her back.

Rubenstein said they began working together a year ago after Berg, who describes herself online as a “spiritual counselor and transformational artist,” decided she wanted to tell her story through a one-woman show.

Rubenstein believes people will relate to and appreciate Berg’s feminist perspective about a “patriarchal” religion. “It’s a woman’s story of awakening,” said Rubenstein. “It’s a story of a woman who has struggled, shed some old skin, and steps into a more creative and inspiring place ... I think that will speak to a broad range of women.”

Berg, a Jewish New Jersey native and mother of two, had moved around several times with her husband and eventually ended up in Santa Fe for about a year before deciding she wanted a divorce.

Then, she says, she received a calling from God that led her to spend time in solitude looking at the Hebrew alphabet – something she had never learned as a kid – and to create art inspired by it. She spent 21 days drawing most of the letters and another nine days in silence a few months later finishing up the project, which is now part of her show.

Berg took the calling, she says, because after going back to school for classes in transpersonal psychology – a branch that utilizes spiritual teachings, as well as scientific ones – around 2000, she began to trust her inner guidance and started to pursue artistic interests again.

She tells the story of Moses, who broke the tablets on which the 10 Commandments were written and only 22 pieces came back. The 23rd piece was lost. According to Berg, it is said that when the last piece is found, humankind will have peace – hence the title “The 23rd Letter.”

She wanted to create her own final letter after drawing her own renditions of the first 22 – “my own inner peace,

if you will,” she said. Berg said 23rd letter came to her in a dream and she will display it during the performance.

She traced the Hebrew alphabet on different sheets of paper and began turning them into her own “mystical, interspiritual symbols.” While they’re based on the Hebrew letters, they also include symbols from elsewhere, including Hinduism and Christianity, as well as Native American and Egyptian cultural symbols.

The show includes her acting out her experiences, telling Biblical stories and singing. It incorporates messages directed to all women about acknowledging generational patterns with relationships, which Berg said she fell into as she stayed in her marriage like her mother had done before her.

Her show delves into Jewish mystical teachings, like those in Kabbalah. But because there are so many different backgrounds represented, Berg said, most of the people interested in her work aren’t even Jewish. “My background is all about bringing different people from different cultures together,” she said.

Viewers are attracted to how the letters and symbols make them feel, she said. “It doesn’t matter if you hold it upside down,” said Berg. “It’s the energy, the symbol of it.”

if you go

WHAT: “The 23rd Letter”

WHEN: Tonight and Saturday, 8 p.m.

WHERE: Railyard Performance Center, 1611 Paseo De Peralta

TICKETS: General admission, \$12. Purchase at brownpapertickets.com or at the door

Contact the writer.