**Ziegler, O’Riley thrill crowd with piano concert**

By SHARIE PYKE

**For The Outpost**

Vaughn, a small town 145 miles southwest of Helena, Two to Tango played the Alberta Bair again.

“How many dancers were there?” a friend asked me. “None,” I replied. What she means is that you wouldn’t be able to see much of the piano itself, the piano being swaddled in glitzy sequins and gorgeous makeup. The audience was almost as beautiful as the performers.

The group consisted of four pianists, two men and two women. The men are Pablo Ziegler and Darren Johnstone; the women are Rachel Mason and Doug Doherty. From their own repertoires, they played for about 90 minutes. The program began with a piece by Ziegler, his own composition, “Milonga en el Estudio.”

This kind of evocative description is a hallmark of Budewitz’s writing. She doesn’t rely on numbers and facts, but instead paints a picture of the setting and engaging mystery.

The notes slid into each other on an otherwise empty stage. I especially liked Mr. Ziegler performing his own composition, “Milonga en el Estudio.” The notes were wistful and nostalgic, that kind of sighing, looking back, when you know you can never go back. The music did occasionally move and sway, undetermined, looking for the right words to write down. It slunk in, wet and soggy, reeking at the start of Chapter 26:

“This is due in large part to Budewitz’s description of setting and engaging mystery. These discussions are thoughtful without being preachy and without distracting from the mystery that is the central thrust of the novel.”

Speaking of which, the mystery itself is quite good enough with twists and turns to keep you guessing to the end. If you’re a fan of the genre, this is a solid pick.

In fact it’s so solid that I can’t find much to criticize. I do have some minor quibbles. For example, the random spice-related fun facts at the beginning of each chapter seem out of place as do the 12 pages of recipes at the end of the book. Also, a romantic subplot doesn’t add much to a novel that already feels a bit too long.

Overall though, this book is a solid entry to the mystery genre thanks to Budewitz’s great descriptions, evocative setting and engaging mystery.

**Killer**: Too much yoga

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Of course, some characters are more memorable than others. My particular favorite was “Dale Evans, Goat Rustler and Attorney-at-Law.” This folky defense attorney is a clever character who isn’t utilized nearly enough here. I would love to see more of him in Webber’s future “Downward Dog Mysteries.”

For all of the fun the book provides, it isn’t without its faults. Most notably among these is that the story’s central mystery is drawn out for way too long. I had to put this book “downout” about 100 pages before Kate did.

Another problem is that numerous sections feature lengthy descriptions of people doing yoga. Weber obviously has a passion for yoga, but for readers like me who are not as interested in this practice, these sections drag on for too long and divert attention from the central plot.

Despite all of this, “A Killer Retreat” still makes for a lighthearted escapist read. If you’re looking for a fun getaway for a couple of days, you should definitely consider traveling with Kate to Elyssian Springs.