STOWE — When three of Vermont’s best pop and jazz singers come together, the result can only be positive. Add three of the state’s finest jazz instrumentalists, and it only gets better.

That’s just what happened Saturday when the Blue Gardenias — singers Amber deLaurentis, Juliet McVicker and Taryn Noelle — performed an intimate holiday concert at the Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center. They were joined by pianist Tom Cleary, bassist John Rivers and drummer Caleb Bronz in a traditional jazz concert that turned out to be excellent.

Opening with the 1944 hit tune, “Sentimental Journey,” it was clear that these three ladies could sing well and beautifully together. McVicker has the lightest voice of the three, which she uses with finesse. DeLaurentis has direct power and amazing skill. Noelle, with the richest voice, is somewhat chameleon-like in her ability to sound like different people.

Much of Saturday’s program was traditional fare, like “Jeepers, Creepers,” “I’ll Be Home For Christmas” and “Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire.” While there wasn’t anything unusual about the arrangements, they were excellent and beautifully performed.

It didn’t hurt that Cleary is a fine jazz pianist with not only a beautiful touch but also a natural improvisational ability. He is co-director, with his wife deLaurentis, of the UVM Jazz Vocal Ensemble and a member of UVM’s jazz faculty. He is also known in the area for music directing in many productions at Saint Michael’s Playhouse.

Noelle is perhaps the most diverse of the group, with plenty of professional credits as dancer and actress as well as a singer. Her performance of Cole Porter’s “Baby, It’s Cold Outside,” with Cleary, was witty and seductive.

McVicker employed her lyrical voice and theatrical abilities to deliver Johnny Cash’s macabre “Long Black Veil” with wit and charm. Cleary and deLaurentis were full of holiday warmth in Mel Tormé and Bob Wells’ 1944 “The Christmas Song,” better known as “Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire.”

Saturday’s show was more than a stringing along of songs. Adding drama, a
story about famed criminal “Pretty Boy” Floyd and his women was employed as a conceit for several songs. Music also went far beyond the usual jazz favorites, even including some rock ‘n’ roll from Ike and Tina Turner. In a tender holiday moment, deLaurentis’ parents, both musicians, joined their daughter on stage.

Saturday’s Blue Gardenias was an entertaining and richly musical experience.

Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center

Peak VTartists presents Scrag Mountain Music in an interactive program of classical music with Clockwise at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 27, at Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center, 122 Hourglass Road in Stowe. Tickets are $30, $25 in advance; call 760-4634, or go online to www.sprucepeakarts.org.