

GUYS & DOLLS and BABY

July 18-August 16
The Hult Center, Eugene.

Ed Ragozzino directs
two magnificent musicals!

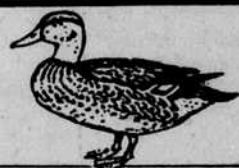
"... simply fabulous... You could pay a lot more to see this in a bigger city, but you couldn't get more value for your money."

—Paul Denison, Eugene Register-Guard

"... crisply paced, visually dazzling... outshines even Broadway road-show musicals that drop into town."

—Bob Hicks, The Oregonian

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THEATRE

Games of Gold in Historic Oakland

by Jim Stiak

Nestled in the fir-green hills of Douglas County 45 miles south of Eugene is the small community of Oakland. A quarter century ago, when the mill that employed most of the area's workers shut down, Oakland felt a jolt common to timber towns throughout the Northwest. The townsfolk's response to that jolt, however, was anything but common.

In 1968, Oakland moved to retain its frontier flavor by becoming the first city in Oregon to pass an Historic Preservation Ordinance. Today, the entire main street is on the National Register of Historic Places. The Carriage Works, manufacturers of horse-drawn buggies, has gained national recognition. The Pringle House, a converted 1893 Victorian residence, attracts guests from far beyond Oakland's lush valley. And inside the Washington School, renovated completely by volunteers, the Oakland Gaslight Players this summer present their third year of old-time melodrama.

This theater troupe is the offspring of artistic director Joe Quinn, who also started the community theater in Roseburg. Quinn, formerly with the Seattle Opera, designed the original stage set for the world premiere of Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. He is, says Gaslight's theater director Hank Botwinik, "a master old-world craftsman," bringing almost-forgotten skills to the 1980's. He designs costumes, sets, and his four-colored hand-printed silk-screen posters are whimsically handsome reminders of an era long before laser printers and MacPluses.

"The SUCCESS attending this GREAT ROMANTIC DRAMA at its initial production when it was received with UNBOUNDED APPLAUSE, unprecedented in the HISTORY of the STAGE, has induced the MANAGEMENT to Spare No EXPENSE in this reproduction."

(reads one poster)

This year's offering, which will run every Friday and Saturday in August, is *Deadwood Dick* or *The Game of Gold*. Based on another great American art form, the dime novels of the 19th century, the play is set in Deadwood, in the wild Dakotas, during the Gold Rush Days. It features a predominantly young, somewhat inexperienced cast, generally accompanied by an occasional miscue, forgotten line, and an audience that loves it. The humor is unremitting as winter rains, if cornier than Nebraska. All the action occurs in and around Calamity Jane's "Man-Trap Saloon," where Skull Varnish is the soup de jour, and Sheriff Loveless always gets his man.

Eventually, the Gaslight Players hope to evolve into a "summer-long melodrama theater," says Botwinik, but this year you'll have but ten chances to catch the curtain rise at 8 pm. Director Hank, recently returned from an engagement with Marcel Marceau, will also perform mime on Thursday nights. The second and third weeks he will be accompanied by guest artists from California, and the fourth week will be with Jesse Nazareth's video extravaganza.

Theater-goers are advised to visit Tolly's, an old-fashioned parlor with the best ice cream this side of Sutherlin, before the show. Asked if all this culture was unparalleled in the western world, Judge Nix—all the law there is in Deadwood—could only give his standard response: "More or less, and a bit more of less than less of more." It's a comment heard often on weekend nights in downtown Oakland.

WAITING october 8

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