

DEXTER THEATRE

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According to Scott Varley, stage and production manager, the theater is an alternative to the bar scene in Eugene. "Bars are exclusive by their nature," says Varley. "We're interested in providing the community with a performing arts center. The theater gives people an activity other than liquor."

Besides excluding anyone under 21, something ODT is determined not to do, bars are not conducive to creativity, so the theater staff believes. They are confident that ODT's "living room" atmosphere provides a comfortable setting in which performers can express their artistic individuality.

For inspiration, artists can use the rolling hills of the Willamette Valley that provide a tranquil backdrop for the white frame theater. Though the exact history of the theater is obscure, it has been used as a moviehouse and possibly as a skating rink. John Alum of Dexter owns the theater, and it was his son, Bob, who rescued it from being turned into a garage.

The inner theater has a character all its

own. Picture yourself standing on the diameter line of a huge circle. The curved ceiling rises high above and gives the interior a spacious quality. The colors are lively, and the eye instinctively roves from one unique object to another. Posters and masks are reminiscent of theater days gone by. There is a built-in stage, and the acoustics of the theater are excellent, according to Jan Currie, theater manager. The Morning Glory Cafe, which is connected to the theater, is also managed by the ODT staff. While it is now open only during shows, home-style meals will be served during daytime hours in the near future.

Though some interior improvements are planned for the future, limited resources dictate procrastination in that area. At this time, all proceeds are derived from ticket sales. "We're running on a fishing line budget," states Currie bluntly. "A shoestring is definitely too fat." Any profit made since the theater opened in July has been used for supplies or minor renovations. Fortunately, community support has been good and Currie has hopes that grants will be available for future improvements.



Jan Currie, Darby Stolt, Laurie Mahon and Scott Varley are part of the dedicated core that has brought The Olde Dexter Theatre back to life.



A solitary trumpeter heralded the appearance of Reverend Chumleigh last Saturday as a flurry of people streamed through the Theatre's main doors.

One reason local residents have been so supportive is that ODT staff members have demonstrated their concern for the environment as well as for the arts. The theater worked in conjunction with the Dexter Fire Department on an energy fair. They also sponsored a benefit variety show for the community energy bank. The theater is obviously not a "get rich quick" scheme, rather a sincere attempt to provide a needed service for the Dexter area.

Some of the weekly activities offered at the theater are classes in ballet (Monday, 7:30 p.m.), Tai Chi (Tuesday, 5 p.m.), modern dance (Wednesday, 7 p.m.) and square dance (Thursday, 7:30 p.m.). Also, Wednesday is "open mike" night during which anyone is welcome to sing, play an instrument, read poetry or do whatever moves them to creativity.

Concerts and special performances are held on weekends. The theater has presented Slow Buck, Prince Gabriel's Fleet, comedian Ron Brown, and a variety of other entertainment. Saturday, Reverend Chumleigh and Brodie, Dog of the Future, were special guests of the theater. An early American folk dance, complete with all the accoutrements of a bluegrass good time, is a monthly event.

Slow Buck will again be featured at the end of October, and a "Come As You Aren't" party is planned for Oct. 29. The theater staff also hope to sponsor more activities for children in the near future.

ODT is a progressive enterprise with an

old-fashioned ideal. "I saw so much lack of quality being promoted," says Nora Sage Murray. "Why shouldn't someone promote quality?" If dedication to a cause has anything to do with success, the theater's future is secure.

The theater crew, Jan, Nora, Laurie, Paula, Scott, Darby and Bob are sensitive to life, nature and man as a natural being. Their concern has led them to establish the Olde Dexter Theatre as a sanctuary for the creative spirit.

By Judy Petree/Photos by Greg Weed



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