

Thirty-wonderful years of 'Shanghaied'



Bill Carr kisses the arm of ChrisLynn Taylor during a rehearsal of "Shanghaied in Astoria."



From left: Ashley Kacate, Angela Lister, Jaime Baird and Jessica Villiard, give their best Uff Daa on stage.



The cast of "Shanghaied in Astoria" lets out a cheer on stage.

Local thespians are hamming it up again. The original, infamous, historical, hysterical melodramatic musical hilarity of "Shanghaied in Astoria" — in its 31st year — opens Thursday, July 9 and runs through Sept. 12 every Thursday, Friday and Saturday at the Astor Street Opry Company Playhouse.

"We like to say, this is our Thirty-Wonderful time to produce this show," said director Nate Bucholz from the rehearsal stage last week. "And this year we've had 45 come out for auditions. It's an amazing turnout!"

How do they do it, year after year? According to Bucholz, "It's because we have so much fun — everybody wants to be a part of that."

Part vaudeville, part soap opera, and part 1950s-style Hollywood musical, "Shanghaied in Astoria" has a little something for the whole family. The show, refined and perfected over the decades, is the longest-running local theater production west of the Rocky Mountains. It incorporates local legend and tom-foolery with a dedicated and talented cast of both fresh faces and old-hands.

A cast of thousands

Included in the lineup this summer are Bill Carr, Jason Hippert, Marcus Brown, Mark Galbraith, Dave Bergquist, LaMar Blackner, Deac Guidi, Oscar Morales de Leon, ChrisLynn Taylor, Lexi Blacksten, Makayla Mestrich, Dena Tuveng, Ashley Mundel, Josh Mendenhall, Tim Murphy, Jon Osborn, Elsa Nethercot, Zack Sandoval, Stephanie Osborn, Eric Bredleau, Ron Woltjer, Timothy Mendenhall, Charlotte Mendenhall, Jordan Griffin, Haley West, Ashley Rowles, Austin Brown, Ellen Kachel-Bewley, Kimberly Waltemate, Arlene Holmes, Rosalina Fallin, Crystal Neher, Sara Berner, Jamie Baird, Ali Craig, Josiah Haynes, Calvin Roy, Mae Loya, Christena Jones, Kylie

Jones, Jessica Villiard, Ashley Cate, Aliyah Craig, Darlene Van Auken and Playhouse band members Phil Morrill, David Bennett and Bill Brookes.

The show runs every weekend all summer, and that's a bit hard for folks, so the large cast means that actors swap parts during the run. "We do a lot of rehearsing," Bucholz continues. "We'll run a scene, and then we'll switch it out and do the same scene with a different set of actors. It's a little time consuming, but everyone gets a chance to rehearse their parts."

"I can hear them on stage right now — they're warming up their voices."

Fresh faces

"I'm just trying to figure out where to put all the women!" Bucholz says with a laugh.

When asked what's new this year, what exactly has been tweaked for public consumption, he is coy. "Well, we've got four Virginias this year, every one of them great. There are two new ones — Ashley Rowles, a total newbie to our stage and Lexi Blacksten, a veteran of three years but new to the Virginia role. And Jordan Griffin is playing Eric for the first time this year. Then we have Kimberly Waltemate from the Long Beach Peninsula — it's the first time she's acted with us.

"Everybody is enthusiastic about this year's show — we're going to have a really good time," Bucholz says. "But I can't tell you everything, you know; we have a keep a few secrets. You'll just have to come out and see for yourselves what's new this year."

If you are one of the unlucky people who have not yet seen this example of community-building creativity, this may be the year you just give in and hoof it over to the ASOC Playhouse, 129 W. Bond St., for a North Coast phenomenon.

Be ready to laugh, cry, cheer for the heroes and heroines, and boo the baddies. A good time is guaranteed for all.

'Shanghaied in Astoria'

7 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday, July 9 to Sept. 12

Box office opens at 6 p.m.; doors open at 6:30 p.m.

2 p.m. Sunday, July 19, Aug. 16 and Sept. 6

Tickets are \$17 to \$21 and can be purchased online at www.astorstreetycompany.com or by calling 503-325-6104

Seats can also be purchased at the door one hour before each show, but reservations are recommended

Be sure to ask about group and family rates and senior and child discounts

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