

THREE PLAYS ONE NIGHT

TIMOTHY GARVIN

Manzanita resident switches gears from being Adam in the first act's "The Diary of Adam and Eve," pictured, a king and father in the second act, and a member of the ensemble in the third act.



The Coaster Theatre's new musical 'The Apple Tree' challenges a small cast but promises fun for audience

Story by NANCY MCCARTHY

Those attending "The Apple Tree" at the Coaster Theatre Playhouse may think they are about to see one play in three acts.

Actually, though, they will see three plays in one night.

Opening March 4, "The Apple Tree" runs through April 16. Friday and Saturday shows start at 7:30 p.m., and Sunday matinees on March 20 and April 3 begin at 3 p.m.

"The Apple Tree" is a trio of mini musicals about love, secrets and choices ranging from the beginning of time with Adam and Eve, through the Middle Ages and ending in a 1960s New York fantasy.

Taken from Mark Twain's "Extracts From Adam's Diary," the first act, "The Diary of Adam and Eve," reveals heretofore unknown details about the world's first couple: their meeting, courtship, their children and, oh yeah, how the whole bite-of-the-apple drama came about.

"It's very much a 'Women are from Venus and Men are from Mars' thing before the book was written," said Patrick Lathrop, who directs the play. Lathrop also is the Coaster Theatre's executive director.

"The Lady Or the Tiger," originally taken from a story by Frank R. Stockton, is a rock 'n' roll study of jealousy and revenge set in a mythical barbarian kingdom, where a choice could mean life or death. Just what — or who — is behind door No. 1 and door No. 2?

This act is a favorite for actor Jean Rice "because it has a tiger in it." Not only is Rice fond of tigers, she gets to play the tiger.

"Passionella," is based on Jules Feiffer's Cinderella-story about a chimney sweep who dreams of being a glamorous movie star and nearly ruins her chance to find true love. "Elvis Presley" makes a brief appearance, complete with guitar.

"It's a girl's fantasy come to life," said Aaron Harris, who plays the "Elvis" character, known in the play as "Flip."

"The Apple Tree" was written by Sheldon Harnick and Jerry Brock, who also wrote the Broadway favorites "Fiddler on the Roof" and "She Loves Me."

The challenge for the cast's 10 members is to take on different roles in each of the plays. Lisa Fergus plays the leads — Eve, Princess Barbara and Ella — in all three acts. How does she switch personalities — and musical styles — so quickly? It's not easy, she admitted.

"I'm working on it," said Fergus during a rehearsal. She also must play different ages, as she goes from being a "newborn" to an elderly woman in "The Diary of Adam and Eve."

"A lot of it is the costumes," created by Judith Light, Fergus said. With each — and sometimes very quick costume change — comes a change in personality.

Timothy Garvin is another actor who must switch gears from being Adam (Eve's love interest) in the first act, a king and father to Fergus's Barbara in the second act, and a member of the ensemble in the third act.

Along with personality switches and costume changes, each of the three acts produces different emotions, Garvin noted.

"In 'Adam and Eve,' there is laughter and silliness. In 'Lady or the Tiger?,' there is deception and some sadness, and 'Passionella' has an upbeat, fairytale feel," he said.

With a variety of musical styles to master, the small ensemble is being led by music director Mont Chris Hubbard, of Portland. Hubbard has extensive experience writing and directing musical scores and is the creator of a Portland musical variety show as well as three CDs.

This is the Coaster's first spring musical. Although the theater usually produces a

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Submitted photos by George Vetter/Cannon-Beach.net

Husband and wife Aaron and Jessica Harris are performing at the Coaster for the first time. In addition to playing Flip, an Elvis-like character in the third act's "Passionella," pictured, Aaron also is Sanjar, the young captain who must make a choice in "The Lady or the Tiger." Jessica sings and dances as part of the ensemble.

musical during the holidays, this year, the holiday play will be the popular "It's a Wonderful Life," a nonmusical.

Rice, who is a member of the Coaster's programming committee, said the committee read the script and listened to the music and liked it. Among the deciding factors was the ability to produce "The Apple Tree" with "three or 25 characters," depending on how many community actors auditioned for it, Rice said. "That was a major plus."

The cast — all volunteers — includes:

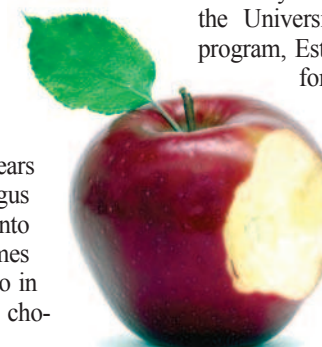
Lisa Fergus: With 30 years experience on the stage, Fergus has played Cinderella in "Into The Woods," Ruby in "Dames at Sea" and Sister Mary Leo in "Nunsense." She has also cho-

reographed several productions, including "Beauty and the Beast," which she also directed.

Timothy Garvin: Garvin's first appearance on the Coaster stage was as Sir Harry in last year's "Once Upon a Mattress." A Manzanita resident, Garvin has been involved with the Riverbend Players in Nehalem.

Emily Estrada: A recent graduate of the University of Oregon's theater arts program, Estrada served as stage manager for two shows at the Coaster. In "The Apple Tree," she plays a snake because what would Adam and Eve do without a snake? She also tells the story of "The Lady or the Tiger" as a balladeer, and she is in the ensemble.

Aaron and Jessica Har-



'The Apple Tree'

7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday,
March 4, 5, 11, 12, 18, 19, 25, 26,
April 1, 2, 8, 9, 15 and 16

3 p.m. Sunday, March 20 and April 3

Coaster Theatre

108 N. Hemlock St., Cannon Beach

www.coastertheatre.com

503-436-1242

\$18 to \$23



From left, Aaron Harris is Capt. Sanjar, Lisa Fergus is Princess Barbara, and Timothy Garvin is King Arik in "The Lady or the Tiger," the act two mini-musical in the Coaster Theatre's production of "The Apple Tree."

ris: New to Cannon Beach since September, the husband and wife are performing at the Coaster for the first time. In addition to playing Flip, Aaron also is Sanjar, the young captain who must make a choice in "The Lady or the Tiger." Jessica sings and dances as part of the ensemble.

Ellen Jensen: This is Jensen's 13th play. She also has appeared in "Annie Get Your Gun," "You're a Good Man Charlie Brown" and "Into the Woods," among others. Jensen plays the narrator in "Passionella" and is in the ensemble.

Jean Rice, Katherine Lacaze, Dick and Kris Frank: In addition to playing the tiger in "The Lady and the Tiger," Rice also is in the ensemble, as well as Lacaze. Lacaze has volunteered as stage manager and performed in two plays, including the recently staged "Dead Guilty." Dick and Kris Frank, who are in the ensemble, have also played roles in several Coaster productions, including "My Fair Lady," "Scrooge" and "White Christmas."