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With the theater poised to open this fall, drama enthusiasts and local actors are anticipating the comeback.

Frank Jagodnik is a longtime actor at the theater, coming up on his 25th season with the organization. He said this past year was difficult without being able to be around his theater friends. He missed the creative and social experiences that community theater provides.

“The theater has become such an integral part of my leisure activities that it felt like I couldn’t spend time with family there too,” he said. “Even if I wasn’t in the cast, my wife and I always enjoyed all the other productions and seeing our theater friends in action.”

The shows to come

In the coming months, the theater will offer four productions, two of which will take place in the theater while adhering to health guidelines for COVID-19.

The first two shows in this year’s lineup are “Sixty-Second Shakespeare” and “The Case of the Coaster Clambake.” Both productions will be performed at the Cannon Beach Park on Fridays and Saturdays, from July 9 to Sept. 4.

“(‘Sixty-Second Shakespeare’ is) really designed to be accessible to everybody, whether you’re a Shakespeare aficionado or not. It’ll be nice little snippets from things that people will recognize,” Tronier said. “And the mystery is just, you know, who doesn’t love a good mystery read in the summer?”

Jagodnik is particularly anticipating the upcoming mystery production. He and his wife, Liz, created the show’s original concept some 15 years ago, he said. It has since been enhanced by play director Katherine Lacaze and executive director Patrick Lathrop.

The final two productions of the year, Oscar Wilde’s “The Picture of Dorian Gray” and Charles Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol,” are planned to take place on stage and under the show lights of the theater.

“(‘The Picture of Dorian Gray’) actually will be the first show we have in the theater,” Tronier said. “It’s one act, so we won’t have intermission. We’re just trying to limit interaction with others just as we ease back into being in a theater space.”

The “Dorian Gray” production will run on Fridays and Saturdays for the whole month of October. For the holiday season, the theater will offer showtimes for “A Christmas Carol” on Fridays and Saturdays from Nov. 19 to Dec. 18.

No callbacks for COVID

In preparation for the upcoming shows,



Actors perform the Coaster’s rendition of ‘Annie’ in 2019.

the theater developed a COVID-19 safety and mitigation plan to help guide the reopening. Not only for people who are purchasing tickets and attending shows, Tronier said, but also to keep volunteers, actors, and anybody involved in shows as safe as possible.

The theater follows practices set forth by the Oregon Health Authority and recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Some of these preventative measures include social distancing, temperature screenings and face coverings for employees and guests alike.

Due to meticulous planning, Tronier said, the summer productions are taking place at the Cannon Beach Park as outdoor spaces prove to be safer from COVID transmission than indoor events.

Although social distancing will be encouraged at the performances, the CDC’s recent recommendation allowing vaccinated people to resume their activities without masks has raised some questions. The matter has not yet been officially discussed within the theater but its safety and mitigation plan is a living document that’s subject to change, Tronier said.

At the start of the year, the theater also implemented a new ticketing system that automatically social distances those in the audience. Event goers in the same group, Tronier said, can select the seats they want in their cohort, so the system will automatically block out seats around them to create a socially-distanced bubble.

“We don’t want people to put their time, energy and money, when it comes to buying tickets, out there and then someone gets sick and we have to cancel,”

Tronier said. “We’re just trying to do the best for our community ... We have to be flexible. That’s kind of been our guiding word in planning for things.”



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