



A 1972 exterior image of the remodeled Coaster Theatre Playhouse.



The exterior of the Coaster Theatre Playhouse today.

Coaster Theatre celebrates 50 years of performing arts

Cannon Beach theater returns audience favorites to the stage

BY MALLORY GRUBEN

Frank Jagodnik jokes that he's had 22 wives and counting.

Only one of those women actually wears a matching wedding band. The rest are friends and fellow actors who played Jagodnik's wives in various performances on the stage at Cannon Beach's Coaster Theatre.

"We've all done all kinds of different characters and relationships," said Jagodnik, who has volunteered at the community theater with his wife, Liz McCall, for 25 years.

This year the theater celebrates its 50th year producing plays and musicals out of the former Coaster roller rink that founder Maurie Clark renovated to bring performing arts to Cannon Beach. And it's dedicated community members like Jagodnik and McCall who have made the last five decades at the Coaster a success, according to Jenni Tronier, the theater's marketing and operations director.

"The Coaster Theatre is, at its heart, a community theater with a big C and little C," she said. "We rely on our community to support us and we also, hopefully, support the community as an artistic outlet and entertainment on the North Coast of Oregon."

In honor of the theater's 50th anniversary, the 2022 season will return several



A 1978 production of 'Oliver' at the Coaster Theatre.

audience favorites to the stage. The season also emphasizes murder mysteries and romantic comedies, two genres that Coaster audiences tend to gravitate toward.

"It's all good memories, all of the shows we picked," Jagodnik said.

This year's production schedule is as follows:

March 18 – April 16: "The 39 Steps," a murder mystery farce that features five actors playing dozens of characters.

May 6 – June 4: "Barefoot in the Park," Neil Smon's beloved romantic comedy.

July 6 – Aug. 6: "Murder on the Orient Express," a well-known Agatha Christie novel recently adapted for the stage.

Aug. 10 – Sept. 10: "Clue, the Musical," a riff on the classic board game where the audience determines the final ending.

Sept. 30 – Oct. 29: "Gramercy Ghost," a romantic comedy in which a young woman inherits her landlady's house — and the Revolutionary War ghost that haunts it.

Nov. 18 – Dec. 18: "Scrooge, the Musical," a timeless musical adaptation of the classic holiday story.

Unlike most years, summer productions will show Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday. The Coaster will reserve Friday evenings for special programming, including poetry readings, musical and dance performances or table readings for plays.

"It's going to be a celebration of the arts in all capacities on those Friday nights," said Patrick Lathrop, executive director.

In addition to the shows, the Coaster will host a monthly concert series throughout the season. Starting March 12, guest performers from the North Coast, Oregon and beyond will perform live in Cannon Beach.

The first four events in the concert series welcome back artists who have performed at the Coaster Theatre previously. "I'm welcoming them back to celebrate their time at the Coaster Theatre," Lathrop said.

On June 28 — exactly 50 years to the date from the opening of the first production in the remodeled building — the theater will host a traditional 50th birthday party, complete with a band. Lathrop said he envisions the birthday party as the

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