

'CLUE: THE MUSICAL'

Coaster Theatre ushers
in a nightly surprise

BY NANCY MCCARTHY

For actor David Sweeney, playing dead is becoming a habit. In the Coaster Theatre's recent production of "Murder on the Orient Express," Sweeney played both the villain, who was stabbed eight times, as well as one of the train's passengers.

Now, in the theater's upcoming production of "Clue: The Musical," Sweeney plays Mr. Boddy, murdered by one of six possible suspects. Who that murderer is, where the crime occurred and with what weapon is left for the audience to decide.

But Mr. Boddy "doesn't stay dead very long," Sweeney said. Instead, he becomes a ringmaster, narrating action and delivering clues to the audience.

Patterned after the popular board game, "Clue: The Musical" pairs six possible suspects with six weapons and six rooms. Audience members are asked to blindly draw three cards, each card containing either a character's name, weapon or room. With different avenues to take depending on audience participation, this means that there are a total of more than 200 possible endings.

The performance changes slightly each time, depending on the luck of that night's draw.

It's the Coaster Theatre's third round of producing the unique musical. It was selected to return as a commemorative performance, celebrating the theater's 50th anniversary.

"We chose plays we had done before and were popular and well-liked. We immediately grabbed 'Clue,'" Patrick Lathrop, executive director of the Coaster Theatre, said. "'Clue' has been done twice before; both times, it was a really big hit. People thoroughly enjoyed it," he added.

That may be because audience members play along during the performance, keeping track of clues on cards they are given. Although no prize is awarded for solving the mystery, there's a certain sense of triumph among those who stand up at the end of the show, recognizing their achievement.

Lathrop, who directs the show and plays Col. Mustard, is also the play's musical director, a task he finds challenging.

He describes the musical score as



Cast members of 'Clue,' from left to right, include Cathey Ryan as Mrs. White, Toddy Adams as Miss Scarlet, Bennett Hunter as Mr. Green, David Sweeney as Mr. Boddy, Joslynn Johansen as a detective, Bryan Lelek as Professor Plum, Patrick Lathrop as Col. Mustard and Shay Knorr as Mrs. Peacock.

'Clue: The Musical'

Coaster Theatre Playhouse, 108 N. Hemlock St., Cannon Beach

7:30 p.m. on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays through Sept. 10

Admission is \$25 to \$30. Proof of vaccination is required; masks recommended

www.coastertheatre.com

bizarre, with "weird key changes, weird time changes and weird licks and runs. They change the rhythm five times on every page."

"It's just a nightmare," Lathrop said. Despite the score's intricacies, it seems to fit the characters, who also might be considered bizarre. Mr. Green, for example, is "one smarmy gangster," according to Bennett Hunter, who has acted in several of the theater's shows.



Lissa Brewer

The Coaster Theatre Playhouse in Cannon Beach.

"To prepare for the character, I pretty much watched 'The Sopranos,'" Hunter said. "He's always a bit on edge, always yelling at somebody at different volumes. He's very sure of himself, or at least he likes to project that, whether it's true or not."

Cathey Ryan, who plays Mrs. White, a cook, said she had to "find the dissatisfied, angered, put-upon domestic servant" within herself. Was that difficult? "No, I'm pretty

cranky," she said, smiling. "I'm having a good time."

Although Jay Johansen is about to be a junior at Neah-Kah-Nie High School, they play the hard-nosed detective who, according to the script, is "hard-pressed to find the hard truth."

"I like the juxtaposition of the detective, who's serious and 'I'm here to get business done' and everyone else is crazy," Johansen said. "Half the lines are tongue-twisters in nursery rhymes."

Just like her much-married character, Mrs. Peacock, Shay Knorr has been married three times, although she is quick to point out that none of her ex-husbands have died.

Knorr, who has acted with the Riverbend Players in Nehalem, is new to the venue. "Mrs. Peacock is fun to play because I guess I'm good at playing those snotty, uptight roles," Knorr said, laughing. "She certainly knows what she wants, and she goes for it."

"And I have a great song," Knorr added. "That's what matters."