

'Godspell' features biblical tales with modern twist

Production opens Thursday with preview night

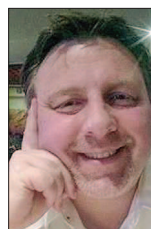
By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

A modern-day version of the Bible's gospels, "Godspell" includes a roving troupe of actors who re-enact the parables through song, dance, mime and comedy.

In 1971, the production initially opened off-Broadway for a five-year run — a week later, it opened on Broadway. During a 2011 revival, "Godspell" found

its way back to Broadway. The popular musical will be staged by College Community Theatre, beginning with a pay-what-you-can preview night. The event is Thursday at 7:30 p.m. in Bob Clapp Theatre at Blue Mountain Community College, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton. Music director Margaret Mayer said it features a cast and crew of more than 40 people and a children's chorus.

Regular performances are Feb. 22-23, Feb. 28 and March 1 at 7:30 p.m.; Sun-



Hale

day, March 3 at 6:30 p.m. and matinee shows on Sundays, Feb. 24 and March 3 at 2 p.m. Due to scheduling conflicts, there isn't a performance on Saturday, March 2.

Mayer said the show has been completely revamped by Terry Hale, BMCC's newest theatre faculty member. In addition to teaching two classes, he also serves as coordinator/artistic director for the theatre department.

Also, Hale is the executive artistic director of the Elgin Opera House. He has

directed and produced theatrical productions for 25 years, including 45 major productions over the last 11 years for the Elgin Opera House.

No stranger to the stage, Hale also has acted in several musical theatre productions. Some of his favorite roles include Col. Pickering ("My Fair Lady"), Bufalo Bill ("Annie Get Your Gun"), The Lion ("Wizard of Oz"), Rev. Moore ("Footloose"), Rooster ("Annie"), and a brother in "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat." He will play the part of "Bill" in the opera house's upcoming production of "Mamma Mia."

Theatrical talent runs in the family — Hale's daughter, Abigail Hale, is in charge of choreography for "Godspell." The 16-year-old is a high school sophomore who hopes to continue her passion for theater after high school.

In February 2018, she won the Freddie G. award for best choreography for her work as the Opera House Youth Actors' junior choreographer at the Junior Theatre Festival in Sacramento, California. Hale said participating in the festival enhanced her opportunities

as a choreographer. "Now I can say I'm an award-winning choreographer at such a young age," she said.

Tickets for "Godspell" are \$20 for adults and \$15 for children (over age 3) and students of all ages. The Pioneer Hall box office is open Monday through Fridays from noon to 2 p.m. and prior to performances. In addition, people can call 541-278-5953 or buy online at www.cctpendleton.com.

Contact Community Editor Tammy Malgesini at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539



Contributed photo

Alice Massey, of Pendleton, is the featured soloist on "Concerto No. 1 for Violin and Orchestra, Op 26" by Max Bruch during Saturday's concert of the Inland Northwest Orchestra in Pendleton.

Inland Musicians tune up with free Saturday concert

Alice Massey is the featured violin soloist

By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

The Inland Northwest Musicians will warm up their 20th anniversary season with a winter concert.

Under the direction of R. Lee Friese, the Inland Northwest Orchestra will perform Saturday at 4 p.m. at the Seventh-day Adventist Church, 1401 S.W. Goodwin Place, Pendleton. There is no admission charge.

Violinist Alice Massey is the featured soloist during a performance of "Concerto No. 1 for Violin and Orchestra, Op 26" by Max Bruch. The Pendleton woman began studying violin as an 8-year-old in Fort Worth, Texas. In high school, Massey performed as principal second violinist with the Youth Orchestra of Greater Fort Worth, traveling with the group to participate in the National Youth Orchestra Festival in Washington, D.C., and the National Symphony Orchestra League convention in New Orleans.

Earning a bachelor's degree in music from Walla Walla University, Massey taught music in Walla Walla-area schools before moving to Pendleton and transitioning to a career in human services-developmental disabilities. Working in the field for 31 years, Massey is the regional developmen-

IF YOU GO

WHO: Inland Northwest Musicians
WHAT: Winter concert
WHEN: 4 p.m. Saturday
WHERE: Seventh-day Adventist Church, 1401 S.W. Goodwin Place, Pendleton

tal disabilities manager for Greater Oregon Behavioral Health, Inc.

During the past 40 years, she has performed as a section string player with the Yakima, Washington-Idaho, Grande Ronde and Mid-Columbia symphonies. Massey served as concertmaster for the Walla Walla Symphony and Oregon East Symphony before becoming a founding member of Inland Northwest Musicians in 1999. She currently serves as concertmaster, the orchestra's music librarian and recording secretary for the Inland Northwest Musicians board of directors. Massey plays a Josef Klotz violin made in 1795.

The concert program also features Felix Mendelssohn's "The Hebrides Overture, Op 26," aka "Fingal's Cave," and "Water Music Suite" by George Frideric Handel.

According to the British Broadcasting Corporation, Mendelssohn was known for his love of traveling, which provided inspiration for his works. The German composer often wrote letters, describing his travels

in great detail.

"In order to make you understand how extraordinarily the Hebrides affected me, the following came into my mind there," he wrote in August 1829 regarding the composition.

Salli Ketchersid, INWM publicity coordinator, said the piece is a standalone composition — "The Hebrides" doesn't precede a play or opera — a form common for the Romantic period. It has been described as a "tone-poem."

National Public Radio reported that Handel was commissioned to write the "Water Music Suite." Lagging at the polls in 1717, political advisors of King George I of England encouraged him to throw a party. The piece's concert premiere was staged on a barge on the River Thames.

Inland Northwest Musicians is committed to providing live musical performances to rural audiences. Although there's no charge for performances, donations are appreciated.

The 20th anniversary season will crescendo with a reunion concert in June. The celebration will include a commissioned orchestral/choral piece.

For more information, contact inwm@machmedia.net, 541-289-4696 or visit www.inlandnorthwestmusicians.com.

Contact Community Editor Tammy Malgesini at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539

Pendleton officials push to keep education dollars local

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

With his position as the head of the Pendleton School District secure for at least another year, Superintendent Chris Fritsch is engaging in the education funding debate that should be a focal point of the current legislative session.

The Pendleton School Board approved extending Fritsch's tenure through the end of the 2019-20 school year on Feb. 13.

On Tuesday, the *East Oregonian* published an editorial column in which Fritsch implored lawmakers to fund K-12 education at an adequate level and provide districts with enough flexibility to spend the funding in the areas where they need it the most.

"If we keep chasing rainbows or windmills, we will once again fall short and be subject to criticism for the same results," he wrote.

In a meeting with the editorial board, Fritsch and the district's other central office administrators expanded on his views. One of the focuses of Fritsch's criticism was the state's

handling of the Quality Education Model, a formula that determines how much Oregon should spend to properly fund K-12.

Although the state is supposed to meet the model's projection every year, state officials have instead had to offer explanations as to why it couldn't be done in every budget cycle since the model was introduced in 1999.

"I don't know why it doesn't bother anybody, but it should," Fritsch said.

Michelle Jones, the district's director of business services, said the cuts to state funding that came during the recession have stopped, but the funding hasn't been restored to pre-recession levels either.

The district has 28 fewer staff members than it did in 2008, and although per pupil spending has risen in the past 10 years from \$8,938 to \$10,870, Jones said any gains have been offset by a long-term decline in enrollment.

Fritsch said the state has adopted a "nickel and dime mentality" when it comes to educational funding, expanding certain areas

while ignoring the larger budget issues. He later added that he was confident that his four-person central office administrative team could solve district-wide issues like absenteeism if they had the right amount of resources to do it.

The district could get more resources as soon as the next school year as Gov. Kate Brown tries to shepherd a \$2 billion revenue package through the Legislature to boost K-12 spending for initiatives like expanding preschool and career technical education, a 180-day school year, and smaller class sizes.

Although the state has talked about districts opting into the improvements of their choice, the Pendleton School District administration expressed some skepticism that some of the proposed reforms would lead to better outcomes.

Fritsch said Pendleton already graduates 81 percent of its students, and even if the district added 10 days to its schedule, it wouldn't necessarily lead to a higher rate if those days weren't filled with better support.

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No bail hearing in Umapipe murder case

PENDLETON — Murder defendant Antonio Vasquez-Vargas waived his right to a bail hearing.

Vasquez-Vargas, 53, of Walla Walla, faces charges of murder and felon in possession of a firearm for the November 2018 shooting death of Renee Luiz-Antonio of Milton-Freewater in Umapipe.

Vasquez-Vargas is in the Umatilla County Jail, Pend-

leton, and was due in circuit court Feb. 4 for a hearing to determine the strength of the evidence and case against him, and whether the court should reduce his \$5 million bail.

The court that day checked the status of the case, according to court records, and defense attorney Kara Davis on Feb. 7 filed a motion to waive Vasquez-Vargas's right to

the bail hearing. Circuit Judge Christopher Brauer signed off on the waiver the following day.

According to search warrant affidavits, Vasquez-Vargas told police Luiz-Antonio harassed and tried to kill him, so Vasquez-Vargas killed Luiz-Antonio first.

Vasquez-Vargas's next court proceeding is a status check the morning of March 6.

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