

'Once Upon a Mattress' coming to a castle near you

"Once Upon A Mattress" was Carol Burnett's star vehicle in the 1960s, and there is a very good reason why. The show may re-tell the age-old fairy tale of "The Princess and the Pea," but if you think you know what to expect, you are in for quite a wallop surprise.

Carried on a wave of beguiling songs, by turns hilarious and raucous, romantic and melodic, this spin on the familiar classic of royal courtship and comeuppance provides for some side-splitting scenarios.

CROW's latest production opens April 10, with shows set for April 11 and 12 on the Florence Events Center's main stage. More than 50 children and young adults have been put through the paces by experienced CROW volunteers, like musical director Jason Wood and assistant musical director Mary Beers. At the director's helm is Melanie Heard, who has plans for the play's leading lady to make a grand and glorious entrance (backside first) through a

window in a castle turret. And that's just a tiny glimpse into the shenanigans audiences can expect in April.

"We are all so thrilled about producing this show...it's one of our favorites," says CROW producer Michael Jacobson. "Last year's production of 'The Little Mermaid Jr.' was truly wonderful, but this production is going to delight and impress audiences even more."

In addition to an outstanding young cast, which was just selected through a rigorous professional audition process, CROW has assembled the best all-volunteer production team available.

Spectacular set pieces have been created by Chris Heard, David Tidball and Crystal Shahan. Karen Mechek and Judy Murphy will once again dazzle with their artistic skill.

Margaret McDiarmid has returned to design beautiful stage lighting, and Chris Owens will provide professional soundboard



A pair of young bards prepare to entertain.



Queen Aggravain, Prince Dauntless and Sir Harry

operation. Polly Fleming and Barbie Madden have been sewing costumes like mad in order to creatively clothe the large cast of lords and ladies.

Debbie Weiss returned this year to stand guard at the castle doors as stage manager.

Other outstanding volunteers like Genevieve Meltzer (assistant director and hair and make-up designer) have devoted countless hours to make the show the absolute best it can be for local children — on stage and in the audience.

"There are many unsung heroes who work behind the scenes on our productions," says

Heard. "Parent and community volunteers have helped with T-shirt sales, safety team organization, fundraising and prop collection, to name a few. We could not do what we do without these amazing people donating their time and energy."

Performances will be held April 10 at 7 p.m.; April 11 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; and April 12 at 2 p.m. Tickets for Once Upon A Mattress can be obtained by calling the Florence Events Center at 541-997-1994, or purchasing them online at www.eventcenter.org. Adults tickets are \$16 and kids (under 12) are \$8.

More information can be found on CROW's website at www.crowkids.com.

"Tickets are already selling rapidly," Heard said, "So don't delay, and bring your knights and ladies to this royally wonderful production."



Back row from left: Ellen Jacobson, Michael Jacobson, David Lauria, Genevieve Meltzer, Chris Owens, Polly Fleming and Jason Wood. Front row from left: Margaret McDiarmid, Karen Mechek, Melanie Heard, Tamara Cole and Maree Beers.



An FEC Guide to Giving

Capital Improvement Fund

Tax-deductible donations can be made to the Florence Events Center Capital Improvement Fund. These funds are maintained for special projects & new equipment.

Endowment Fund

An endowment fund for the Florence Events Center has been established with the Western Lane Community Foundation. Tax-deductible donations can be made to: Western Lane Community Foundation, P.O. Box 1589, Florence, OR 97439.

Named Theater Seat

You can have your name(s) placed on the back of a theater seat for a \$1,500 tax-deductible donation.

www.eventcenter.org. Toll-free: 1-888-968-4086

We accept Visa or MasterCard. Fax: 541-902-0991 Phone: 541-997-1994