

# Unwelcome pandemic results in teachable moments for local artists and educators

BY DAVID JASPER • The Bulletin

**T**he workshops Bend playwright Cricket Daniel has been teaching on behalf of Cascades Theatrical Company this winter aren't the first that she's ever taught, but they have led the Bend playwright to a new insight about herself: She loves teaching. It would be tone deaf and idiotic to suggest that COVID-19, which has killed over 485,000 Americans, has been a positive in our lives. Nevertheless, its arrival here nearly a year ago, and the pivots and other changes that necessitated, has led Daniel and others to learn some new things about themselves.



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Jacalyn, a retired opera singer and her artist husband David Kreitzer moved to Bend last year, where they've opened Kreitzer Art Gallery. Jacalyn said that her revelation this past year has been to offer vocal instruction to her students for free "and inspire them to use this time to prepare," she said.

It's not surprising that Daniel has some wisdom to impart. Over a decade ago, determined to see her work on stage, Daniel began teaching herself to write, starting with her 2009 comedy "Couple Dating." It was followed by more shows written and produced by Daniel, including "Gina Galdi and Guest," "Helen on Wheels" and "I Shot Jennifer Lopez."

Her 2018 tale of four senior women who set off to revisit significant sites from their younger days, "Lost Virginity Tour," caught the interest of "Menopause the Musical" creator Jeanie Linders and is set to tour nationally when the pandemic danger subsides.

Because her CTC workshops are being taught via Zoom, Daniel said, two aspiring playwrights living outside the area — one in San Diego, the other in Burns — have been able to participate.

"So it's a ton of fun," she said. "I am very much enjoying it. I do see this as something I would like to continue doing. I can see myself maybe offering consultations through my website, other playwriting workshops like this."

## Maintaining composition

When things began to slow down last year, Bend composer Chris Thomas, who wrote the score for the recently released film "Haymaker" and "Imagine Symphony Live," the latter of which recently netted him

a Hollywood Music in Media Award, began channeling some of his energy into not just scoring films, but also teaching about film scoring.

"It was right at this point when more and more people were asking me to go somewhere and teach something, or offer a presentation. And then suddenly it was all off," he said.

Thomas took some time — months, he said — to ponder "what I was going to say, and stand behind. It wasn't so much me thinking about, oh, how to teach film music. It was more like, 'What do I really believe in?'"

After some introspection, "I started to realize that the way I like to interact with people — I guess I'll use the word — educator, like I really started getting into teaching and presenting and sharing music. I care a lot about capturing my thoughts accurately, and having the right advice for younger musicians."

He decided to take it further, by involving more kids in those cities in playing music and not solely listen to him talk about writing for film.

"I've been writing music to little scenes from movies, and sending them all a part in a click track (an electronic metronome), and they play along on a phone, and they send me their stuff," he said. "I create this giant

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