

Tower preparing for live events

BY DAVID JASPER • The Bulletin

You won't have to wait until May to see what April showers are bringing: This month, the Tower Theatre plans to get back to what it does best, offering live entertainment in the historic, 480-seat theater located on Wall Street in downtown Bend. When Deschutes County entered the Moderate Risk category according to the state's COVID-19 guidelines three weeks ago, Tower Theatre Foundation executive director Ray Solley and the staff of the nonprofit theater began making preparations to reopen to the public. That starts with a Cocktail Cabaret event from Limelight Entertainment April 9 and 10.

"That allows us to go to 100 people in the theater again, which is the same parameters that we had back in November, when we were told to close a second time," Solley said, adding that the same kinds of protocols will be in place, including seating that allows groups of people to maintain 6 feet between parties, along with other safety measures.

During the first closure, the Tower made efforts to keep up with the zeitgeist — and keep a little money coming in — with such efforts as Friday Night Popcorn, during which concession items were sold to accompany the public shift from concerts and other live entertainment to streaming entertainment at home. It also stayed in the public eye using its marquee



Submitted photo

Limelight Entertainment's "And the Award Goes to..." Cocktail Cabaret event kicks off the resumption of live ticketed events April 9 and 10 at the Tower Theatre in Bend.

to share messages such as "Keep calm and wash your hands."

After the second shutdown began in November, the historic downtown Bend theater pivoted yet again, offering streaming entertainment to its patrons directly, with performances by acts such as We Banjo 3 and The Junebugs.

The plan for now is to offer a mix of live and streamed entertainment, Solley said. For example, The Junebugs will again perform via stream on April 15, and there's a goal in the works of presenting the group live at the Tower in June.

Rather than rush to open the doors as soon as the county's risk was downgraded to moderate, "We said, OK, we need to retrain people. We want

to make sure everything is safe and clean, and we're in the middle of some upgrades and enhancements and we wanted to get those done or at least out of the way," Solley said. "I looked at the schedule and said, wait a second, the first live thing we could do would be the Cocktail Cabaret."

There's an earlier event, a raffle event in which a private party can win the chance to watch the college basketball finale at the Tower on April 8: "It's open to the public to buy the raffle ticket; it's not open to the public to show up unless they win," Solley said.

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If You Go

1. Kosher's Passover Fest, streaming thru April 4

https://www.towertheatre.org/tickets-and-events/mostly-kosher_0

2. Blind Boys of Alabama Easter Special (livestream) April 2

<https://www.towertheatre.org/tickets-and-events/the-blind-boys-of-alabama-livestream-concert>

3. Brews & Brackets Private Party April 5

Raffle winner picked April 2

<https://www.towertheatre.org/tickets-and-events/brews-and-brackets>

4. Cocktail Cabaret: "And the Winner is..." April 9 and 10

<https://www.towertheatre.org/tickets-and-events/cocktail-cabaret-and-the-award-goes-to>

5. The Junebugs (livestream) April 15

https://www.towertheatre.org/tickets-and-events/the-junebugs-live-to-your-home_1

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