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'Into the Woods,' in the park

Summer 2021 will also see the return of Theater in the Park with the Stephen Sondheim musical "Into the Woods" on Aug. 21 and 22. The show is helmed by director and choreographer Michelle Mejaski, whose past theater in the park credits include "La Cage Aux Folles" and "Jesus Christ Superstar." Scott Michaelsen is serving as musical and vocal director.

For those who've not yet seen the musical, Mejaski describes it as "a glimpse into the lives of well-known characters in fairy tales that we know, and it shows us that things aren't always as they seem, and life is not a fairytale because every choice comes with consequence."

"Into the Woods" stars a host of Central Oregon talent, including Tim Maurer (the Baker), Kara Klontz (Baker's Wife), Natalie Manz (Cinderella), Ryan Klontz (Cinderella's Prince) John Kish (Jack) and Christie Capucci (The Witch).

The show will be staged, as usual, in Drake Park and Mejaski expects it to be another sell-out run. She and Lay it Out Events, the production company behind Theater in the Park, would love to add another night of performances if possible. For tickets and more info, visit theaterbend.com

Open Space

In the months ahead, you'll likely be hearing a lot about Open Space, the new multi-purpose venue at 220 NE Lafayette Ave., in the former home of 2nd Street Theater. Live theater is among the potential uses of Open Space, and Thoroughly Modern Productions is already calling it home, according to TMP founder David DaCosta.

Rehearsals will get underway this month for TMP's next two shows, "Moana," being staged July 23-25, and "Frozen Jr," Aug. 27-29, each starring youth casts and will make use of set-enhancing animated video.

"It's accompanying animated video from the beginning of the shows all the way through," DaCosta said. "It's pretty cool stuff. It's not going to replace a set, but it is the main component of the set."

Musical Impressions Studios will put on "Little Women" at Open Space. Co-directed by Angelina Anello-Dennee and Gracie Conant, it performs July 16-18. The July 16 show is a fundraiser for the new Ellipse Theatre Community, co-founded by Anello-Dennee. Look for tickets and other info,



Submitted photo

Michelle Mejaski will direct and choreograph "Into the Woods," coming to Drake Park in August.

after the link goes live on June 21, at showtix4u.com/event-details/54559.

Bendertainment, a new, BIPOC-focused theater production company launched by Bend theater stalwarts Stephanie Von Aydan and Matt Vigil. Bendertainment also plans to use Open Space, albeit not until a planned variety show in October, according to Von Aydan, followed by the company's first full-fledged production, coming in 2022.

More shows ahead

BEAT Children's Theatre will be presenting "Star Wars Shakespeare: Twelfth Night" this summer, described by BEAT Executive Director Bree Beal as "a hysterical version of Shakespeare's original play, rewritten through the lens of the Star Wars universe. The script adaptation was done by our director, Michaela Conley." Look for performances in mid-August. BEAT is also offering a slate of Summer camps and classes, including traditional Improv, traditional musical theater and some new additions such as Hip Hop Shakespeare. Classes and camps are filling up quickly, and enrollment is limited for



Ryan Brennecke/Bulletin file

"We don't want to have a vaccinated section and a nonvaccinated section. We don't want to have verification at the door or verification in advance. Quite honestly, we've spent the last 13, 15 years building loyalty and passionate patrons. The last thing we want to do right now is have them come to the door and we go, 'No, we don't have a place for you,' or 'No, you can't come in,'" said Ray Solley, executive director of the Tower Theatre Foundation.

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Solley told the Tower staff earlier this week, "I believe we need to continue our 'watchful waiting' of COVID restrictions to be fully lifted before resuming normal operations. Not only will their removal make our re-opening easier and more cost-effective, I think it will profoundly re-enforce the public's perception that it's OK to go indoors for live entertainment again."

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Submitted photo

Jake Woodmansee will perform in "A Uniquely Offensive Comedy Showcase: Sister Ethel & Friends" on June 25.

safety. More at beatchildrenstheatre.org.

Actor and producer John Kish has plans to hold small performances, workshops and more at the new home of his popular plant shop, Somewhere That's Green, now located at 184 NE Greenwood Ave. in Bend. Look for more news on the subject later this summer, Kish said.

And if you're wondering about the Tower Theatre, Ray Solley, executive director of the Tower Theatre Foundation, which operates the theater, said the theater is waiting for the lifting of restrictions on public gatherings.

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