

Orinda Starlight Village Players 2008 Season—A Summer Full of Laughs

By Andrea A. Firth

“I like to make people laugh,” says Geotty Chapple, President of the Orinda Starlight Village Players as he describes his attraction to the farcical comedy, *Bedfull of Foreigners*, that he will direct at the outdoor theater in the Orinda Community Center Park later this summer. “We do a lot of British comedy,” adds Starlight Village Players Director Suzan Lorraine, “We all like to laugh.”

The Orinda Starlight Village Players will launch their summer season in late May with the play *Murder on the Nile*. “The first play of our season is traditionally an Agatha Christie murder mystery,” notes Lorraine, who will direct. “I think this is the only place in the Bay Area where she gets produced.”

“This place” is the outdoor theater tucked in the back corner of the Orinda Community Center Park, home to the Starlight Village players for over 25 years. The charming outdoor amphitheater seats about 100. Redwood benches line the first five rows, and audience goes in the latter rows sit upon pads that are provided to soften the terraced stones. And as is often the case in Orinda in the summer, “If the fog comes in, it can get a little chilly, so it is important to layer,” notes Lorraine.

The second play of the three to be offered by the Starlight Village Players, *I Hate Hamlet* by Paul Rudnick, puts a twist on Cal Shakes’ approach to summer theater. “This is one of my favorite plays,” explains Lorraine. “There are so many moods in it. It moves from absolutely hilarious to very serious.” Based in part on the life of John

Barrymore (grandfather to one of the contemporary Charlie’s Angels—Drew), the play features a Hollywood soapstar who moves to New York City to play the part of Hamlet in a theater in the park. Presciently, the ghost of John Barrymore surfaces to teach the young actor how best to play the part of the also haunted Hamlet.

“This is quintessential community theater,” states Lorraine.

The Orinda Starlight Village Players will perform three plays throughout the summer months on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons at the Outdoor Theater in Orinda Community Center Park, 26 Orinda Way (across the street from Rite Aid and the Orinda Post Office). See sidebar for plays, dates, and ticket information.



Orinda Starlight Village Players’ 2008 Outdoor Theater, Orinda Community Center Park

Regular admission: \$15; seniors/students—\$7.50

All 3 shows: \$35; seniors/students—\$21

Tickets at Box Office or call (925) 253-1191 or 255-3295 (after 7 pm)

Murder on the Nile by Agatha Christie
May 30th thru June 28th

Fridays and Saturdays at 8:30 pm
Sunday, June 22nd at 4 pm
Thursday, June 26th at 8 pm

Bedfull of Foreigners by David Freeman
September 5th thru the 27th

Fridays and Saturdays at 8:30 pm
Sunday, September 21st at 4 pm
Thursday, September 25th at 8 pm

I Hate Hamlet by Paul Rudnick

July 18th thru August 16th
Fridays and Saturdays at 8:30 pm
Sunday, August 10th at 4 pm
Thursday, August 14th at 8 pm