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'Five-Door Farce' final play of the season for Starlight Players

By Sora O'Doherty



Susan Chapple and Dan Phillips in Starlight Players' production of "Five-Door Farce." Photo Charlie Jarrett

A funny play rounds out the 34th season of the Starlight Players, a completely volunteer theatrical group in Orinda. Robert Merrill's "Five-Door Farce" has only been performed at one other venue, in Riverside.

According to Merrill, "To tell you part of the plot of 'Five-Door Farce' would mislead you. To tell you more than that would reveal too much. When pressed about the play, I've said the following: It's a tragedy inside a parody of a farce. It's the collision of 'Noises Off' and 'Six Characters in Search of Author.' It's a farce, seriously. Exploring the themes of creation, gender roles, identity, religion, theater, determinism, and existentialism, it plays with the conventions of farce in a way that fans of farce will love and enemies of farce will appreciate. Oh, and it's funny." The play is being directed by Jill Gelster, administrative director of the company.

Starlight Players are a good example of the saying, "it takes a village." Gelster and her husband, David Dierks, run the box office and concessions. Dierks is the set foreman and builds all the sets, with the help of the cast. The cast also has to do all the set decorations as well as acting. Gelster and Joe Donovan do the tech work for each show.

Auditions are held each spring for the three shows to be produced that season. The cast size varies. For "Five-Door Farce" there are 11 in the cast.

Performances will run through Sept. 29, Fridays and Saturdays at 8:30 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 24 at 4 p.m. and Thursday, Sept. 28 at 8 p.m. (The performance scheduled for Sept. 30 has been canceled.)

The outdoor theater is located at 28 Orinda Way in Orinda Community Park. Reservations can be made online; tickets are available at the door. Regular admission is \$20. There are light refreshments for sale, or you may want to bring a picnic and eat in the park before the performance.

Starlight Players will be back next year in June for their 35th season. Auditions will be held next April.

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