

Valhalla upgrading site, summer festival lineup



The Grand Hall's front has new siding. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

For nearly 40 years the Valhalla Art, Music & Theatre Festival has been staged at the Tallac Site on the South Shore. But for the last few years music has not had equal billing. That is about to change.

"I want to get the music to the level of what the theater is so it will be a world-class festival," Evangeline Elston told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Elston was hired this winter to be the director of the festival. While she has less than a one-year contract, she is hoping the improvements she brings to this year's offerings will warrant a longer contract.

She grew up near Carson City, spent the bulk of her career in the Grass Valley-Nevada City area in the music world, and the last year in Austin, Texas, doing work for artists. She knew she wanted to return to the Sierra and that is how she landed in Tahoe.

Ginger Nicolay-Davis, president of Valhalla Tahoe (formerly Tahoe Tallac Association), admits the group has been running on autopilot when it came to music – booking acts that had been there before and not doing much more.

This season expect a more eclectic mix.

One of the first things Elston was able to get the board to agree to was upgrading some of the sound equipment in the Boathouse Theater, which is where the paid performances will be.



A paved walkway bisects the Twin Cabins.

Ray Bonneville will launch the 2014 season on June 25 at 7:30pm. Lance Canales and the Flood will also be on stage that night.

Grammy-nominated bluegrass duo Laurie Lewis and Tom Rozum will play Aug. 6 at 7:30pm.

For the first time, Valhalla and Lake Tahoe Community College are partnering to put on a summer play. “August: Osage County” will be at the Duke Theater in July.

To balance this adult-oriented production, "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" will be at the Boathouse earlier in July.

Four nights of Improv are on the schedule.

In conjunction with this being the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, the Wild and Scenic Environmental Film Festival will be at the Boathouse on Aug. 13. This is also going to be a membership drive event for Valhalla.

The nonprofit gets its funding from ticket sales and memberships. In a deal with the U.S. Forest Service, which owns the land, a certain percentage of the proceeds must be spent on upgrading the property.

In the last three weeks about \$30,000 in improvements have been made. A walkway between the Twin Cabins, which are in front of the Grand Hall closest to the road, was completed May 12. The front of the Grand Hall and the side porch have been resided. The remaining siding will be replaced next year.

One of Elston's goals is bring more public awareness to the partnership between Valhalla and the USFS, and how it's not just a festival that is going on, but preservation of Tahoe's past.

--

Note:

- The event schedule for the 2014 season is available online.
- Membership information is also online.