

Valhalla music fest upgrading facilities



“Motherhood Out Loud” is a special fundraiser in May. Photos/Provided

By Kathryn Reed

Eclectic. That is the word the director of the Valhalla Art, Theatre and Music Festival is using to describe the 2015 season.

Evangeline Elston is returning for her second year as leader of this nearly 40-year-old South Shore tradition.

As with years past, there will be a mix of offerings for a variety of ages.

This season there is also a concerted effort to raise money to upgrade the aging facilities. Events are mostly staged at the Boathouse Theatre or Grand Hall. These are on U.S. Forest Service property just past Camp Richardson on Highway 89. The buildings have been around for decades. Columns around the Grand Hall should be replaced before the season starts.



Quinn DeVeaux and the Blue Beat Revue play July 29.

“We have not given enough attention to the boathouse electrical system. We call them lighting ghosts. Sometimes you sit there with the lights dim for theatrical purposes and then every light goes on at once,” Elston told *Lake Tahoe News*. “It’s quaint, but we’re getting tired of it.”

Upgrading to LED lighting will occur. This will save money and reduce the amount of heat that is generated. Cost estimates are being sought for the desired improvements.

The main fundraiser for this project is a one-night engagement of the play “Motherhood Out Loud”, which sold out a couple years ago. This is the Saturday of Mother’s Day weekend next month.

A smaller fundraiser is April 27 at Lake Tahoe Paint and Sip.

The nonprofit arts group has revamped its website. Tickets can now be bought online, plus there are packages available and ways to donate to the cause.

Scottish fiddler Alasdair Fraser is opening the season on June 17.

“What we are going for this year is eclectic programming,” Elston said.

Her forte is music, so bringing in diverse acts is especially

important to Elston. Music will range from jazz to folk to classic to rock. In addition to the midweek shows at the boathouse there will be four free concerts on the Great Lawn on Sundays.

Reaching out to the Hispanic community is a goal of the board that runs the festival. One way to do so is with the Calidanza traditional Mexican folk and contemporary dance troupe on June 27.



Susie Glaze and the Hilonesome Band play Aug. 5.

While normally the festival puts on two two-week plays, that isn't the case this year. "On Golden Pond" will have a three-week stint, while the young adult theater's "Midsummer Nights Dream" will have a four-day run.

"A lot of times what happens with theater is it picks up steam along the way," Elston said. This is an experiment to see if a three-week show will draw more people in.

Four nights of comedy will return, as will some of the longstanding traditions like the artists in residence program and Great Gatsby Murder Mystery Dinner.

Word Wave in the fall is a major addition to the schedule. Elston described it as a "festival of story rather than a literary festival."

Notes:

- More information is available online.
- Telephone: 530.541.4975.
- “Motherhood Out Loud” fundraiser is May 9. For tickets, go online.
- April 27 fundraiser at Lake Tahoe Paint and Sip.