

Transcription of Podcast 322: *Old Hams* (Performing Arts Club)

Thursday, February 24, 2022

SPEAKERS

Bob Firing, Cathie van Blerk, Jan Briggs, Earl Warner, Judith Bennoch

Note: This transcription was computer-generated and may contain typographical errors.

Bob Firing 00:10

Good afternoon Shadow Hills! Well, spring is in the air and that means that there's going to be a spring presentation from the Performing Arts Club. And the title of the comedy that they're presenting this spring is "Old Hams." And my guest is the president of the Performing Arts Club, Judith Bennoch, who's been here several times before. So Judy, take over, tell us what we're going to expect.

Judith Bennoch 00:40

Okay. Thank you very much, Bob. As always, we really appreciate you allowing us to come and share information with our residents. Basically, first we thought it was really important to come and chat with you today. Because we do have a new play coming on in March and with all of the restrictions and clubhouse closings, etc. there have been people that really aren't aware that yes, in fact, performing arts club is alive and well and going to be performing for you and entertaining you March 17 to 20th.

Judith Bennoch 01:11

So I also have with me today, the director and assistant director, and we'll hear from them as well. But I just like to let you know and thing is that yes, we're alive and well, but it wasn't easy. We had to as you know, we barely got started in rehearsals the beginning first week of January when the clubhouse was shut down to any club activities. Well, we thought outside of the box and with help from Lifestyles and Connie, we ended up using the outdoor patio at the Montecito clubhouse for rehearsals, and were bundled up sometimes had extra heaters and things but masks with everyone but made it work. And I have to give kudos to the cast for putting up with that. It wasn't always easy. And there were some evenings we were a little chilly, and things got revised often as to where the heater should be in the fireplace. But anyway, they persevered, we got back inside. And the most recent lovely was having being able to remove masks. It was quite interesting our first night without masks on stage, when people actually began to be able to see facial expressions. And things changed and things looked a little differently. So you can imagine that spending five or six weeks in front of people masked, performing and then to have them remove them so it's exciting and we are excited to be able to provide you with some ongoing entertainment. And thank you for your higher patronage and hope that you will support us again.

Judith Bennoch 02:45

Tickets are on sale now. They are on sale on Mondays, Wednesdays and Friday in the Montecito Clubhouse from 10am to 1pm. And, there are people there waiting for you to take your money and find

you a really good seat. We've had very brisk sales for the first couple of days. So I encourage you to get there early to get your best occupation. Now for some background information on herself and a little bit to tell us a little bit about "Old Hams." I'd like to introduce Jan Briggs, and she's a first time director for Performing Arts Club here in Sun City Shadow Hills, but is not a novice director at all. Jan...

Jan Briggs 03:28

Thank you, Judith. Yes, you want a little of my background... I was born and raised in Washington State. And I have been an actor since I was a kid. I do have a background in directing up in Washington State. At one point I wrote and directed a three act musical called "Yesterday Once More." My husband and I have been full time residents in Sun City Shadow Hills for nine years. I have been in either seven or eight performances here, I can't remember which. And as Judith said, This is my first opportunity to direct and it has been a great deal of fun. We had a huge turnout, or huge for us anyway, as far as people auditioning, and I was thrilled to be able to cast three new people. All of them are inexperienced actors, but they all shine. They all have been some of the very first people to learn their lines, get their characters down, and I think the community is really going to enjoy seeing some new people. And then Cathie here is my assistant director. And I told Judith or whoever when I volunteered to be director that I would only direct if I got Cathie because she is my right hand and my left hand and we have acted together before and work really well together and it has been a really exciting experience. Cathie, do you want to tell people a little bit about the show? Or...

Cathie van Blerk 05:07

I'll be glad to good. Okay. Well, "Old Hams" refers to "old actors." And the concept is that a bunch of old actors are living in a Victorian mansion that is owned by a former movie star of old Hollywood. And when she dies, they have problems because there are those who would love to get hold of the property. And they figure out a way to save this property and have fun doing it and make us all laugh while they do it.

Judith Bennoch 05:44

Cathie, what is your prior experience with Performing Arts Club?

Cathie van Blerk 05:49

Well, I moved here at the beginning in 2004. And, I was still teaching so I didn't have an opportunity for a couple of years to participate. But soon after I got involved with "The Vagina Monologues," and then became the costume director for "Thrice Upon a Tony," which was a monumental task. And from then on, I was bitten. I was in many different shows in different capacities, and enjoyed every bit of it. But since I've always had trouble for remembering lines, I decided that I think my place is behind the scenes now as a stage director, or assistant director, or something in the background.

Judith Bennoch 06:36

That's, that's so true. And that just kind of brings me to sort of a description of our club as a whole, not everyone who's in the performing arts club performs. And it's really important that we really need people who that isn't the only reason they want to join our club as well, because we've talked about this before as to how many people it takes to put on a production, which is usually about a three month period from time of auditions to show. And I'm going to ask Earl Warner, the producer of "Old Hams" to

talk a little bit about that, because his job as producer is to bring all of these people together to make sure that the show does go on.

Earl Warner 07:16

Well, thanks, Judith. First of all, I've been very fortunate to be on stage and in many of our productions, I have never been a producer. So this is a brand new experience for me. And I'm learning a lot. It's challenging, but I'm enjoying it. And I say this a lot, but I have one of the greatest production teams. They are all talented in their particular area. And they are, you know, they move ahead, they take the initiative. And you know, they all had this magical ability to make me look like I know what I'm doing. So...

Judith Bennoch 07:59

I am what would be some of the departments or the conveners of the leads, what kind of things would people be doing?

Earl Warner 08:05

Well... Well, a good question. Lighting, for instance, you know, if we didn't have lighting, you wouldn't be seeing any actors on stage. If we didn't have sound, you wouldn't be hearing any of the actors on stage. If we didn't have a construction crew, you wouldn't see any set on stage. If you didn't have a costumer or hair and makeup people. I'm probably leaving out a couple areas, and not intentionally, obviously. But, you know, that gives you an idea of everybody behind the scenes that is needed to make a production a success. And I mean, people that are that have done this not producing but have been involved in a show realize that, but most audience members don't realize all the people behind the scenes. You're gonna see nine actors on stage, but there's probably four times that number of people behind making it all happen. So yeah.

Judith Bennoch 09:11

Great. So any last words from the director or producer?

Jan Briggs 09:16

Oh, all I can say is I hope that people turn out for this. It's a very, very entertaining show. There are some old timers people that have performed in the past several times, Sun City Shadow Hills, as well as our new people. And it's a hilarious, hilarious show. And we have very, very talented actors. And so I hope people will buy their tickets and come. I think it's going to be worth every moment that you come out for it. And we really appreciate the community support for our club.

Judith Bennoch 09:51

Earl?

Earl Warner 09:52

I might add that . . . I'm going to use the word "age appropriate." This many of our shows have, you know, the characters have run the gamut in age from well, early 20s or early 30s to, you know, a more mature person. But in this case, this is a show that is, has been written for a senior audience, and for

senior actors, and I think it's perfect for our audience. Go out and buy tickets, they're going fast. And I think you'll really enjoy it.

Judith Bennoch 10:30

Thanks for all. And for me as president of the club, this is great. And we're really looking forward to the show. But you know, in a month, this will all be over. But this isn't over for the Performing Arts Club. This just begins our cycle again. And I just wanted to let you know that we are excited that in the fall, in November of 2022, our next production is hopefully going to be, if we can find a director. So anyone out there that's interested in directing, we are looking at producing putting on "Blithe Spirit." And it is written by Noël Coward, which, we're looking at some plays now that are more familiar with the playwright for us. But we are like excited about that. But we do need a director. It's hard, and directing is a difficult job. But I know, there are people here, and there may be people in the community that don't know about us, but it's something they've done before and have recently moved here and are interested. So you can certainly contact me with any interest in that that area at all. And finally, we're hoping that perhaps we can come back closer to showtime, and maybe introduce you to a couple of the actors before they go on stage. So, with that I'll turn it back to Bob.

Bob Firing 11:48

Okay, Shadow Hills! Tickets are on sale Monday, Wednesday and Friday. And this is an all-volunteer organization, but they work really hard to put on a good show for you. So, come out and support them. Have fun and meet some new people. Until next time, bye bye.