

# Village Voices

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The Newsletter for Village Theatre Subscribers

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## Million Dollar Quartet: The Story Beyond the Musical

Photo by Jay Koh



Village Theatre opens its 2007-2008 Mainstage Season with the rousing new musical, *Million Dollar Quartet*. Author, music historian, and Grammy Award-winning producer Colin Escott (*The Complete Hank Williams*) joined forces with acclaimed film writer, producer and director Floyd Mutrux (*American Hot Wax*), and musical director Chuck Mead of the multiple Grammy nominated country band BR5-49, to tell the story of an impromptu jam session with four of the biggest up-and-coming stars in rock-n-roll.

On December 4, 1956 a twist of fate brought Carl Perkins, Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Johnny Cash together for an afternoon of revolutionary music that embodied the birth of rock-n-roll. The man who discovered them all - the "Godfather of Rock-n-Roll" and Sun Records owner, Sam Phillips - presided over an unrestrained mixture of gospel, country, blues, and pop that ultimately forged a new sound in music. It was the first super-session. Eager for publicity, a reporter and photographer from the *Memphis Press-Scimitar* were called in by Phillips to cover the event. The article and photo of the foursome ran the next day with the caption "Million Dollar Quartet".

After reading Colin Escott's cameo of the event in his book *Good Rockin' Tonight*, Floyd Mutrux said, "there's a musical here," and recruited Escott to write the script with him. "We tried not to sanitize these people, but show them as real live, wild Tennessee boys who had stumbled upon this music and literally revolutionized the world of music," continued Escott. "The best we could hope for is to make the script half as much fun as the music."

This Village Theatre original musical is inspired by the December 4, 1956 event and is infused with an eclectic mix of 27 toe-tapping, hip gyrating songs that exhibit the passion and fervor of Perkins, Presley, Lewis, and Cash. The song selection delivers an illuminating snapshot of the creative genius in each of the four artists that so resonated with Sam Phillips and the world. *Million Dollar Quartet* captures the freewheeling energy of early rock-n-roll as these four incredibly talented musicians jam and banter about their individual paths to fame, their jealousies, and their deep respect for each other. It was a time when the music was so new that it hardly had a name. In what can be described as the ultimate fly-on-the-wall experience, Escott and Mutrux brilliantly bring to life the music, personalities, and the spirit of the Million Dollar Quartet. This was the day the music LIVED! ■

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# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE PRODUCER & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Welcome to the 2007-2008 Season! I am thrilled that you will be joining us for a season filled with entertaining, exhilarating, and extraordinary works of theatre. For us at Village Theatre, this is a season of firsts and we are pleased to have you be a part of it. As

many of you know, each season we produce one new musical; however this season, we found two shows with such promise, fantastic music, and great characters and story that we decided to add them both to our season. With *Million Dollar Quartet*, you'll watch the careers of music legends Carl Perkins, Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis and Johnny Cash take flight while rocking to some of the greatest hits of that era. Then, this spring, *Little Women* brings the beloved novel to life. For me, producing new musicals is one of the most important things we do as a theatre. Producing a new show gives us a chance to help a musical to grow, to nurture it from its infant state and, with our assistance, to see it burgeon into fruition. I know that these two musicals are going to grow into something great, and I'm so glad you'll be here with us to experience them.

Our other first deals with a project a long-time in the making—our new technical studios. These studios finally give our artistic staff the opportunity to build a show, from the ground up, in one building. Housing our props, scenery, and paint departments, this new studio will enable Village Theatre to take our artistic talents to new places. And the process has already begun; *Million Dollar Quartet* is the first show to be built in the new technical studios, making the show, and the studios, a truly exciting and groundbreaking endeavor. Thanks again for being part of Village Theatre.

*Robb Hunt*

Robb Hunt, Executive Producer



This past season has given us a chance to spread our wings artistically: from *EVITA* to *Once Upon a Time in New Jersey*; *Bye Bye Birdie* to *Shadowlands*; and finally to our most recent season closer, *The Who's TOMMY*, which perhaps pushed us as far as we've ever gone. *TOMMY* brought in a

record number of new patrons to Village Theatre, as well as inspiring great and passionate conversation among you, our subscribers. While some loved *TOMMY* more than any musical they've seen at the theatre, others questioned our choice to produce this show. Our goal in producing this award-winning production, as well as the entire season, was not only to challenge ourselves artistically, but to also appeal to diverse audiences of all ages and showcase different forms of musical theatre. In addition, Village Theatre is dedicated to producing shows that multiple generations can enjoy together.

Entering the 2007-2008 Season, we're looking forward to continuing to have a season of musicals that are multi-generational and continue to push the organization to new heights. This year, we'll produce not one, but two new musicals, as well as two stage classics: *The King and I* and Neil Simon's *Barefoot in the Park*. Ending our Season with Elton John and Tim Rice's *AIDA*, a first for the Seattle area. For me, artistically, producing a new musical is one of the most challenging, but also most rewarding things we can do; you get to introduce to the theatre community a new story, new setting, and new music, to enjoy, to connect with, and to be a part of. And, with the opening of the new Technical Studios, a show's technical elements, which have always been a strong trademark of Village Theatre, will only continue to grow and reach new levels. I hope you'll enjoy the season!

*Steve Tomkins*

Steve Tomkins, Artistic Director

## VILLAGE NEWS



The building of Village Theatre's new Technical Studios. Photo courtesy of Village Theatre.

## Village Theatre Opens New Technical Studios

Located two-blocks away from the Francis J. Gaudette Theatre in Issaquah, the new 14,500 square foot technical studio space consolidates technical production activities, including the paint shop, scene shop, and prop shop, into one central location. Identified as a priority in capital improvements, the new Technical Studios are a part of Village Theatre's long term strategic plan in meeting artistic goals and continuously improving production values. Sixty percent of the \$5.8 million dollar cost of the capital building projects have been raised. The entire capital campaign goal is to raise \$10 million for additional projects and an endowment.

### Annual Gala Exceeds Goals

*On the Town with Village Theatre* raised more than \$206,000 on May 19, 2007 at the Fairmont Olympic Hotel with auctioneer John Curley! Many thanks to our guests, volunteers, and gala committee. Stay posted for a 2008 date.

### Date Nights Made Easier with the Help YMCA

The Everett Family YMCA is offering a "Date Night" child care service on Friday, November 9, 2007. While parents enjoy Village Theatre's production of *Million Dollar Quartet* at the Everett Performing Arts Center, their children

will be one block away at the YMCA under the care of trained staff. Date night activities may include play time in the Adventure Zone (for ages 6+), craft projects, pizza, movies, or swimming (ages 7+). For more info, call the YMCA at (425) 258-9211 x217.

### Village Theatre Pied Piper Stokes Creativity with Imagine Children's Museum

Arrive early to the Pied Piper presentation of Katie Couric's *The Band New Kid*, produced by the Kennedy Center, and join in on some serious fun. One hour prior to curtain, kids can participate in engaging show-related activities provided in partnership with Imagine Children's Museum.

### Save the Date! The 2007 Youth Education Luncheon

Join us Thursday, November 15, 2007 from 12:00 PM -1:00 PM at the Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue for Village Theatre's 7th Annual Youth Education Luncheon. Dave Ross is our emcee and Jane Hague is our keynote speaker. This luncheon will also feature KIDSTAGE Kids as part of the presentation. Funds raised will support our Youth Education Programs and scholarships that include KIDSTAGE classes and productions and our Pied Piper productions. Suggested Minimum Donation: \$125. ■

# Q & A:

## An Insider Look into the Masterminds Behind Million Dollar Quartet

Colin Escott and Floyd Mutrux, authors

**VT:** You each have such diverse and celebrated careers. How did you come together to create Million Dollar Quartet (MDQ)?

**Colin:** Floyd had read a book I'd written about Sun Records, *Good Rockin' Tonight*, and called out of the blue one day. He was so passionate about this era in music, and I already knew that he'd directed one of the best movies about '50s rock, *American Hot Wax*. We both wanted to create a musical that truly depicted the anarchic, brawling spirit of '50s rock as we knew it and loved it.

**Floyd:** I had written a prequel to MDQ that has yet to be finished. Colin knew that story better than anyone . . . and I was lucky to find him.

**VT:** Did you have a favorite scene or song that just didn't work on stage as much as it did when you imagined it, and it had to be cut?

**Colin:** I lost some of my favorite jokes during the earlier rehearsals. When no one laughs, you just have to admit the jokes aren't funny.

**Floyd:** My favorite scene is one we never developed. An idea that the showgirl (who disappeared off the face of the earth after that night) would be portrayed as the "guardian angel" who brought Elvis home for Christmas, one last time.

**VT:** Who is your favorite MDQ character and why?

**Colin:** Sam Phillips, the owner of Sun Records. He was the man who had the vision, maybe the lunacy, to sign Elvis, Jerry Lee Lewis, Johnny Cash, and Carl Perkins, all of whom had been . . . or would have been . . . shooed away from mainstream record labels. Phillips was a true fringe thinker.

**Floyd:** They all would have made it, but one thing's for sure, there would never have been a "Million Dollar Quartet" without Sam Phillips. I always said, if there was a MDQ souvenir t-shirt, on the back it should say, "It's really Sam's story!"

**VT:** Beyond MDQ, what other projects are you working on?

**Colin:** Floyd and I are developing other projects that try to capture our love of R&B and rock 'n' roll. Meanwhile, I'm a consultant to Time-Life Music, developing compilations for them, and my biography of Hank Williams has been optioned for development by a division of Universal Pictures.

**Floyd:** I have four movie scripts at the studios (floydmutrux.com), but I basically have all my creative energy in the American Pop Anthology bios that Colin and I are putting up. *Baby It's You*, the story of the Shirelles has been in musical readings for over a year. We will mount a workshop in Los Angeles, winter '07, and plan to open in New York in spring '08. *Lonesome Town* and *When the Fat Man Sang* are very far along, and will be workshopped summer and fall '08. ■

## YOUTH EDUCATION

### KIDSTAGE: New Program, New Opportunities

Village Theatre KIDSTAGE Everett proudly introduces a new addition to the KIDSTAGE repertoire of classes and productions. Summer Independent allows teens to fully stage their own musical with strong support and instruction from professional Village Theatre mentors. This past July, KIDSTAGE Summer Independent created a concert revue titled *Songs They'll Never Let Me Sing*, featuring choice hits from such celebrated productions as *Hairspray*, *Spamalot*, *Dreamgirls*, *Les Misérables*, and *A Chorus Line*.



Music director TJ Anderson working with Carlie Watson on her song choice, "Mr. Cellophane."

This one of a kind production stemmed from young musical theatre performers who recognized that they would never be cast in particular roles due to type, gender, age or ethnicity. Every member of the 19 person cast, production team, and creative team was under 20 years of age. KIDSTAGE Summer Independent allowed experienced young performers to shake things up and become the characters whose songs they have always dreamed of singing.

"This revue gave us the tools and the experience to learn how to shape our own productions," added 18 year-old Julia Kinnunen, a KIDSTAGE performer and visionary behind the concert revue program.

The Summer Independent production of a concert revue is a stepping stone for KIDSTAGE Everett toward a student self-produced full scale musical next summer. Since 1986, Summer Independent has been a program of KIDSTAGE Issaquah, which staged the wonderfully grisly and wry *Sweeney Todd*, also produced last July. ■

### Lessons of Tolerance and the Power of Friendship

Pied Piper presents the musical adaptation of Katie Couric's *The Brand New Kid*, produced by the Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences On Tour. This uplifting new musical about friendship, overcoming peer pressure, and how to be true to yourself explores many of the cultural situations today's children face through Lazlo, a new kid in the class with a strange accent and a different look.

"We live in a society that really is a melting pot of cultures, colors, and beliefs, as well as differences in abilities. This musical brilliantly illustrates the effect that intolerance has on one young boy, and the realization by a classmate that she needs to stand up and do something about it," said Pied Piper program manager, Erica Weir. "Her initiative trickles down to her classmates and helps them all realize that they are all different and a little bit 'weird', but they still have common ground and can be friends."



Kennedy Center actors Michael Grew, James Gardiner, Erika Rose, Diego Prieto, and Cristina Flagg in Katie Couric's *The Brand New Kid*. Photo by Scott Suchman.

"Whether a child is from Hungary, the Middle East, or Ohio, kids face teasing and bullying," concluded Weir. This musical focuses on a key message: that kindness can be taught and friendships formed despite differences. It may not be easy to stand out by standing up for what is right, but *Brand New Kid* gives children a great example of just that. ■

Youth Education is Funded in Part by



## VILLAGE ORIGINALS: NEW WORKS

### MDQ: Road to the Mainstage

*Million Dollar Quartet* has been in development for over five years and Village Theatre has played a key role in getting this new musical mainstage ready.

The musical originally premiered as a reading at Village Theatre last August, during our Sixth Annual Festival of New Musicals. It was that initial reading that proved to be the most inspiring to its writers, Colin Escott and Floyd Mutrux.

"That was the first time we'd seen the words and music come together in front of an audience," said Escott. "We looked at each other and I think we were thinking the same thought: we really might have something remarkable here!"

Escott and Mutrux admit though that the road to a finished piece wasn't always easy. "There were several false dawns," shared Escott.

Following some re-writes, the reading, and more re-writes, *Million Dollar Quartet* moved on for a run in Daytona Beach (2006). "It was a huge hit for the theater," added Escott. "The audiences for the shows were all ages, even grandparents taking their kids—they all loved the music!"

"There were no major disappointments, only some tweaks and changes to make it better along the way. Meshing the dialogue with the music and fitting it all into the 90-minute time slot was the most difficult part of the process," concluded Escott. ■

### Love is Love Comes to First Stage Theatre

Join us for *Love is Love*, a new musical revue conceived and directed by Martin Charnin, creator of the eternal *Annie*, as it reaches its final phase of development this fall. For this moving new piece, Martin has teamed up with Seattle-based composer Rich Gray, best known as the creator of Empty Space's hilarious *Forbidden Christmas*.

Having undergone several re-writes since it premiered last year at The Moore Theatre in association with Seattle Theatre Group and Village Theatre, *Love is Love* follows the stories of 12 unique women, played by four actresses, as they grapple with the mysteries and complications of love—from the undeniable flutter of love at first sight to the responsibilities of keeping love alive. See it at First Stage Theatre, November 30-December 23, 2007. ■

Village Originals is Funded in Part by



# VOLUNTEER CORNER

## Paying Tribute: Lynn Meyer, Volunteer Extraordinaire!

Volunteers, subscribers, and donors are vital to the growth and success of our organization. Without them, we could have never built the Francis J. Gaudette Theatre, continue to produce the shows which connect us as a community, or expand our youth education programs that inspire confidence and a love of the arts in our students.

Lynn Meyer, a valuable member of the Village Theatre community, has been volunteering at our theatre for over 20 years. Her outstanding contributions include everything from serving on the gala committee since its inception in 1987, assisting with fundraising for various projects, and even working as a tour guide at the Francis J. Gaudette Theatre during the grand opening events. Lynn is a great supporter of the Village Originals program and has recently focused a lot of her attention on facilitating its development. In addition, she is a long-time subscriber and beloved donor.



Lynn Meyer

Lynn has touched many projects and people throughout her life, and Village Theatre would like to thank her for her continued support, commitment, and passion over the years.

"Village Theatre can always use help, whether it be monetary or in helping hands and minds," said Meyer. "The arts are one of the toughest areas in which to raise money. People say that it's wonderful to see, but they don't place it on a high priority. Working with Village Theatre has been an absolute delight."

Lynn is a retired business owner and began volunteering because she felt the need to "give back to my community." She was born and reared in the Seattle area and grew up in the Fairmont and Roosevelt hotels, where her father was the general manager. Lynn is also a volunteer at the Woodland Park Zoo, the Senior Foundation of Mercer Island, and the Community Center of Mercer Island. She has served as head of the Chamber of Commerce in Mercer Island for five years and has been a Master Gardener for the past 31 years.

Over the years...

Lynn's favorite Mainstage Production: *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. "I could see that 1,000 times!"

Lynn's favorite Village Originals Production: *Kiss Me Quick Before the Lava Reaches the Village*. "I just thought it was hysterical!" ■

# ART OF GIVING

## Sponsor Spotlights

### ISSAQUAH



First Mutual Bank is pleased to support Village Theatre as the corporate sponsor of *Million Dollar Quartet*. We believe a company should be measured not only by the quality of its products and services, but by the strength of its partnerships within its community.

Based in Bellevue with branches throughout King and Snohomish Counties, First Mutual Bank believes there is no such thing as a typical banking customer. Because we don't believe in a one-size-fits-all approach to banking, our experienced bankers take the time to really learn about your banking needs, to build long-term relationships, and to provide fast, flexible service that's tailored to meet your individual needs. First Mutual Bank is dedicated to providing exceptional service to our customers and our community.

By actively participating in civic affairs that benefit and strengthen our community, we carry out our corporate mission to help businesses succeed, families belong, and communities prosper.

We are proud to be a Village Theatre sponsor and look forward to the high-quality, family-friendly shows that it produces in Issaquah and Everett. Village Theatre is a cultural asset, particularly for our children and families; it promotes positive values and an appreciation for the arts. As an employer and friend to local businesses, Village Theatre stimulates the local economy, providing a healthy nightlife and generating revenue for local restaurants and shops. Village Theatre brings strength and excellence to our area and is a part of what makes our community special. Enjoy *Million Dollar Quartet*. ■



One of the best parts of living in Issaquah Highlands is being a part of the greater community of Issaquah, with its rich heritage, active community life, and neighborhood offerings. Issaquah Highlands, one

of Issaquah's newer neighborhoods, is a good match for Village Theatre: both are vibrant, thriving, creative communities that draw together a diverse mix of generations, occupations, and cultures. Issaquah and Issaquah Highlands offers a richer experience with each passing year, with Salmon Days, outdoor concerts, a variety of shopping, and dining and Village Theatre.

Port Blakely Communities, developer of Issaquah Highlands, is excited to once again join as a sponsor of Village Theatre. We applaud Village Theatre's work in bringing quality, professional theatre to the Mainstage performances, as well as its grass roots efforts to reach a wider audience through its innovative Youth Education programs. We thank Village Theatre, its leaders, performers, volunteers, fellow sponsors, contributors, and patrons for all you do to make Issaquah a better and more entertaining place to live. ■

### EVERETT



Our mission: To be a highly respected and profitable independent community bank, which is widely recognized as a premier provider of financial services within the communities we serve. We provide a balance between our customers, communities, employees, and shareowners, while satisfying regulatory requirements, and treating each other with dignity and respect.

Frontier Bank is a proud sponsor of Village Theatre and is dedicated to the communities and organizations we serve. Here in the Puget Sound Region, we know that the performing arts are an essential ingredient to our exceptional quality of life. Founded in 1978, Frontier Bank is the largest commercial bank in Western Washington. Headquartered in Everett, we now have offices throughout our state. Frontier Bank is proud to sponsor this production of *Million Dollar Quartet*! Thank you for your support of Village Theatre. ■



## The Official Airline of Village Theatre

For the past 15 years, Continental Airlines has been a committed partner of Village Theatre. Thanks in large part to Continental's generous support, Village Theatre has been able to spread its wings and attract nationally-recognized performers, designers, and directors to our stages. Without the support of Continental, Village Theatre's reach and impact would be severely limited. Continental Airlines and Village Theatre have a unique partnership and mission—both are able to transport us to exotic, magical destinations through the excitement of travel and the power of live theatre. Village Theatre sincerely appreciates the invaluable contributions we have received from Continental Airlines.

Continental Airlines entered the airline business on July 15, 1934 dedicated to providing the most reliable service to most people. Today, Continental Airlines continues to maintain that standard with more than 44,000 employees. Continental Airlines serves 292 destinations and more than 61 millions passengers annually with more than 3,200 daily departures internationally. A leader among all airlines, Continental has gone the furthest toward "green" operations, spending more than \$16 billion over the past ten years to replace its fleet with more efficient aircraft. Its 13 full-time staff environmentalists work with engine manufacturers, design green terminals, and track carbon emissions and chemical recycling daily. Even all the trash from company headquarters is later sorted for recyclables. Continental Airlines continues its commitment to provide the best possible product and service to its customers. That commitment has paid dividends for the airline — Continental continues to be recognized as the best in the industry by a variety of sources and has recently earned noteworthy recognitions and awards that include:

- No. 1 Most Admired Global Airline; Fortune magazine (2004, 2005, and 2006)
- No. 1 Most Admired U.S. Airline; Fortune magazine (2006)
- Best Executive/Business Class; OAG Airline of the Year Awards (2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006)
- Best Airline Based in North America; OAG Airline of the Year Awards (2004, 2005, and 2006)
- Best Trans-Atlantic and Trans-Pacific Business Class among U.S. airlines; Conde Nast Traveler (1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006)
- Best Airline for Travel in North America, Best Flight Attendants in the US, and Best Inflight Service in the US by reader survey in the UK's Business Traveller magazine (December 2006) ■

## ON STAGE

### MAINSTAGE PERFORMANCES

#### *Million Dollar Quartet*

Book by Colin Escott and Floyd Mutrux

Music Arrangements by Chuck Mead

Directed by Floyd Mutrux and Matt Walker

Musical Direction by Chuck Mead

Issaquah: September 19–October 28, 2007

Everett: November 2–18, 2007

#### Rodgers & Hammerstein's *The King and I*

Music by Richard Rodgers

Book and Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II

Based on *Anna and the King of Siam* by

Margaret Landon

Issaquah: November 14, 2007–January 6, 2008

Everett: January 11–27, 2008

### VILLAGE ORIGINALS PERFORMANCES

#### *Love is Love*

A Developmental Production

Conceived and Directed by Martin Charnin

Music and Lyrics by Rich Gray and

Martin Charnin

Musical Direction by Dwight Beckmeyer

First Stage Theatre, Issaquah

November 30–December 23, 2007

### PIED PIPER PERFORMANCES

#### Katie Couric's *The Brand New Kid*

Adapted from the book by Katie Couric

Book by Melanie Marnich

Music by Michael Friedman

Lyrics by Melanie Marnich and Michael Friedman

Produced by The Kennedy Center for Young

Audiences On Tour

Everett Civic Auditorium

November 4, 2007

## INFORMATION

### Subscriber Rewards Card Participants as of August 3, 2007:

Anabel's Framing & Gallery • Bellevue Arts

Museum • Bherd Studios • Countryside

Floral and Garden • Extreme Pizza

• Fins Bistro • Fitness Together • Howard

Mandville Gallery • Lake City Florist

• North Creek Medical • Pilates Northwest

• Pogacha of Issaquah • Rain City Cigar

• Seattle Parties • Seiko the Company

Store • Sunset Bowl • Yoga Circle Studio.

Complete details are available online.

### Scripts & Production Preview Guides:

Both are available at our Box Office locations free of charge. Preview a script or read a production guide to learn more about a specific performance and if it is right for you and your family.

### Lost Your Tickets? Can't Make it to a Scheduled Performance?

Simply call the Box Office and your tickets will be replaced at no charge. As a subscriber, you may also exchange your tickets for a different production date for the same show, up to 24 hours prior to the date on your tickets. You may also exchange tickets between performance venues.

### Box Office:

Francis J. Gaudette Theatre, Issaquah

(425) 392-2202

Everett Performing Arts Center

(425) 257-8600

Hours: Tue-Sat 11:00 AM-7:00 PM

[www.villagetheatre.org](http://www.villagetheatre.org)

## MISSION

Our mission is to be a regionally recognized and nationally influential center of excellence in family theatre:

- To promote a season of top quality productions
- To commission and produce new musicals that achieve national exposure
- To train young people in theatre skills for career opportunities and enriched lives
- To develop a broad-based appreciation for live theatre
- To promote positive values through art

Based in Issaquah, with operations in Everett, Village Theatre is a leading producer of musical theatre in the Pacific Northwest. Producing entertaining quality productions for the entire family since 1979, Village Theatre has grown into one of the region's best-attended professional Equity theatres. Through its Village Originals program, Village Theatre is nationally recognized for its contribution to the development of new musicals, having launched over 60 new works to date. Village Theatre also takes pride in nurturing tomorrow's audiences through its youth education programs, Pied Piper and KIDSTAGE, serving over 53,000 young people, families, and schools annually. ■

# Village Theatre

Mainstage • Village Originals • KIDSTAGE • Pied Piper

at the Francis J. Gaudette Theatre  
303 Front Street North  
Issaquah, WA 98027

[www.villagetheatre.org](http://www.villagetheatre.org)

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