



BEHIND THE SCENES

Calliope Productions, Inc., 150 Main Street, Boylston, MA 01505

www.calliopeproductions.org

September 2020



What's Been Happening at Calliope Productions

Although productions and other group activities have been suspended at Calliope over the past six months, we have been able to take advantage of the "down time" to work on other projects.

More time has been available to maintain and tend the lawn areas and upgrade the flower gardens in the front of the building and along the front of the parking lot. The walls and trim in the Lobby and hallways have been repainted.

The files of past theatre programs, reviews, and newspaper articles have been sorted through and reorganized, and a written history of Calliope Productions is in the process of being completed.

In the performance hall, all the seating has been thoroughly cleaned, and the walls, ceiling, and ramped seating platform have been repainted.

Much-needed cleaning and repairing of the lighting system has also been done, and the placement of backstage lighting components has been improved.

Renovations of the rest rooms for performers in the basement have also been completed. And the overdue purging and reorganization of Calliope's costume rooms and prop and general storage area (which also doubles as the men's dressing room) in the basement are well underway.

Additional items on the punch list for the next few months include several more painting projects and identifying old VHS tapes of past productions and then transferring them onto DVDs.

Youth Theatre Activities

Keeping Theatre Alive For Student Performers

Starting early in the spring, when rehearsals for Calliope's Pre-Teen workshop April production of **BOTS!** had to be cancelled due to the pandemic, Calliope's Megan Burke began developing ways to keep Calliope's student performers engaged in theatre activities.

With assistance from some of the members of her Calliope Teen Troupe, Megan started running weekly virtual workshops on ZOOM for interested students - at no cost to participants.

One highlight involved Pre-Teens working with playwright Steve Murray on his new musical, ***Greece is the Word: The Zeusical*** over the April school vacation week.

From May 13 through June 3, Megan ran virtual workshops for both Pre-Teens and Teens. She expanded the program to a five-week schedule of once-a-week classes of 45 to 60 minutes each during July.

These sessions included Paul Spanagel teaching stage combat, Matt Cory conducting tutorials in accents, and NYC professional performers Patrick Reidy and Kari Grunburg appearing as guest speakers.

On August 6, participants enjoyed engaging in a virtual "read-through / sing-through" of the musical ***James and the Giant Peach***.

We are grateful for all the time and effort that Megan Burke has put into keeping our Teen and Pre-Teen students connected to Calliope and the theatre experience.

Additional Youth Theatre opportunities for the fall and winter will be posted on Calliope's website and Facebook page.

BEHIND THE SCENES was a periodic newsletter that Calliope started in 1991. It was used to announce upcoming performance seasons, special events and productions, newsworthy items, and registrations for workshops and Youth Theatre programs. The last issue of **BEHIND THE SCENES** was in February 2010. We decided to resurrect this newsletter to bring our friends and patrons up to date with the status of Calliope Productions during the current pandemic shutdown.

To Our Friends and Patrons:

The Shows *Will* Go On

Six months ago, before the final performances of our March production of *The Lady Vanishes*, Calliope Productions went into shutdown out of concern for our performers and audiences members in light of the dangers posed by COVID-19.

Several weeks later, in accordance with Governor Baker's lockdown order and his ruling relegating live theatre performances to "Phase 4" of the state's reopening plan, we postponed our remaining 2020 shows until 2021.

These are the shows listed on the back page of this mailing as "waiting in the wings" until opening our theatre for performers and audiences is safe and viable again.

As has happened with theatre companies across the world - from major Broadway and West End theatres, to regional and local playhouses, and fledgling acting troupes - cancelling the bulk of the 2020 season was not easy.

The theatre is an exciting and magical place, providing a unique experience for audiences and performers alike that cannot be replicated through any written, recorded, or electronic medium. It generates a unifying and shared cohesiveness among people - which makes the need to keep theatre alive even more urgent in the dark times that we are all experiencing.

Losing the connectedness found in theatre has been perhaps most disheartening to students in our Youth Theatre program who had been yearning to return to their theatre "home" in the summer after being separated from their friends during the isolation of pandemic quarantines and a disjointed end of the school year.

Fortunately, many of our students found comradery through the online theatre workshop sessions that Calliope's Megan Burke ran in the spring and summer (see article on page 1).

For many businesses and organizations, the financial implications of enduring an extended shutdown during this pandemic have been devastating. Calliope's consistently responsible fiscal management over the past 38 years, however, have put us in better shape than most other theatre companies.

Nevertheless, routine expenses for Calliope's utilities, internet, telephone, alarm system, and general maintenance, as well as service and professional fees, can be a drain on our resources over the long term.

During the past several months, donations from theatre patrons, performers, parents of Youth Theatre students, and Board Members have helped Calliope cover some of these necessary expenditures.

But more donations are needed between now and the time when we are able generate income from our first production of 2021.

Please consider making a contribution to Calliope Productions' COVID-19 Emergency Fund by using the **Donor Form** below - or by making a donation online at www.calliopeproductions.org

If you are unable to make a monetary contribution at this time but have one or more gift cards (e.g. for Lowe's, Staples, Home Depot, Amazon, Target, etc.) please consider mailing it/them to Calliope. Every little bit helps!

All of us at Calliope thank you for your continued support and encouragement and wish you the best of health. We're looking forward to having you join us again in 2021!

- Dave Ludt

Calliope Productions COVID-19 Emergency Fund Donor Form

Calliope Productions, Inc.
P.O. Box 581
Boylston, MA 01505

Name _____ E-Mail _____

Address _____

ZIP _____

Please Fill In Spaces and Check Appropriate Boxes:

I would like to donate to Calliope's COVID-19 Emergency Fund. Amount of Donation: \$ _____

Enclosed is my Check.

Charge the above Amount to the following Credit Card: (Please Circle) AMEX / Discover / MasterCard / VISA

Card Number: _____ Expiration Date _____

Name on Card _____ Signature _____

Today's Date _____

Please do NOT list my name as a Donor in any programs or brochures.

Calliope Productions is a non-profit corporation registered as a Massachusetts public charity. Donations to Calliope are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law and qualify for Employers' Matching Gifts Program. Please contact your employer for details.

The Current State of Cultural Organizations

Surveys and studies conducted by the Massachusetts Cultural Council over the past several months focusing on the effects the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the state's non-profit cultural organizations have painted a somber picture.

Citing a current loss of \$425 million in Massachusetts alone due to COVID-19 cancellations and closures, the Council estimates that it will take at least two years after reopening for such organizations to return to pre-COVID-19 levels of programming and financial security.

For live theatres, reducing occupancy, eliminating concessions, installing sanitizing stations, and implementing rigorous safety protocols will require additional time, expertise, and resources - all of which have financial implications.

As stated by Governor Baker, Phase 4 regulations for reopening indoor theatres is dependent on the "development of vaccines and/or treatments."

Calliope's Board of Directors, however, feels it would be imprudent for us to consider rehearsing and performing productions until the spread of the pandemic has been halted, vaccines have been in widespread usage, and audiences (and performers) feel safe in returning to the theatre.

For updates and more information about relevant Massachusetts studies and guidelines please visit massculturalcouncil.org and mass.gov/reopening.

Help Wanted

Calliope is looking for someone with QuickBooks experience to take over bookkeeping responsibilities from Jan Fuller, Calliope's Treasurer, who has doubling up as Calliope's bookkeeper since 2003.

This is a part-time job that would start in early 2021.

If you or someone you know has the experience and interest in Taking over this bookkeeping position, e-mail us at calliope@calliopeproductions.org for additional information.



Calliope Productions is supported, in part, by the Massachusetts Cultural Council through a grant from the Local Cultural Council of Boylston.

Signs of the Times. . .

Because Calliope has no upcoming shows to advertise, we have been using the signboard outside Calliope for topical messages:



Spring



Summer



Fall



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Waiting in the Wings for Calliope's 2021 Season . . .

MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT

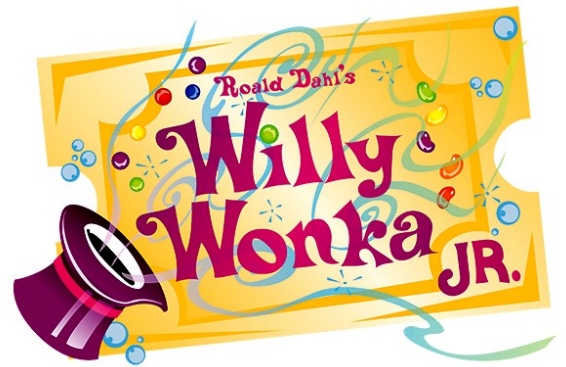


Love, Loss,
and
What I Wore

RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S

CINDERELLA

BYEBYE BIRDIE



Calliope Theatre
150 Main Street
Boylston, MA