

Published June 24th, 2020

A crack in the door: 'Live' art returns to Lamorinda

By *Sophie Braccini*



Murder Mystery with Mr. Grim Photo Malcolm Cowler

Much like in the spring when little flowers start poking their heads out of the ground, art projects are gently sprouting again in Lamorinda. A new painting was installed at the Moraga Commons Park, Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery in Lafayette reopened alongside the Moraga Art Gallery, the Orinda Starlight Village Players are offering a live murder mystery online, while Lafayette's Town Hall Theatre invites audiences to revisit Oscar Wilde's "An Ideal Husband."

It has been a very difficult three-month period for artists, very often deprived of revenue but still having to face fixed costs linked to their art, and unable to share their productions with the public. The community has also been deprived of artistic nourishment, but the tide is, slowly, turning.

First signs of new art are visual. Two galleries are reopening to the public, on a limited basis to comply with the county health services' order. Jennifer Perlmutter in Lafayette whose gallery occupies the large former bank at the corner of Moraga Road and Mt. Diablo Boulevard

feels very comfortable with distance and masks. At this time no receptions or events are being planned but the doors are open for the public to see the new exhibition by Dana DeKalb and Jane Fisher, "Domesticated," Wednesday through Saturday between 2 and 6 p.m.

The spacious Moraga Art Gallery has reopened, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday from noon to 3 p.m. The artists collaborative that manages the gallery says that it will continue to implement safe practices for protection of visitors and staff alike. Face masks are required, the number of customers is limited to four people at a time, and if there is a need to touch the artwork, a box of gloves is available at the front desk.

Free for viewing in Lamorinda are the statues displayed in public places in the three cities, including a project of the Moraga Art in Public Spaces committee, consisting of a new original art piece by student Anna Chao, photographed and turned into a wrap for the large electric utility box at the Moraga Commons Park.

According to the latest health order, theaters are not to reopen before July 15. Professional entertainers are finding creative ways to keep working and producing.

The Orinda Starlight Village Players are offering every Thursday of the week in July a live Zoom murder mystery called "Betsy." It is described as a combination between an escape room and dinner murder mystery, hosted by mysterious Mr. Grim (Malcolm Cowler). A group of eight actors will tell the story and act the different parts while up to nine guests will play live online to discover "who did it." The Players are offering this online entertainment for free, but donations will be appreciated. To reserve a spot on a Thursday night please email Info@orsvp.org or call (925) 528-9225.

Town Hall Theatre in Lafayette is also offering online entertainment for free, and is grateful for donations. The team is offering through July 17 Oscar Wilde's "An Ideal Husband," one of its archival videos recorded during a live performance, which has the feeling of an in-person viewing. Although the play is set in 1895 London, the themes could not be more relevant today. Director Susan Hovey stated that the topic is timeless. There is political intrigue and scandal, but the show does not hit you over the head with it. It's scathingly witty and thoroughly entertaining at the same time. The video is accessible on the theater's website link (www.townhalltheatre.com/

town-hall-video-archives.)

Cal Shakes will not be seen at the Bruins Theater in Orinda this summer, but is busy with engaging youth in its summer conservatory.



From left: Heather Kellogg and Dennis Markam in "An Ideal Husband" by Oscar Wilde. Photo Jay Yamada

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