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Cripple Creek Theater Gets New Life from Thin Air

A long-time summer tradition in Cripple Creek takes on a new and exciting role beginning June 1. An all new theater company with an all new venue will premier this summer, continuing the magic, drama and fun of classic Cripple Creek melodrama on the stage of the Butte Theater.

Thin Air Theatre Company, comprised of 3 veteran melodrama actors with roots in the days of the Imperial Players, will stage two new productions this summer and follow up with 2 all new shows in the fall holiday season. This new venue will include melodrama as well as a classic western musical, mystery and holiday fun.

This effort is being lead by 3 of those veterans, all of whom have appeared on the Butte stage and have a passion for theater in Cripple Creek - producers, actors and writers Chris Armbrister and Mickey Burdick and actor and producer Mel Moser. Chris Sorensen is adapting and writing the shows for the company.

Thin Air Theatre Company's endeavors will bring to the Butte material never before seen on the Cripple Creek stage – 4 new shows not to be missed.

The new season kicks off June with *The Colorado Colleen*, a Victorian classic melodrama set in Cripple Creek, adapted by Chris Sorensen from Dion Boucicault. Combine on stage a secret marriage, a mother plotting to increase her family's social status by marrying her daughter to a rich mine owner, an evil servant and an Irish bootlegger who saves the day, and you have another fun-filled outing for the entire family.

The Colorado Colleen runs June 1- July 30.

Annie Get Your Gun, one of Broadway's most loved musicals, with such songs as *There's No Business Like Show Business* and *Anything You Can Do I Can Do Better*, is the season's second summer show. It is based on the spectacular career of sharpshooter Annie Oakley. The story surrounds Oakley's relationship with Frank Butler who she ousts as the star of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. The show ends with a winner-takes-all shooting match where they both realize their love outweighs their pride.

Annie Get Your Gun runs Aug. 3-Sept. 29.

When fall comes to Cripple Creek, complete with that eerie full moon that rises over the historic headframes, it will be time for Halloween and a new mystery on stage. *Dr. Jekyll's Medicine Show* will bring a new twist to the Jekyll and Hyde story. Henry Jekyll, an assistant to a medicine show huckster, concocts a tonic that actually does everything it is claimed to do and more, unfortunately for several victims. Battling the demon Jekyll creates in himself means fighting a murderer, gambler, womanizer and cheater – to save Cripple Creek and the woman he loves. Written by Sorensen and directed by Moser, *Dr. Jekyll's Medicine Show* runs Oct. 5-31.

After filling the stage with mystery and murder, Thin Air Theatre will transform the scene into holiday splendor with an all-new show, *Angel of the Christmas Mine*. Written by Sorensen and directed by Armbrister, three 1890's hard rock miners opt to pull a shift down under on Christmas Eve. When a cave-in traps the miners, they spin Christmas tales to keep their minds off their fate. Cripple Creek folks work to rescue the miners and short of a miracle there is not much hope. But miracles can happen at this time of year.

Combine melodrama, music, mystery and miracles and you get action-packed and fun-filled season of theater in Cripple Creek. Individual and season tickets are available for all 4 shows.

For information about the Thin Air Theater Company shows at the Butte and how to make reservations online or by phone, visit www.butteoperahouse.com.