

For immediate release

Former Players Bring Talents to Thin Air Theatre Company

From acting on stage, three former melodrama cast members have taken on a new role in the tradition of Cripple Creek theater.

Chris Armbrister, Mel Moser and Mickey Burdick, all former Imperial and/or Cripple Creek Players cast members put their theater talents together last fall to form a new company – Thin Air Theatre Company (TATC). Two more former Imperial Players members, Chris Sorensen and Terry Herron are also helping with writing and directing shows for TATC.

The new venture will stage classic Cripple Creek melodrama, musicals and professional shows in the Butte this summer and fall. After the long and successful tradition of melodrama appeared to be ending with the resignation of the Mackin family late last summer, the actors pooled their energies, efforts and resources to create a new company that would ensure the continuation of professional theater and melodrama.

“After years of working as an actor in Cripple Creek, I was naturally thrilled when the opportunity arose to become a part of the new Butte programming”, said Burdick who has performed in several melodramas, *The Vampire of Cripple Creek* and recently wrote and performed in *A Christmas Wish*.

A former Christmas show written by Armbrister and Sorensen inspired Armbrister to return to Cripple Creek and lend his talents to TATC.

“The thing that brought me back to Cripple Creek is the people and the incredible support that I saw when producing *A Cripple Creek Christmas Carol*. The first time I drove down Tenderfoot hill I was captivated by the vision that stretched out before me. As I pulled up to the Imperial, where the melodrama used to be performed back in those days, I felt like I had stepped into another era; you gotta remember this was before there were any casinos in town...it was magical,” said Armbrister. “When TATC was approached by the City of Cripple Creek with this new venture, that magical feeling began again to emerge and I knew then that TATC was a project I had to be a part of...there is nothing better in the world than doing something you love (theater), with good friends whom you trust and just enjoy being around, in a place that ignites your creative spirit.”

Actors, directors, writers and managers – the three are also friends as well as business partners in TATC.

“The chance to work with such talented individuals in such a fine theatre rarely comes along, so I welcomed the challenge with open arms,” said Burdick, who is also managing a professional theater project in Estes Park. “It’s a bit of a change, being behind the scenes now, but to tell the truth, I’m just getting too old to keep up with all the dancing anymore,” he quipped.

Moser, a longtime face on the Imperial and Butte stages and Butte Theater Manager, grew up in eastern Montana’s ranch country.

“My exposure to theatre was limited, but what did stick with me was a small rural town in the area that had a live stage theater. It was the pride of not only the community, but of the surrounding area as well,” said Moser.

For many who lived in that area, the days before cable/satellite tv/ computers etc, it may have been the only live entertainment some of these folks would ever see in their lifetime.

“It made a difference in their lives and the pride the community had for this little theater, I guess stuck with me. I would like to think the Butte Theatre has this same potential and I like being a part of that,” Moser said.

Thin Air Theatre Company will be producing a classic Victorian melodrama opening June 1. A second professional show the western musical classic *Annie Get Your Gun*, will open Aug.3, followed by a Halloween show and all new Christmas show.

If all goes as planned, TATC will be back in 2008 with more professional shows – making a year-round live theater venue a success at the Butte.

“My hope is to see this theater and this town thrive in ways we never thought possible; to produce a body of work that will leave the public smiling, and enrich the lives of those around us,” said Burdick. “We (TATC) have a lot of passion, and high ambitions. I hope you enjoy this show, and leave here to tell others about your experience. It is only with your help that we can meet these lofty goals and continue to produce the high quality entertainment people have come to expect from the Butte. “

For more information on TATC and the summer season, visit www.buttoperahouse.com.