

Idiot String
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Schedule announced for *Elixir of Life* a world premiere ensemble theatre production touring Bay Area parks this autumn

Rebecca Longworth and Joan Howard, co-Artistic directors of the ensemble theatre collaborative Idiot String, have announced a performance schedule their next outdoor traveling production, a world premiere titled *Elixir of Life* that will tour Bay Area parks this autumn.

Elixir of Life will be performed outdoors with FluxWagon, Idiot String's folding mobile stage, in Bay Area parks on **Friday through Sunday evenings October 20 through November 12**. The show will visit San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, Alameda, Port Costa, Pleasanton, San Mateo, and Santa Clara.

Elixir of Life invites the audience to Port Promise, California, a late Victorian outpost where mysteries are part of the fabric of life, and an old-fashioned tonic might do a body good. When a traveling Snake-Oil Seller comes to town with an Elixir full of promises, each of the Port Promise townsfolk come face to face with the prospect of a miraculous second chance that could change their lives forever.

Performed outdoors on Autumn evenings near dusk—when the separation between the physical world and the spiritual world is said to be at its most delicate—*Elixir of Life* elicits laughter, contemplation, and a sense that anything is possible.

Friday performances are set for 6:30pm, while Saturday and Sunday begin about one hour before sunset. A full list of performance times can be found at www.idiotstring.org/elixir.

All shows are free and open to the public. Due to space considerations, reservations are recommended and may be made online at idiotstring.org/elixir.

At most performances, a donation is suggested, but no one will be turned away for lack of funds. In Pleasanton, San Mateo and Santa Clara, admission is completely free of charge.

Production sponsors include the **City of Pleasanton** for the performance at Firehouse Performing Arts Center on October 29; the **Downtown San Mateo Association** for the performance at San Mateo Central Park on November 5; and **Santa Clara City Library Foundation and Friends** for the performance at Santa Clara's Mission Branch Library on November 11.

Audience members should expect to stand and move around during the outdoor performances and are encouraged to dress warmly. *Elixir of Life* is suitable for all ages, but best enjoyed by audience members aged 9 or older.

More information can be found at www.idiotstring.org/elixir.

Performance Sponsors

The City of Pleasanton Firehouse Arts Center, in the refurbished historic Pleasanton Fire House, is designed to promote participation in recreational experiences as they relate to the arts. Offering a thriving youth theater program, theater performances, arts exhibits, and classes of all kinds, the Firehouse Arts Center serves as an inviting beacon in the heart of Pleasanton, strengthening community image and sense of place. The City of Pleasanton will sponsor a performance of *Elixir of Life* on the grounds of the Firehouse Arts Center on Sunday, October 29 at 5:15pm, one hour before sunset.

The Downtown San Mateo Association (DSMA) is a coalition of San Mateo businesses owners who promote business and civic activity and improve the downtown experience for all. Downtown San Mateo is a an award-winning dining destination and walkable urban neighborhood in the heart of the Peninsula. For more information, call 650-342-5520 or visit downtownsanmateo.org. The DSMA will sponsor a performance of *Elixir of Life* at San Mateo Central Park on Sunday, November 5 at 4:05pm, one hour before sunset.

The Santa Clara City Library Foundation and Friends (www.lovethelibrary.org) (SCCLFF) is a non-profit organization dedicated to supplementing public funding to expand and enhance the Santa Clara City Library's programs & services. The Santa Clara City Library, serves the city of Santa Clara and surrounding communities with three library branches, including the Central Park Library, which houses the majority of the Library's collection as well as public art, computer and Internet facilities, a café and bookstore, a renowned genealogy and local history collection, and a children's garden; and the Mission Branch Library and Family Reading Center, which has hosted performances by the Samuel Peaches Peripatetic Players since 2014, and borders scenic Mission Plaza Park. SCCLFF sponsors an *Elixir of Life* performance at the Mission Branch Library on Saturday, November 11 at 4:00pm, one hour before sunset.

Elixir of Life Cast & Creative Team

The cast of *Elixir of Life* features **Julie Douglas** (of *Ondine*, *Macbeth* and *Odyssey on Angel Island* with We Players, and *Comedy of Errors* with Impact Theatre) as the travelling salesperson, Doctor Vitae. Vitae's two assistants are played by physical comedians **Joan Howard** (Idiot String's co-Artistic Director, who has appeared in *O Best Beloved*, *Aesop Amuck*, and *Shakespeare or Space Wars* with Samuel Peaches Peripatetic Players; and in foolsFURY's *Faulted* and *The Unheard-Of World*) and **Miyaka Cochrane** (*Comedy of Errors*, *Richard III*, and others with Impact Theatre; *Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory* and *Pirates of Penzance* with Berkeley Playhouse).

Actors playing inhabitants of fictional Port Promise, California, include **Sam Bertken** (of *Killing My Lobster* and Samuel Peaches Peripatetic Players), playing a preacher who is relatively new in town; **Kristen Matia** (the performance series *Ei8ht*) as a barmaid with wanderlust; **Maria Leigh** (*Macbitch* and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* with The Breadbox; *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth* with We Players) as wealthy but lonely Josephine; **Casey Robbins** plays recently-widowed Ernest, the saloon-keeper, and serves as Music Director (Casey had appeared with Samuel Peaches Peripatetic Players and in *The House of Yes* at Custom Made Theatre; he is also a composer whose original musical, *Gravedigger*, will be produced at PianoFight this fall); **Marlene Yarosh** (of Samuel Peaches Peripatetic Players, *Horse's Ass* with Repurposed Theatre, and *Orlando* and *Much Ado About Nothing* with TheatreFIRST) plays Sybil, a fiercely independent shopkeeper.

Idiot String's co-Artistic Director, **Rebecca Longworth**, directs and has assembled the script from characters, stories and text devised by the ensemble. Rebecca's recent credits include directing Idiot String's Samuel Peaches Peripatetic Players, *Buyer and Cellar* at New Conservatory Theatre Center, and devising original, site-specific work with the Hatch Collective. **Addie McDowell** designs costumes, and **Megan Hillard** is the production's scenic artist, and **Kevin Landesman** serves as lighting consultant. Artist **Wendy Addison**, proprietor of Port Costa's Theatre of Dreams (www.wendyaddisonstudio.com) has designed paper props for the production, such as posters for the Seller's medicine show and medicine bottle labels.

About Idiot String

Idiot String's mission is to create performances that are accessible to a broad audience and that inspire creativity, engagement in the physical world, and connection between people. Their work has been recognized with a **Stuart Award for Excellence in Theatre**, and funding from **Theatre Bay Area** and the **San Francisco Awesome Foundation**.

Idiot String is the production company behind the **Samuel Peaches Peripatetic Players**, the fictional troupe of eccentric travelling thespians who have toured Bay Area parks annually since 2014 with their adaptations of popular stories. The Players made their Bay Area debut with ***O Best Beloved***, an adaptation of Rudyard Kipling stories, at the **2013 San Francisco Fringe Festival**, winning a “Best of Fringe” designation. In 2014, ***O Best Beloved*** inaugurated FluxWagon and the Players’ annual tradition of touring Bay Area parks, which they continued with ***Aesop Amuck*** in 2015 and ***Shakespeare or Space Wars***, a mashup of *Romeo & Juliet* with the Star Wars movies in 2016 and 2017.

Idiot String’s name references a delightfully clever device that is useful for all ages: “idiot string” is the affectionate name for the string or yarn that threads through a jacket’s sleeves to hold a pair of mittens in place.

More information at peripateticplayers.org

Calendar Information

Title:

Elixir of Life by Rebecca Longworth and the Ensemble

Tour Schedule & Locations:

Friday performances are at 6:30pm. Saturday and Sunday performances begin approximately one hour before sunset.

Friday 10/20 @ 6:30pm - Mosswood Park, Oakland

3612 Webster Street, Oakland — near the J. Mora Moss House

Presented in association with Oakland Parks, Recreation & Youth Development

Saturday 10/21 @ 5:20pm - Mosswood Park, Oakland

3612 Webster Street, Oakland — near the J. Mora Moss House

Presented in association with Oakland Parks, Recreation & Youth Development

Sunday 10/22 @ 5:20pm - Port Costa School, Port Costa

1 Plaza del Hambre, Port Costa — at the intersection of Canyon Lake Dr & Reservoir St

Presented in association with the Port Costa Conservation Society

Friday 10/27 @ 6:30pm - Washington Square, San Francisco

Filbert at Stockton Street, San Francisco

Presented in association with San Francisco Recreation & Parks

Saturday 10/28 @ 5:15pm - Washington Square, San Francisco

Filbert at Stockton Street, San Francisco

Presented in association with San Francisco Recreation & Parks

Sunday 10/29 @ 5:15pm - Firehouse Arts Center, Pleasanton (FREE)

4444 Railroad Ave, Pleasanton — on the grounds of Firehouse Arts Center

Sponsored by the City of Pleasanton

Friday 11/3 @ 6:30pm - Live Oak Park, Berkeley

1301 Shattuck Ave, Berkeley — between Eunice and Berryman, just down the hill from Live Oak Theater.

Presented in association with Berkeley Parks & Recreation

Saturday 11/4 @ 5:05pm - Live Oak Park, Berkeley

1301 Shattuck Ave, Berkeley — between Eunice and Berryman, just down the hill from Live Oak Theater.

Presented in association with Berkeley Parks & Recreation

Sunday 11/5 @ 4:05pm - Central Park, San Mateo (FREE)

50 E 5th Ave, San Mateo

Sponsored by the Downtown San Mateo Association

Saturday 11/11 @ 4:00pm - Santa Clara City Library (FREE)

1098 Lexington St, Santa Clara — near the Mission Branch Library

Sponsored by the Santa Clara City Library Foundation and Friends

Sunday 11/12 @ 4:00pm - Franklin Park, Alameda

Find us near the intersection of San Antonio Ave and Morton Street

Presented in association with Alameda Recreation & Parks

Tickets & Reservations:

All shows are free and open to the public. At most performances, a donation is suggested, but no one will be turned away for lack of funds. In Pleasanton, San Mateo and Santa Clara, admission is completely free of charge.

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idiotstring.org/elixir.

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