

'Love Letters' opens at Park Hall

Peter Burke | Posted: Thursday, August 18, 2011 12:00 am

Mountain Community Theater will bring a unique and critically acclaimed play to Park Hall in Ben Lomond this weekend.

"Love Letters," by A.R. Gurney, was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for drama in 1990 because of the exquisite storytelling in the two-person play that has been performed by the likes of theater greats Joanna Gleason and John Rubinstein and actors Michael Emerson and Carrie Preston.

This month, a group of veteran Mountain Community Theater actors and actresses will portray the lifelong relationship between the staid and dutiful Andrew and the lively but unstable Melissa by way of letters they write to each other.

The show is unique in that the power of the words, without glamorous sets or songs, drives the performance.

"It's so beautifully written," Rita Wadsworth, one of the leads, gushed.

Mountain Community Theater veterans Wadsworth and Stuart Serman will star in one of six performances over the next two weekends.

MCT will put on the play on two stages: three performances at Park Hall in Ben Lomond this weekend and three performances at Center Stage in downtown Santa Cruz Aug. 26 through 28.

"We have the cream of the crop in Santa Cruz and San Lorenzo Valley in terms of actors," said director Wendy Edmonds of Boulder Creek. "The writing is so exquisite. He insists on no music, simple lighting and no set to speak of."

The experienced actors must rely on voice inflection to display their interpretation of the letters. Edmonds and her husband, Steve Edmonds, will perform the first show at 8 p.m. Aug. 19.

Wadsworth brought the play to MCT after another play fell through for the August bill. She had previously directed it with her theatre company, Elf Empire at Bocce Cellar in Santa Cruz. Then, MCT performed the show in 2005, directed by Edmonds.

"It's been a team effort through MCT," Edmonds said. "A lot of the early MCT members have come in working with the new ones."

For information: www.mctshows.org or 336-4777.

Performances at Park Hall, 9370 Mill St., in Ben Lomond



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Stuart Serman, who will play Andrew, and Rita Wadsworth, who will play play Melissa, rehearse for their upcoming show at Park Hall. Peter Burke/Press-Banner

**7 p.m. Aug. 19: Wendy and Steve Edmonds

**7 p.m. Aug. 20: Kathie Kratochvil and Peter Gelblum

**2 p.m. Aug. 21: Rita Wadsworth and Stuart Serman

Performances at Center Stage, 1001 Center St., in Santa Cruz

**7 p.m. Aug. 26: Suzanne Schrag and Noel Warwick

**7 p.m. Aug. 27: Ann McCormick and Marty Lee Jones

**2 p.m. Aug. 28: Sarah Albertson and Bill Peters

**Tickets: \$15, \$12 for students and seniors