

Roanoke's Mill Mountain Theatre staging 'The Sound of Music'

Joe Tennis | Bristol Herald Courier | Posted: Wednesday, December 18, 2013 11:30 am

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Mill Mountain Theatre of downtown Roanoke closes its 2013 season with a production of "The Sound of Music," running through Dec. 22.

BY JOE TENNIS

BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

ROANOKE, Va. - On a chilly Thursday night in the heart of downtown Roanoke, the stage of the Mill Mountain Theatre is alive with "The Sound of Music."

All across town, too, word on the street has become a buzz with the majesty of this production, which marks the first cold-season show since the Mill Mountain Theatre reopened earlier this year at the Center in the Square.

The center's reopening is all thanks to a \$30 million renovation, which helped bring the Center in the Square back to life for a handful of museums celebrating science; African-American culture; and the history in the mountains of Western Virginia, stretching from Bristol and the coalfields to the Blue Ridge and headwaters of the James River.

"We're a giant, cultural center for three museums," said Julee Goodman, vice president of development for Center in the Square. "And we provide a completely free home for these organizations."

At the forefront, beyond the saltwater aquariums in the front lobby, are the front doors leading to the Mill Mountain Theatre, an institution that celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2014 with a season of shows that include "Swing!" opening May 7; "The Wizard of Oz" opening Aug 1; "To Kill a Mockingbird" opening on Oct. 1; and "Children of Eden" opening on Dec. 3.

Once, this professional theater group was located on Mill Mountain at the old Rockledge Inn. But a fire forced the group to relocate, temporarily, to the Grandin Theatre in Roanoke's Grandin Village. By the mid-1980s, however, the group had moved again - this time to the Center in the Square: what is now a seven-story, 200,000-square-foot cultural complex, standing about two hours north of downtown Bristol.

Mill Mountain Theatre, today, features 340 seats in its Trinkle Auditorium.

Closing out the 2013 season, with shows through Dec. 22, is "The Sound of Music," highlighted by lively performances of "Climb Ev'ry Mountain," "Do-Re-Mi" and the title song, "The Sound of Music."

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>> If You Go

What: Mill Mountain Theatre

Where: Center in the Square, One Market Square, Roanoke, Va.

Info: 540-342-5740

Web: www.centerinthesquare.org

>>> Barter shows continue through Dec. 29

ABINGDON, Va. - Live shows continue in Abingdon, Va., at the Barter Theatre through Dec. 29 with productions of "A Christmas Story."

Two more shows - "'Twas the Night Before Christmas" and "Another Night Before Christmas" - are also being featured during the Christmas season at the historic theater on Abingdon's Main Street.

"A Christmas Story" is based on a motion picture of the same name and follows the adventure of a boy named Ralphie, who wants a genuine Red Ryder BB gun for Christmas. The show comes alive on Barter's stage with scenes of a school bully, a bunny suit and the triple-dog-dare tongue on the flagpole.>> Want to go? Call 276-628-3991 or visit www.bartertheatre.com

-- JOE TENNIS