

Guests can act up at BC3 dinner theater Nov. 22

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(Butler, PA) Butler County Community College dinner theater guests Nov. 22 can interact with five actors performing a 90-minute comedic murder mystery staged among tables within BC3's Founders Hall, and can submit their written guess as to whodunit before Mystery's Most Wanted's final and conclusive act of "Il Morte de Figaro," the production company's owner said.

"The audience is included," said Randy Oliva, owner of the 25-year-old Penn Hills company and author of the 90-minute play. "We give them lines in the show. We give them parts. We make them characters who have something to do with the plot."

And sometimes, he added, dinner theater guests' participation "is just for comedy value."

The show is considered to be rated PG-13. The dinner theater is scheduled from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. on BC3's main campus in Butler Township and will be catered by the Monroe Hotel, Butler, said Jocilyn Csernyik, BC3's assistant director of student life for activities.

A buffet will include selections such as a tossed salad, Italian sausage with peppers, parmesan-crusted chicken breast, onion-roasted redskin potatoes, pasta alfredo, green bean casserole, rolls, raspberry tea, unsweetened tea and water, Csernyik said.

Mystery's Most Wanted's theater-in-the-round show at Founders Hall will be its eighth, said Oliva, a Chicago native who appeared in the Off-Broadway play "Cowboy Void" and in television commercials for Iron City Light beer, McDonald's, Nationwide Mutual Insurance Co. and Dollar Bank.

His company performs up to 150 times a year.

"Il Morte de Figaro" is set in the 1930s, at the Pantages Theater in New York, home of the Notta-So-Hotta Opera Co., whose shows have been failing, Oliva said. Notta-So-Hotta Opera is hoping its newest production, starring Antonio Bandana, will save the company.

Problem is, Bandana deals with mobsters.

"And," Oliva said, "he owes them a lot of money."

Bodies begin to turn up at the Pantages.

Is Bandana the murderer? Or is it the rumored phantom? Somebody else? After their meal and mingling with actors during an intermission, dinner theater guests will have the chance to solve the mystery.

“Cards will be on the table waiting for them,” Oliva said, “and they will write down who they think the culprit is.”

Cast members will collect the cards and perform the final, 20-minute act. The murderer’s identity will be revealed and Oliva will announce not only those dinner theater guests who correctly identified the culprit – but winners of what he calls “Bonehead Awards.”

“For people who don’t know the answer, and try to be funny,” Oliva said. “Some of the answers are hysterical.”

Tickets cost \$15 and can be purchased by calling Csernyik at 724-287-8711, Ext. 8448, or by emailing jocilyn.csernyik@bc3.edu.

Funds raised will support BC3 student life activities and the purchase of related supplies, Csernyik said.

Cast members are Oliva as Bandana and the phantom; Barbie Williams as Hattie Donovan; Steve Werner as Guiseppi Ricardo; Chris Bondi as Chuck George; and Kaitlin Cliber as Miss Kathleen.