

Vail Valley Theatre Company

Nearly 40 Years of Raising the Curtain on Local Talent

BY LAURA LIEFF



his daughter Anna in a Vail Children's Theater production of *Peter Pan*. Since then, he's been part of one or two shows annually and joined the board of directors a few years ago. Beth Swearingen, artistic director, who was a professional Broadway singer/dancer, has been with the organization for over 30 years. She initially came to Vail in 1990 to work at Club Majiks (where she met friend and collaborator Bob Finnie) for one summer. But, like so many who plan to come to Eagle County for a short stint, Swearingen stayed. "The VVTC has kept me connected to my passion and given me the opportunity to make lifelong friends," she says. "Through the years, Bob and I have written over a dozen shows together including *An Evening on Broadway* and *A Rocky Halloween*. I have also directed and choreographed numerous musicals."

Something for Everyone

With a variety of productions slated for the rest of 2026, VVTC sometimes incorporates over 50 people for each show — including performers, production and stage managers, directors, technicians, production crew, musicians, front of house, set designers/builders and props managers, as well as the members of the board and numerous volunteers.

Regardless of a person's theatre background or experience, VVTC prioritizes inclusion. "We pride ourselves on being open to anyone who wants to be involved," says Tedstrom. "It's exciting, especially in a transient community, that we are a go-to group for people who feel like they haven't found their place elsewhere." VVTC president Connie Kincaid adds, "We thrive on diversity — because it's a source of creativity and because we need all kinds of people to participate in the many different opportunities we have."

Kincaid was a professional dancer/singer in Los Angeles and moved to Vail in 1993



Sybill Navas. According to current board member John Tedstrom, "their goal was to continue the tradition of community theatre in Vail that was started in 1961 as the Vail Players." In 2010, the organization's name changed to VVTC.

In addition to bringing actors, singers, dancers and stage production technicians together, the VVTC provides opportunities to develop new friendships, discover hidden talents and be part of a community theatre group that encourages and cultivates camaraderie. A non-profit organization that values diversity and gives talented locals the opportunity to participate in live theatre, the VVTC's mission is to be "a strong positive force for the arts, helping [the] community stay strong and resilient."

Tedstrom, who has been involved since 2004, decided to delve deeper into theatre after performing with

Since its inception in 1987, the Vail Valley Theatre Company (VVTC) has come a long way. Originally called Vail Community Theater, the organization was founded by three directors: Edmund H. Drager, Jr., Thomas Gorman and

— before Bravo! Vail, the International Dance Festival and Vilar Performing Arts Center existed. “I had entered a wasteland,” she remembers. “With no outlet for my passion, I felt as if I was dying a bit every day until I met Beth Swearingen who introduced me to the VVTC. I joined the company in 2007, then the board and now serve as its president.” She adds, “The company helped make my heart sing again and I have found and made very dear friends. I can truly say that VVTC has been a lifeline.”

In addition to the big productions, VVTC focuses on community programming — theatrical dance class, improv workshops and community choir — in order to give Eagle County residents numerous ways to get involved. “These classes and workshops invite locals to have fun doing something they love, as well as a creative outlet and place to hone their skills,” Swearingen explains. “Our classes and workshops offer a safe, forgiving environment with no pressure to perform. Many dance, improv and choir

participants have no interest in performing, but they do love trying new things and enjoying the arts. In a place where outdoor activities abound, VVTC provides theatrical arts as a choice as well.”

Upcoming Productions

Looking ahead, the VVTC is excited to continue delivering quality live experiences. Without a permanent theatre space, most 2026 shows will be performed in the Grand Hyatt Theatre (the former Cascade Theatre). Their two major productions — *RENT* and Agatha Christie’s *Murder on the Orient Express* — promise full-scale events. *A Christmas Carol* will feature actors in full costume performing a staged reading rather than a fully memorized production, while *Rocky Road Improv* is geared towards audience interaction. “A vibrant arts culture is essential to any thriving and healthy community,” says Kincaid. “There’s really something for everyone and VVTC has been a strong connector for many.” +

2026 SCHEDULE

JUNE 18-21

RENT

AUGUST 21

Rocky Road Improv

OCTOBER 29-31

Agatha Christie’s Murder on the Orient Express

DECEMBER 11

A Christmas Carol



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