

The Studio Theatre Navigates Virtual Table Readings

The Studio Theatre Tierra del Sol produces virtual table readings of plays at 1 p.m. every Friday.

By KRISTEN FIORE

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The Studio Theatre Tierra del Sol is still telling stories.

At 1 p.m. every Friday, the venue streams virtual table readings of plays on Facebook, YouTube and on the websites of The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center and The Studio Theatre.

This Friday's stream is "A Woman of No Importance" by

Oscar Wilde.

"These projects have all been centered on a woman character," said Nathaniel Niemi, resident director at The Studio. "We've been picking projects that show social conditions for women in lots of different time periods and how these amazing ladies are standing up to have their voices heard against injustice."

The theme goes hand in hand with the theme for The Studio's recently announced Season 5: "Well-behaved women seldom make history."

The Studio began posting virtual table readings at the end of April with George Bernard Shaw's "Pygmalion" and has produced table

readings of other titles such as "Trifles" and "Lysistrata." In the coming weeks, patrons can expect table readings of Sophocles' "Antigone," Ashleigh Ann Gardner's "Qualia" and more.

"It's been a blast to direct these virtual readings," Niemi said. "It's great to be back in a rehearsal room, though (it is) virtual, and get creative with some of our Studio family. We've brought back actors we've worked with in the past, so you'll see some familiar faces."

Digital theater does come with some challenges, however.

"Navigating Facebook and learning all the ins and outs of the digital world can be tough

for someone just tuning in," said Kaity Strong, who does digital marketing and communication for The Studio's streams.

So Strong takes in feedback from patrons and strives to have any problems smoothed over by the next week.

"I also think that from a production standpoint, every week the quality of video and art gets more finessed," Strong said. "That's in large part due to our awesome production staff and the ever-talented Ryan Loeckel. He has really been taking this in stride and helping us succeed."

Loeckel, company manager and casting coordinator at The Studio, is responsible for

putting the videos together, which can take 15 to 30 hours of editing, depending on the length of the play.

"I condense recorded footage for time and pacing, create and add transitions between scenes along with a soundtrack chosen by our audio designer, and then work with marketing to release the final cut to our online platforms," Loeckel said.

Loeckel said that so far the feedback has been positive.

"Our whole team has been working and learning assiduously to achieve this process separately but together in order to produce a quality and entertaining product for our community," Loeckel said.

Strong said that it has been thrilling to make theater under new constructs.

"This is actually a very exciting time to look at the art we create and push ourselves artistically to put it in a different forum," she said.

Watch the table readings on Facebook at @thesharondiotheatretierradelsol, on The Sharon's website www.thesharon.com, on The Studio Theatre's website www.thesharonstudio.com, and on YouTube at The Villages Entertainment.

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