

'Drive-in' theater

**Chico Theater Co.
is back with a fun
parking-lot production**

As if to confirm the old theater adage that "the show must go on," in this case despite the pandemic, Chico Theater Company (CTC) is mounting a live theater event in—get this—its Eaton Road parking lot.

by
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Review:
*The Diaries of
Adam and Eve* shows
Thursday-Sunday,
7:30 p.m., through
Oct. 17.
Tickets: \$10/person;
\$20/carload
(limited space)

Chico Theater Co.
166 Eaton Road, Ste. F
894-3282
chicotheatercompany.com

The play is *The Diaries of Adam and Eve*, and it's based on the Mark Twain novel of the same name, as adapted by Ron Fitzgerald. CTC is presenting it on a makeshift but effective stage built against the back of the theater, facing the back parking lot. Attendees arrive in cars and pickups, pull into their reserved spaces and watch the play either from the comfort of their front seats or, in the case of pickups, sitting on lawn chairs in the truck beds.

There is even a concessions stand serving snacks, beer and wine. The arrangement gives new meaning to the phrase "drive-in theater."

Interviewed before a recent performance, Marc Edson, CTC's founder and driving force (he directed this production), said going six months without doing live theater was painful for the members of his troupe. Mounting the play was difficult—among other obstacles, they had to get a use permit from the city—but well worth the effort, he said.



Twain published *The Diaries of Adam and Eve* in 1906, shortly after his much loved wife, Livy, passed away. As many critics have noted, it's his most personal work, and also the most emotional. As John Updike wrote, "*Adam and Eve* ... gave Twain a path into intimate feelings unapproached by the beguiling, brusquely fantastic, altogether masculine yarns that dominate his oeuvre."

As its title suggests, the novel is written in the form of diary entries, which cleverly allow the first couple to tell their stories separately, giving a he-said/she-said structure to the tale.

In adapting the novel to the stage, Fitzgerald largely merged the two diaries, transforming much of their content into dialogue so as to have both on the stage

much of the time. This is a love story, after all.

It takes some time for that love to manifest, however. At first, Adam resents Eve's sudden presence in his heretofore peaceful and quiet life alone. "It" talks too much, he says. And what's with this constant naming of things?

Adam, it turns out, is lazy and incurious, while Eve is enthusiastic in her appreciation of the wonderful world around them.

Of course, we know how this story turns out, so the fun is in the getting there. That fun increases exponentially when the third character in the play, the Snake, enters the picture.

He's the requisite bad guy—the primordial bad guy, we might say—and like

During a dress rehearsal for *The Diaries of Adam and Eve*, the Snake (Jeff Dickinson) offers the forbidden fruit to Eve (Holly Quick).

PHOTO BY RANDY ROSS

so many bad guys he's the most entertaining figure on the stage. Here he's played by veteran local actor Jeff Dickinson for laughs as much as nastiness. From the moment we meet him (he's singing "Sympathy for the Devil" at the time), we're drawn to his dangerous cheerfulness. Dickinson is terrific in this kind of role, and he lifts the production way up when he's on stage.

That's not to say there's something lacking in the performances of Holly Quick as Eve and Alex Limper as Adam. Far from it. But they're the good guys, and goodness is never as fraught as evil. □

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