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Summer 2020

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Publisher and Editor Bruce C. Lee

Contributing Writers Leonard Colby, August B. C. March, Steve Yates

Contributing Photographer Karl Hugh

Cover Photo: Katie Cunningham as *Lady Macbeth* in *Macbeth*, 2019.

This page, top to bottom: the Engelstad Shakespeare Theatre; Betsy Mugavero (left) as *Witch* and Wayne T. Carr as *Macbeth* in *Macbeth*, 2019; a rehearsal on the temporary stage, 1962; and Southern Utah University, Cedar City, and Cedar Mountain.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The Festival in the Time of COVID-19

In a particularly dark moment in Nobel Laureate Gabriel García Márquez’s novel *Love in the Time of Cholera*, a seemingly innocuous line jumps off the page today: “Someone had turned off the moon.”

Today, as the world grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic, it seems that someone, indeed, has turned off the moon. Thousands have died, millions have lost jobs, businesses have closed, and economies have rapidly contracted. We have learned how to shelter in place, how to social distance, and how to keep in touch with others through modern, but cold, technology. And in the midst of all this, many of the things that give us hope and humanity have faded from view. This, of course, includes live theatre. As I write this, the world’s businesses, families, and activities are just starting to reopen; but theatres, which are inherently social and congregational, are nearly universally still closed, including the Utah Shakespeare Festival, which canceled its summer season for the first time in its fifty-nine year history.

However, and this is the most important thing, human beings are resilient, social, and intent on keeping alive their interactions with those around them. Because of that, we will emerge and the moon will be turned back on and shine through again. The Utah Shakespeare Festival is planning for a glorious sixtieth anniversary in 2021, when theatres will be open again and we can sit on the lawn and enjoy *The Greenshow* before a play. The Festival believes the future will be even better than the past, that theatre and all artistic endeavors will triumph over the darkness of a moonless night.

I sincerely believe in this vision of a bright future—because I believe in us, our human, gritty, loving community.

Bruce C. Lee
 Publisher and Editor

P.S.: I invite you to support the businesses advertising this year in *Midsummer Magazine*. They have long supported the Festival, and they would appreciate your support now. Thanks. ■

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“What Art Thou?”

By Leonard Colby

On May 12, 2020, the Utah Shakespeare Festival changed the banner headline on its website from “The Curtain Will Rise This Summer” to “Festival Cancels 2020 Season,” making it one of the last large regional theatres to cancel its season because of the COVID-19 pandemic and darkening its summer stages for the first time in its nearly sixty-year history. The news release that accompanied the announcement said that there were simply too many obstacles

Photos from the 2019 season, top then clockwise: A scene from *The Book of Will*; Armin Shimerman as Gregory Solomon in *The Price*; Quinn Mattfeld as Hamlet in *Hamlet*; and Trent Dahlin (left) as Feste and Katie Cunningham as Maria in *Twelfth Night*.

to overcome. The safety and health of the Festival’s staff, artists, audiences, and community guided this difficult but necessary decision.

The cancellation has, of course, affected many playgoers, fans, and artists who planned on attending or working at the Festival this summer. However, because of the quality of the Festival’s programming and the loyalty of its patrons, this venerable institution will carry on. “There will be better days ahead, and the Utah Shakespeare Festival will once again be a source of joy, imagination, and insights into the human condition,” said Frank Mack, executive producer. “I’m heartbroken we can’t do that this season but am enthused by the prospect of our sixtieth anniversary next year.”

But what about those of you who may not be loyal fans, who haven’t yet discovered the Festival. Do you find yourself asking as Hamlet did of the ghost “what art thou”? Well, it’s time to answer your questions:

When is the Festival and how many plays does it perform?

The Festival normally (when there isn’t a pandemic) runs from June through October. It produces eight or nine plays each season, in rotating repertory, in matinee and evening performances, in three different theatres. This means you can spend a few days at the Festival and see more than half a dozen plays.

Does the Festival offer just plays (as if that weren’t enough)?

The reason for the Festival’s being is the plays, or as Shakespeare said, “The play’s the thing!” However, the Festival also offers what it calls “the Festival Experience.” This includes morning seminars with artists and scholars discussing the previous day’s plays; informative orientations before each play; production seminars with actors, costumers, props artisans, and others; numerous educational experiences; backstage tours; the nightly pre-play entertainment *The Greenshow*; and a variety of other experiences. And many of these are free.

Is the Festival all about Shakespeare?

Absolutely not. The Utah Shakespeare Festival began by producing three plays by Shakespeare, and one of its touchstones

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Quinn Mattfield (left) as *The Black Stache* and Aaron Galligan-Stierle as *Smee* in *Peter and the Starcatcher*, 2013

has always been the Shakespearean canon. Yet, it began performing non-Shakespeare plays in 1977 when it staged Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado*. Since then it has produced over 120 plays by other playwrights, from musicals such as *Mary Poppins* and *Fiddler on the Roof* to classics like *The Cherry Orchard* and *Gaslight* to new creations including *Peter and the Starcatcher* and *The Book of Will*.

Is the Festival a professional theatre?

It certainly is. In fact, the Utah Shakespeare Festival earned the coveted Tony Award for best regional theatre in 2020. Sometimes people mistakenly think because it is located in the relatively small community of Cedar City, Utah, and is associated with Southern Utah University that it is a community or university theatre. To the contrary, the Festival hires professional actors, directors, and artists from across the country.

Sometimes we hear from visitors who chance upon the Festival thinking it is something it isn't, and they leave pleasantly surprised, as this patron noted: "I wasn't sure what to expect or perhaps I was expecting something between the quality of a high school play and a college performance. It was neither. The quality of the talent was akin to something live on Broadway. Trust me when I say, I have been exposed to many different types of entertainment, and I recognize great talent when I see it."

Can you tell me a little about the Festival's history?

Sure, and you can learn much more by reading the article on page 15. Basically, the Festival started in 1962 as the brainchild of Fred C. Adams and his wife, Barbara. That first season featured Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Hamlet*, and *The Merchant of Venice*. The initial season ran two weeks, attracted 3,276 spectators, and yielded a much-needed \$2,000 profit on which to build a second season. It was produced on a makeshift stage that for several was taken down at the end of the season and rebuilt every summer. Since that time, the Festival has grown to a multi-million dollar enterprise, attracting approximately 100,000 visitors per year to plays in three modern theatres.

What plays will the Festival produce in 2021?

That is still being determined, but the Festival administration is planning on complete season, celebrating the Festival's sixtieth anniversary and honoring Founder Fred C. Adams who passed away on February 6, 2020. Visit bard.org for the latest news.

I've heard the Festival is working with the Royal Academy of the Arts in London. What's that all about?

In February of 2020, the Festival and RADA announced a five-year artistic exchange program, bringing RADA graduates and student productions to the Festival, as

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The Engelstad Shakespeare Theatre

for the Arts is a six-acre complex that incorporates visual arts, live theatre, and dynamic arts education on the campus of SUU. It is also the home of the Festival. The center includes the Festival's three theatres and artistic, production, and administrative facilities, as well as the Southern Utah Museum of Art. The buildings are surrounded gardens, sculpture, a seminar grove, a *Greenshow* performance space and much more. The \$38.6 million project broke ground on March 27, 2014 and was dedicated on July 7, 2016. The center is named for Beverley Taylor Sorenson, a tireless and visionary advocate for arts education and whose family

foundation was a major donor toward the center.

Tell me more about the theatres?

The Engelstad Shakespeare Theatre celebrated its opening night on July 7,

2016. It is an open-air space, reminiscent of Elizabethan theatres that Shakespeare's acting companies might have performed in but with modern amenities and technology. As the symbolic home of the Utah Shakespeare Festival, it features plays by Shakespeare and other playwrights whose works are appropriate for its outdoor Elizabethan-inspired architecture. It is also used for educational programming for Southern Utah University. The theatre seats approximately 921 and is named for the Ralph J. and Betty Engelstad family which was a major donor toward the building.

The Randall L. Jones Theatre opened June 23, 1989, as a new indoor space for the Utah Shakespeare Festival to offer classics of world drama, "Shakespeares of other lands." It is also a performance space for Southern Utah University during the academic calendar. The theatre seats approximately 770 and has been recognized nationally for its architectural beauty. It is named after a Cedar City native known as the father of tourism in southern Utah and whose family was a major donor toward the building.

The Eileen and Allen Anes Studio Theatre opened its doors on July 30, 2016. It was designed to showcase smaller, more intimate shows for the Utah Shakespeare Festival and as a home for its new plays program, highlighting the "Shakespeares of tomorrow." This space allows the Festival to extend its offerings throughout the year and to highlight smaller, more intimate plays. The theatre is named for long-time supporters Eileen and Allen Anes who were major donors toward the building. It provides flexible seating for approximately 200.

What about economic impact?

The Festival has grown steadily from a budget of under \$1,000 in 1961 to over \$7 million today. Approximately 65 percent of the Festival's budget is funded from ticket sales, concessions, merchandise, and education classes, with the remaining support coming from contributed income such as memberships, grants, and foundations. The Festival's economic impact in Cedar City, Iron County, and the surrounding area is enormous. In a 2012 study by Neil Abercrombie and Dr. Kelly Matthews, the total economic impact was

well as training workshops for students, faculty, and staff in both Cedar City and London. The program includes a commitment from the Festival to hire at least one RADA student or graduate in its acting company each year. RADA will bring its second-year students' touring production of a Shake-

peare play to the Festival for one week each July. Additionally, RADA faculty and staff and Festival staff will conduct a variety of educational and artistic exchanges.

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Is the Festival part of Southern Utah University?

The Utah Shakespeare Festival is proudly a unit of Southern Utah University, a relationship that has helped foster the growth and viability of the Festival for fifty-nine years. SUU is a caring campus community where students come to explore their interests and prepare for meaningful careers and life experiences. With more than 140 undergraduate programs and 21 graduate and certificate programs across six academic colleges, SUU offers world-class, project-based learning opportunities where students gain professional experience before entering the job market.

Does the Festival have any education programs?

Does it ever! In addition to a number of classes offered ever summer and fall, the Festival conducts the following:

Each autumn the Festival and SUU sponsor the annual **Shakespeare**

Competition when over 3,500 students from more than 130 schools in eight states descend on Cedar City as part of the largest scholastic Shakespeare competition in the country. Students compete in acting, dance/choreography, music, and technical theatre before panels of industry professions. They also participate in workshops such as stage combat, improvisation, movement, technical theatre, auditioning, ballet, modern dance techniques, and choral performance. At the end of three days, winners are announced and trophies and scholarships are handed out.

The Festival hits the road each winter with its **Shakespeare-in-the-Schools Touring Production**. From January to April, teaching artists take the Festival experience to more than 25,000 students throughout the West. Students have the opportunity to watch the performance and participate in a fifteen-minute post-show discussion, as well as workshops with the actors in Stage Combat, Performing Shakespeare's Text, and Developing Character through Improvisation.

The annual **Playmakers Program** is

theatre training that is the perfect place for young performers to start. Youth audition, rehearse, training, and ultimately perform a play each year. The program trains them in theatre fundamentals, including how to sing and dance with a live piano, rehearsal and performance etiquette, and how to work, share, give, and play with others.

The Wooden O Symposium is a cross-disciplinary conference exploring Medieval through Early Modern Studies, through the text and performance of Shakespeare's plays. Scholars from all disciplines submit papers that offer insights and new ideas springing from the era of William Shakespeare. Many are then selected to be read and discussed at the symposium where scholars have the unique opportunity of immersing themselves in research, text, and performance in one of the most beautiful natural settings in the western United States.

Does the Festival accept donations?

In a word, yes! In fact, the Festival counts on charitable contributions to keep its artistic vision alive and growing. As

you might imagine, ticket sales alone cannot cover the costs of the Festival's productions and all of the additional educational activities it adds to round out the Festival experience. To explore how to donate, visit www.bard.org/give.

Can I volunteer at the Festival?

The Festival has a number of opportunities for volunteers, including brochure and poster distribution, ushering, blanket folding, helping to prepare mailings, selling programs, working with social media, helping in our gift shop, working with our education department or company management, and many

more. If you have a skill and some time to donate, the Festival can use your help. To volunteer, please fill out the survey at www.bard.org/volunteer.

How can I learn more?

To learn more about the Festival, visit www.bard.org or call the Ticket Office at 800-PLAYTIX. ■



Tim Sailer (left) as Macbeth and Stefanie Resnick as Lady Macbeth in the Shakespeare-in-the-Schools Macbeth, 2019.

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The History of the Festival

By August B. C. March

It all started at the Fluffy Bundle Laundromat. As Fred C. Adams, the founder of the Festival tells it, he and his then girlfriend (and later wife) were doing their laundry when an idea was born: Why not a Shakespeare festival in Cedar City, Utah? Fred was then an assistant professor of theatre arts at what is now Southern Utah University and thought a Festival could draw people off the newly planned I-15 freeway to stop in Cedar City.

Photos, top then clockwise: the Beverley Taylor Sorenson Center for the Arts; the Adams Shakespearean Theatre which is no longer used by the Festival; Lauritz Petersen (left) as Laertes and Howard Jensen as Hamlet in Hamlet, 1962, the Festival's first season; and R. Scott Phillips (left), managing director, Sue S. Cox, board chair, Douglas N. Cook, producing artistic director, Fred C. Adams, founder and executive producer, and Cameron Harvey, producing artistic director, accept the Tony Award at Radio City Music Hall in 2000.



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An advertisement for the Fluffy Bundle Laundromat, 1961.

Excited by the idea, Fred packed up his notes and ideas and headed to Ashland, Oregon, the site of the granddaddy of all Shakespeare festivals, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. While there, he closely observed operations and was befriended by Angus Bowmer, the OSF founder, whom Adams interviewed extensively. Fred, Barbara, Barbara's mother, Louise, and two college students also visited theatres in Canada and Connecticut; and on the long ride back to Cedar City in 1961, the Utah Shakespeare Festival was born!

Fred approached the Cedar City Council and the Chamber of Commerce and told them he had the solution to attract people to Cedar City. Their reaction was predictable. "The idea went over like a pregnant pole vaulter," Adams liked to say. "They thought it was a dumb idea. Really dumb." But the local Lions Club agreed to underwrite his plan with \$1,000 after he told them he expected to recover all of the money in ticket sales.

The Festival presented its first season in 1962. Besides laundry tumbling around in the dryer, it was inspired in response to two influences: An estimated quarter of a million summer tourists desiring more evening activities after visiting the area's national parks, and young entrepreneurs and actors Fred and Barbara's desire to produce great theatre.

Shakespeare was a natural choice for Cedar City. Historically, the people of southern Utah have a love for drama and especially the works of Shakespeare. Fred and Barbara proceeded with their new company and presented *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Hamlet*, and *The Merchant of Venice* that first season. A small company of college students and townspeople produced the plays on an outdoor platform, backed by a partial replica of an Elizabethan stagehouse. Between rehearsals, volunteer actors wielded hammers and scissors, building their own stage, props, and costumes. The initial two-week season attracted an excited 3,276 spectators and

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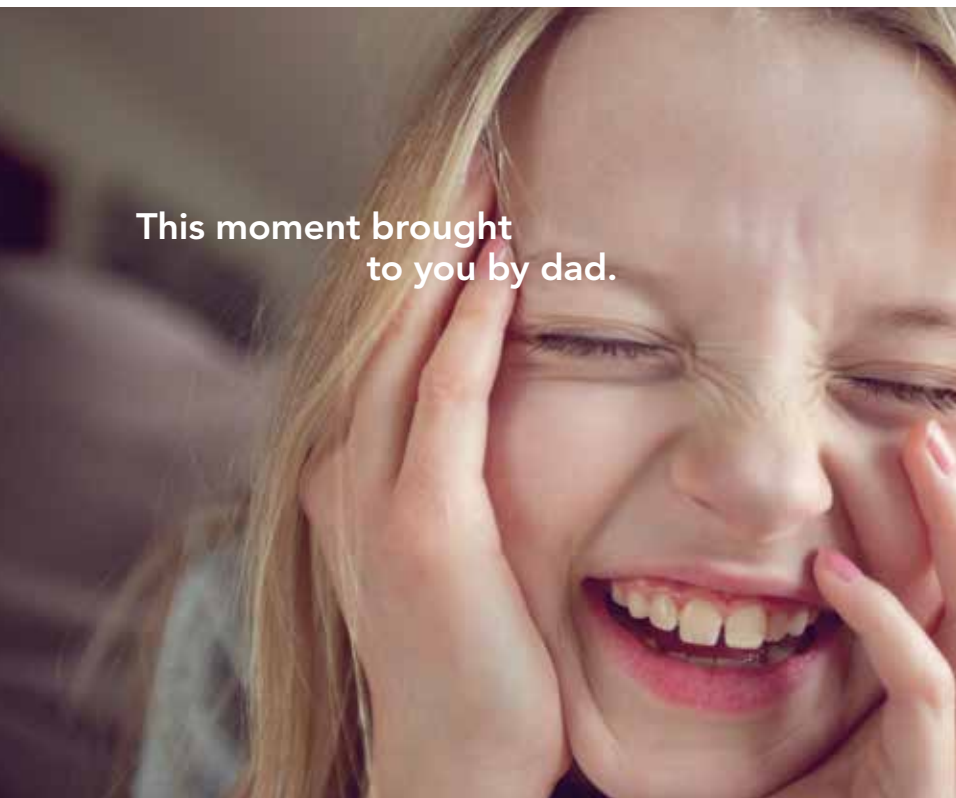


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yielded a much-needed \$2,000 profit on which to build a second season.

Barbara was adamant that the Festival include a nightly *Greenshow*, pre-show entertainment featuring music, dancing, and a Punch and Judy puppet show. LaVeve Whetten was in charge of the dancing; and Barbara, the music. She obtained recorders and taught a group of musicians to play the instruments. Because no one knew about the Festival, the group would go downtown in the afternoons/early evenings and wander into the cafes and play and sing medieval music and invite them to come

and see the Festival that evening. For many years, Barbara was the force that kept *The Greenshow* improving and growing.

It soon became evident that the Festival needed a permanent performing space, rather than a platform that was put up and taken down every season; so work began on an Elizabethan theatre that would serve the Festival for many years. The Adams Memorial Shakespearean Theatre began as a stagehouse; but in five years' time was gradually surrounded by its permanent orchestra and gallery seating. The Adams Theatre was dedicated in 1977

and so closely resembled Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London that the British Broadcasting Company chose it as the location for some of the filming of their Shakespeare series. The popular theatre served the Festival for nearly four decades, featuring three plays each season (usually Shakespearean), mounted by professional directors, designers, and actors from around the world, along with graduate students from top professional graduate schools.

It didn't take too many years, however, until the Adams Theatre was selling out most evenings, and Festival administrators decided it was time to expand. The result was the indoor, modern Randall L. Jones Theatre which opened its first season June 23, 1989, offering classics of world drama. Its repertoire has spanned more than three centuries of playwrights and has included the classics of Russia, France, England, Italy, Ireland, Norway, and the United States.

In 1992, the Festival started the groundwork for the New American Playwrights Project (now Words Cubed). These staged readings are presented to Festival patrons who desire an opportunity to view the current work of some of today's best playwrights.

Then on May 8, 2000, the theatre world took notice: the Festival joined the ranks of some of America's most famous and respected theatres when it received the coveted Tony Award for America's Outstanding Regional Theatre. The Tony Award is the most prestigious and sought-after award in live theatre, the equivalent to the Academy Awards in film.

In 2005, the Festival began setting up its managerial structure for the decades ahead. Fred C. Adams was named executive producer emeritus and began concentrating his efforts on fundraising. In October 2005, R. Scott Phillips was named executive director of the Festival; in January 2011, David Ivers and Brian Vaughn were named artistic directors; and in May 2014 Zachary Murray joined them as general manager, thus completing the top management team.

On July 7, 2016, the Festival celebrated the biggest event of its history with the ribbon cutting for the Beverley Taylor Sorenson Center for the Arts, including two new theatres for the Festival: the Engelstad Shakespeare Theatre (which replaced the aging Adams Shakespeare Theatre) and the Eileen and Allen Anes Studio Theatre (a

new, flexible theatre which seats about 200 playgoers). These two theatres joined the existing Randall L. Jones Theatre to give the Festival three very different performing spaces for the future. Anchoring the other corner of the center is the new Southern Utah Museum of Art. Also on the center are offices, a rehearsal/education hall, and other space for the Festival. This is all, of course, a part of Southern Utah University.

"This is an exciting weekend, one that we at the Festival and myself personally have been looking forward to for decades," said Fred. "This arts center will provide inspiration and a place to reflect and learn for hundreds of thousands of guests and artists for years to come."

During this season, the Festival also announced an enhanced mission for its new plays program. Formerly known as New American Playwright Project, it has now been rechristened Words³, pronounced Words Cubed and named for a line in Hamlet, "Words, words, words." Words³ is devoted to nurturing and developing opening submitted and commissioned-based new plays by providing a professionally supported platform for readings, workshops, and fully-realized

productions. It is all part of a commitment to create a diverse body of new work.

Later that same year, after successfully negotiating its first season in a new center and new theatres, the Festival geared up for its next big change. Executive Director R. Scott Phillips, who was the Festival's first full-time employee forty years earlier, announced his retirement, effective March 1, 2017.

"Scott has been crucial to the Festival's forward trajectory in the last decades," said Vaughn. "He has made an immeasurable impact on the Festival that will be felt for generations to come. I am personally indebted to him for bestowing his trust in me to join the leadership team. He will be greatly missed."

Later that summer, co-artistic director David Ivers resigned, and Brian Vaughn was named sole artistic director. Finishing off the leadership transition was the announcement that Frank Mack would be the new leader of the Festival, beginning as executive producer on September 1, 2017. The management team now consists of Frank Mack as executive producer, Brian Vaughn as artistic director, and Kami Terry Paul as general manager.

Founder Fred C. Adams passed away February 6, 2020, just before the COVID-19 pandemic changed this summer's theatre landscape and just a bit more than a year short of the Festival's sixtieth anniversary. He is already missed, and the Festival will dedicate the 2021 season in his honor. But he established a secure artistic and financial base that gives the Festival a hopeful future for years to come.

The Festival now plays to nearly 100,000 patrons who view almost 300 performances each year in three theatres over a sixteen-week season. It is a year-round operation with over thirty full-time employees and a budget of approximately \$7 million. Each year the Festival produces eight or nine professional plays. In addition, a smaller touring production plays to schools throughout the West during the winter months. In keeping with its mission to entertain, enrich, and educate its audiences, the Festival also offers a variety of activities such as a free pre-play *Greenshow*, orientations, literary and production seminars, classes, workshops, and backstage tours—making it a true destination theatre, and one of Utah's cultural treasures. ■

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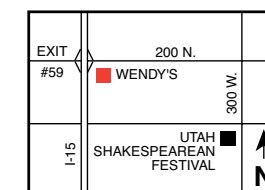
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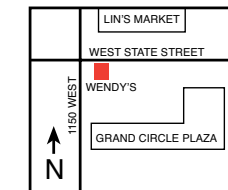
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Cedar City: Home of the Festival

By Steve Yates

When the first group of settlers came to what is now Cedar City on November 11, 1851, they probably didn't realize they were laying the foundations of the thriving cultural hub that the town was to eventually become. The thirty-five men who arrived here that cold winter were sent twenty miles south from the community of Parowan by Brigham Young, president of the Church of

Photos, top then clockwise: the Kolob Canyons section of Zion National Park; Frontier Homestead State Park Museum; petroglyphs at Parowan Gap; and Cedar City Main Street.

Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), to develop the first iron refinery west of the Mississippi River. Simple log homes were quickly built, as well as a small fort at the base of a hill north of town to defend residents from the occasional attacks of marauding Indians. Iron and coal mining soon commenced, and the settlement grew.

Though the original name given to the settlement, "Fort Cedar," is a misnomer (the majority of the trees here are in fact junipers) the name stuck. By 1855 the town was permanently established. On February 18, 1868, Cedar City was officially incorporated and well on its way to becoming the vibrant city of today.

Reaching back further into history, long before the arrival of LDS pioneers, prehistoric cultures lived and thrived here. Archaeological study reveals hundreds of historic sites dating as far back as 750 A.D. that record the presence of these cultures.

One of the more fascinating examples of prehistoric rock art sites can be found at Parowan Gap, west of the town of Parowan. Here, extensive symbols incised into the rock walls of the narrow canyon present mysterious lines, curves, strange geometric shapes and vaguely anthropomorphic figures. Recent compelling evidence and studies indicate that these petroglyphs, far from being primitive "doodles," are in fact part of a sophisticated ancient solar calendar marking the passing of the seasons.

In addition to the rich historical background of the area, Cedar City also has a diverse cultural background, thanks in part to the large number of LDS pioneers who were of European descent and who brought their love of music, dance, and theatre with them as they resettled in the growing community.

Life was not always easy for these early residents. Work in the iron and coal mines was dangerous and physically exhausting, and, even when the iron works began to decline in 1858 and the economy shifted to farming and sheep ranching, the day-to-day tasks of eking out a livelihood could be arduous at best. The dry and hot summers and occasionally punishingly cold winters could wither even the most resilient of souls.

Rather than despairing, however, the residents of Cedar City drew upon their heritage and love of the performing arts

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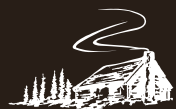
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to use their resources to build the town's first Social Hall. When completed in 1862, the building served not only as a school and church but also as a dancehall and theatre where plays, including the works of William Shakespeare, were performed.

Given this history, it's not surprising that one hundred years later, in 1962, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Hamlet*, and *The Merchant of Venice* were performed on a simple outdoor platform on the small college campus in Cedar City to an appreciative crowd.

That small community college is now Southern Utah University, and that humble stage has exploded into the world-renowned Utah Shakespeare Festival. Today the university is home to over 11,000 students while the Festival draws over 100,000 visitors from around the globe each season.

Other cultural events have also grown to draw visitors and enhance the lives of locals. The opening of the Beverley Taylor Sorenson Center for the Arts in 2016 added even more, including two new theatres for the Festival, as well as the Southern Utah Museum of Art. This world-class center is designed to attract visitors from across the country to enjoy the artistic talent that Cedar City has become known for over the years.

Many of the visitors who have experienced what Cedar City has to offer return year after year, often with friends and relatives in tow. They, like so many before them, recognize that Cedar City is a special place not just culturally, but geographically, and as such is an ideal base camp for endless opportunities for fun and adventure.

Perhaps the words of Janet and Andy McCrea, recent arrivals to Cedar City, best sum up what many others have discovered:

"From the moment we saw our first play at the Festival, we were smitten. Life in Cedar City is rich with so many options for cultural entertainment that we have to pace ourselves!"

Those of us who have also made our home in the Cedar City area couldn't agree more. Unparalleled scenery, arts and entertainment, fine restaurants and shopping, and a healthy business climate all come together in one perfect package to make Cedar City one of the best places in the world to play and live. ■



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