

arts & culture

Theater Production Company Holding First Fundraiser

Significant Productions has embarked on a \$25,000 fundraising campaign for updates to The Sharon.

By TAYLOR STRICKLAND  
Daily Sun Senior Writer

After nearly a decade of delivering world class entertainment to The Villages, Significant Productions is asking the community to consider giving back to its local theater.

Ever since its curtain rose for the first time in April 2015, The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center has been one of Central Florida's premier stages, bringing in some of the best entertainers the performing arts world has to offer. To continue bringing the best, Significant Productions, the theater production company that oversees The Sharon and The Studio Theatre Tierra

Del Sol, recently launched the 501(c)(3) organization's first fundraising campaign, "Bringing the Best."

"'Bringing the Best' will help us bring a lineup of show-stopping performances that will have everyone talking," said Whitney Morse, SigPro co-founder, artistic director and granddaughter of The Sharon's namesake. "Ticket sales account for only 65% of our annual operating budget, and we need the help of our community to continue bringing the best world class artists to our stages."

Running through Aug. 16, the goal of Bringing the Best is to raise \$25,000 for needed facility updates at The Sharon. The campaign will feature several incentives, including special donor acknowledgements in upcoming programs and on the SigPro website and official Facebook page.

Those who donate \$2,000 or more will get the chance



Daily Sun file photo

Artistic director Whitney Morse and executive director Jason Goedken founded Significant Productions in December 2022. Now, the duo is announcing the nonprofit's first fundraising campaign, "Bringing the Best," to raise money for facility updates at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center.

to enjoy an exclusive evening in The Sharon's private box, hosted by Whitney Morse. Donors can select a show of their choosing from The Sharon's upcoming season, subject to contract terms and availability.

"We're specifically looking at several improvements, which will pay for themselves quickly and reduce repetitive costs, thereby allowing us to reallocate those funds elsewhere in the budget," said Jon Cronin, director of operations for SigPro.

Those improvements include digitizing the marquee signage in front of The Sharon,

which would reduce large-format printing costs and reduce the theater's environmental impact, and preventative maintenance for the theater's flying system.

A fly system, or theatrical rigging system, is a network of pulleys, counterweights and related devices within a theater that enables the stage crew to safely hoist curtains, lights, scenery, and sometimes people into the air. The Sharon's fly system is the world's first fully automated flying system and, after nearly a decade of shows, is in need of repair.

"We're looking at the need

to replace several high voltage power inverters," Cronin said. "Those inverters are \$5,000 each, and the labor to install them is another \$2,500."

To save on future costs, SigPro is partnering with the manufacturer of the flying system, ETC Connect, to certify six staff members in the hardware inspection and maintenance of the system. Cronin said this will not only cut back on the cost of housing a certified technician from the manufacturer, but will also set The Sharon apart as one of the few venues whose staff are certified in such a way.

To qualify for rewards like The Sharon box, patrons must donate within the campaign window. All donations are tax deductible. For more information or to make a donation, go to significantproductions.org/donate/.

"If you want thriving, vibrant, world-class performing arts offerings at your Hometown Performing Arts Center, then you should consider learning more about SigPro and becoming a donor," Cronin said. "I think you'll be proud that you did, and we'd be honored to have you along for the journey with us."

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