Cabrillo stage prepares for big new summer season

With the unseasonably warm weather of last week, it’s tempting to imagine that summer has arrived, but if that were true, theater season would be upon us. It definitely can’t come soon enough, especially with Cabrillo Stage announcing its smashing summer lineup: “Anything Goes,” “A Chorus Line,” and the debut of “Escaping Queens,” which is being billed as a “musical memoir” by the multi-talented playwright Joe Ortiz. While the lively Broadway style musical numbers are always familiar, I’m particularly excited to see what Ortiz (co-owner of Gayle’s Bakery) has cooked up.

With the budget cuts that Cabrillo Stage has endured, the company could use some support, namely by way of a festive fundraiser hosted by the newly established Theater Guild, which will offer an evening of dinner and dancing, called “Swing Into Spring,” on March 30 at the Cocoanut Grove Ballroom. Visit cabrillostage.com to purchase tickets to the event.

A costume contest, auction, big band music and first grabs at buying season tickets to the summer shows will be highlights at Swing Into Spring.

COFFEE TALK

I would argue that an artist needs two things: Inspiration and coffee breaks. Sip some java (or tea) and the muse will show up. This just might be the case for local artists living and working at the Tannery on River Street. Coming soon, they will get their own coffeehouse when Rebecca’s at the Tannery opens in the new artist work studios courtyard. A temporary coffee cart selling beverages and bakery items will be on hand as construction gets underway in the storefront space set to open in about two months. Look for a generous menu, beer, wine, tapas, plentiful seating and various artistic performances in the evenings.

At the helm of this creative venture is longtime mighty muffin maker Rebecca Campbell and local actor Ian McRae, who’s also a co-owner of Hula’s.

“It will hopefully be a social gathering space for everybody out there (at the Tannery) — actors, painters, musicians,” said McRae. Campbell echoed his sentiments: “Everything about the place feels magical. It’s a collaborative effort of people being creative.”

MAKING MUSIC

As children, their mom was the one on stage, but now, she’s a stage mom. Brothers Jamie and Kellen Coffis have been involved with music since they were children, accompanying their mom in singing performances. But these days, the 20-something brothers have teamed up with several other musicians to form the band, The Coffis Brothers and the Mountain Men. With all members of the band hailing from San Lorenzo Valley, the dynamic group has been together for about two years. They have recorded one album and will release a new single this summer. The brothers Coffis and their band mates will serve up their blues-influenced rock ‘n’ roll tunes on Saturday, March 21 at The Crepe Place. Take a listen at coffisbrothers.com.

BEHIND THE SCENES

This past weekend I acted in a short independent film produced by The Impact Media Group, a local production company. The silent flick, “Smarty Pants” was written by Emily Catalano and was one of two scripts that won a Santa Cruz screenwriting competition in the fall.

“Smarty Pants” is a sweet story about a quirky couple: He’s, well, a smarty pants who might be plenty book-smart but can hardly remember to tie his own shoes. She’s his long-suffering partner. At the end of this clever tale is a surprise twist. Who’s really the smarter person in this pairing?

The shoot took place on the Eastside of Santa Cruz in a beach bungalow, was directed by Deva Blaisdell-Anderson and showcased the cinematography talents of Philip Lima.

Check it out along with the other award-winning film, “Tip of My Tongue,” debuting on opening night at this year’s Santa Cruz Film Festival on May 10.

Contact Christa Martin at christasentinel@gmail.com.