



# WHAT IS COMMUNITY THEATRE?



by Rebecca Riffle-Bakody

People have been attending plays and musicals since theater first began in Italy in 1585. The Globe Theatre in England, which hosted Shakespeare's plays, opened in 1599. In the United States, theater performances have been documented as early as 1850.

People have always enjoyed the excitement of watching live theater, both amateur and professional, which explains why it has endured for centuries.

We've all heard of *Hamilton*, *Wicked*, *Phantom of the Opera*, and *Lion King The Musical*. These shows were all made popular by being featured on Broadway in New York City.

The theaters on Broadway are all pro-

fessional theaters. This means that the actors, and everyone involved, are paid to put on these shows. Essentially, it is their job to be involved in these shows.

Most other theaters, like the Main Street Theatre—home of Prescott Valley Performing Arts in Prescott Valley, are called community theaters.

Another way to describe this type is amateur theater. This means that, in most cases, the cast and crew are volunteers and do not get paid to perform shows.

Performances usually only run two to three weekends instead of years. Also, if a show is being performed at a professional theater, community theaters cannot also perform the

show. That is why you do not see local theaters performing shows like *Hamilton* and *Wicked*.

Even though it is unknown when and how we will be able to have live audiences enjoying a night at the theater, we do know that it will return in the future.

Fortunately, our community has many options for attending, performing, and volunteering in amateur theater. One such option is the Main Street Theatre, which is currently being built in Prescott Valley on Main Street next to Findlay Toyota Center. They will be performing Main Stage, Family, Teen, and Children's theatre.

Visit [prescottvalleyperformingarts.org](http://prescottvalleyperformingarts.org) for more information.