

TheatreZone announces season

BY CHARLES RUNNELLS • CRUNNELLS@NEWS-PRESS.COM • JUNE 18, 2008

TheatreZone is rocking the stage right now, and the troupe plans to rock it again next summer, too.

Naples only professional theater company is bringing the rock opera "Tommy" to the G&L Theater in June 2009.

Like the current rock musical "Hair," artistic director Mark Danni hopes "Tommy" appeals to Baby Boomers and other full-time residents. "We're trying to appeal to people who are here year-round."

And there are an awful lot of The Who fans out there.

TheatreZone announced its third season last week. And for the first time, most of those shows include two-week runs.

In the past, the troupe has kept many of its shows to one weekend, but now sales have been strong enough to warrant two weeks each, Danni says.

"We want to grow. And we have grown."

The musicals "Evita" and "Leader of the Pack" sold out most of their dates this season, and other shows did reasonably well, Danni said.

"It was very much a pleasant surprise," he says.

So now four of next season's five shows extend over two weeks. The fifth is a one-woman show starring Andrea McArdle, Broadway's original Annie.

The 2008-09 season opens Dec. 4 with the Barry Manilow musical "Copacabana."

"'Leader of the Pack' showed us that people do like something light and fun," Danni says. "And this is light and fun."

That show is followed by:

- "Stepping Out" (Jan. 8-18): This comedy follows a dance instructor as she tries coaxing coordination from 10 amateurs with an overabundance of left feet. The show stars Donna McKechnie, the Tony Award-winning star of Broadway's original "A Chorus Line."

- "Jekyll & Hyde" (March 5-15): Based on Robert Louis Stevenson's classic novel, this musical-theater phenomenon pairs a suspense story of good and evil with a lush, romantic pop score. The show stars Jason Kraack as the good doctor with split personalities.
- "You Don't Know Me" (April 23-26): McArdle brings her one-woman show to TheatreZone. The concert features her singing everything from pop classics to Broadway staples (including, of course, songs from her most famous role in "Annie").
- "Tommy" (June 11-21): The Who's rock musical follows a deaf, dumb and blind boy - traumatized as a child - who somehow grows up to become a pinball wizard. It's loaded with hard-rock classics such as "The Acid Queen," "Pinball Wizard" and "I'm Free."

Season tickets are already on sale and cost \$160-\$190.

Individual tickets go on sale July 10. They're \$35-\$40.

For more information, call 888-966-3352 or visit TheatreZone-Florida.com.