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Curator



PERFORMANCE

Hamming It up at Crab Cove

The well-received and out-there Island City Waterways returns with an update.

By Jen Strongin

Island City Waterways is back.

"We had a such fantastic response to the first Island City Waterways that I started scouting for our next location the following week," said Janet Koike, founder of the popular performance arts piece presented by Rhythmix Cultural Works, or RCW, in 2016 in Alameda. "It's inspiring to create art for and about our community here in Alameda, and we love this opportunity to share its colorful

past and inviting present with the entire Bay Area."

Koike is also the founder of RCW, the 10-year-old nonprofit Island arts group, and this year's Island City Waterways, like the predecessor, will use music, dance, theater, and storytelling to celebrate another chapter of Alameda history.

RCW's proximity to the estuary — and a concern for the growing ecological threat of industrialization — inspired Koike and her husband, SF Mime Troupe alum Ed Holmes, to create the original Island City Waterways, a fun,

interactive, and educational public art piece.

That story explored Alameda's maritime history while urging the audience to protect the bay and waterways beyond. Those performers dressed in turn-of-the-century garb and led audiences on a walking tour between the Park Street and Fruitvale bridges with site-specific history of Alameda unfolding, from the town's beginning to present day life on the estuary.

The new Island City Waterways is May 19 and 20 at Crab Cove and Crown Memorial State Beach in collaboration with the East Bay Regional Park District and includes a cast of 40 actors, dancers, and musicians. They will lead audiences on an easy stroll around Crab Cove and Crown Memorial State Beach for 75-minute performances that honor the cove's rich history and celebrate the sea. Along the way, the audience will be invited to do art and environmental activities.

Photo by Maurice Ramirez

"Island City Waterways will bring together the energy of so many truly talented artists to help EBRPD share the remarkable history of Crab Cove," Koike said.

Created by Koike, written by Holmes, directed by professional clown actor Jeff Raz, and choreographed by Kim Epifano, Island City Waterways 2018 is another roving production featuring Holmes and his SF Mime Troupe cohort Bob Ernst, the dancers of Epifano's Epiphany Productions, the percussionists and musicians of Maze Daiko, performers from Gamelan Sekar Jaya and the Prescott School Stilt Walkers, and guest artists Mark Izu and Brenda Wong Aoki.

Suitable for all ages, Island City Waterways 2018 tells how the cove was shaped by its surrounding water. The storyline stars amusement park Neptune Beach — The Coney Island of the West — in the Roaring '20s, complete with carnies and bathing beauties. A drum corps will introduce scenes from a WW II-era maritime officer training facility with audience-participatory drills, and Ryujin the Dragon Queen will spin a scary tale of ecological warning about Crab Cove, the first estuary marine reserve in California. A wild finale concludes the performance, with the cast taking to the beach to make an island-to-island connection between Alameda and the Hawaiian Islands waters and global efforts to protect them.

The EBRPD is interested in new ways to connect visitors to parks, and participating in innovative



programs that reach the community in new, out-of-the-box ways is one way of doing so, said Morgan Dill, naturalist at Crab Cove.

"The opportunity to work with Rhythmix Cultural Works is an exciting one that highlights the rich natural and cultural history of Crab Cove in ways only possible through collaboration. We look forward to Island City Waterways performances and the chance it gives audiences, young and old alike, to discover (or re-discover) this beloved park in their community," Dill said.




Rhythmix Cultural Works presents Island City Waterways 2018, on Sat., May 19, and Sun., May 20 (10 a.m., 11:45 a.m., 1:30 p.m., and 3:15 p.m. but arrive 30 minutes before the performance time), free but online registration recommend as space per tour is limited, Crab Cove, Crown Memorial State Beach, Rhythmix.org, IslandCityWaterways.org. (There are some performances Fri., May 18, reserved for Alameda school kids.) Audience members should dress in layers and wear comfortable walking shoes.



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