

For immediate release

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Award winning SpongeBob Musical live on stage at Highland Secondary

COMOX, VALLEY B.C. – Live theatre is back, and Comox Valley Schools is excited to announce that *The SpongeBob Musical*, a joyful and uplifting show, is set to open to audiences from March 8-12 at Highland Secondary, at 7 p.m. each evening.

Lisa Williams, the musical director and Highland drama teacher, says “New York Magazine described this show as ‘effervescent candy for the spirit’ and I couldn’t agree more. It’s exactly what we need right now. SpongeBob lifts us, inspires us and reminds us that we are stronger together!”

SpongeBob the Musical is set in the undersea city of Bikini Bottom, inhabited by a happy-go-lucky yellow sea sponge named SpongeBob SquarePants and an eclectic mix of oceanic neighbours. SpongeBob’s easy lifestyle is abruptly interrupted when it is discovered that Mt. Humongous, a nearby volcano, will erupt within the next 48 hours and destroy Bikini Bottom. SpongeBob, trying to prove to himself and the world that he is not “just a simple sponge,” resolves to save the day when everybody else has given up all hope.

The show is based on the animated TV show, *SpongeBob SquarePants*, but, as musicals do, it transcends the quality and themes of the original inspiration. The music was scored by greats like David Bowie, Cindy Lauper, Steven Tyler, Sara Barielles and more. Every scene, and every song, is energizing, captivating and just plain fun.

The cast and crew of the musical come from SD 71 high schools. When they started to audition, they had no idea if the musical would ever make it to a live performance. Despite the uncertainty, they persevered and enjoyed the process of creating together. Williams noted of directing in pandemic times, “we haven’t even seen anyone’s faces since August.” When performing, many students will be wearing transparent masks but all through the rehearsal process, students have been wearing the masks that they wear in school.

Olivia Parsons who plays Sandy Cheeks the Squirrel says, “We have all had a hard couple of years due to the pandemic, and this show is full of what many of us are missing - life, love, and laughs. Working on this project has been the highlight of my year, and if viewers can experience a fraction of that joy, it is well worth the cost of a ticket.”

Stella Swanson, the singer-songwriter known for her successful children’s albums, plays the lead role of SpongeBob and cannot wait for everyone to see the show saying, “nobody has been able to see a musical in-person for a couple of years, so it’s going to feel extra exciting!”

Williams and her cast and crew hope the Comox Valley will come together to support theatre and all the young people who have each put in hundreds of hours. Williams gushed, “Wow. Just wow! Working on this show this year has been a joy and a privilege. I hope audiences join us and feel the love.”

There are two ways to watch the show – in-person, masked, and at 50% capacity – or get a virtual ticket and watch from the comfort of your own home. Each night will be streamed. All tickets are available online at <https://events.sd71.bc.ca/spongebobmusical/>. Single tickets cost \$20.00 and a family “Bubble Bundle” is available for \$50.00.

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Jesse Hatch (Patrick), Stella Swanson (SpongeBob), and Olivia Parsons (Sandy Cheeks the Squirrel) stand ready to save Bikini Bottom. Photo by: Jake Fernandes.

