

2016

STORIES FROM.... SPOON RIVER

Meet the Pioneers Takes a Short Break

After ten years of producing *Meet the Pioneers* in the Jacksonville Historic Cemetery, from 2006 through 2015, a milestone had clearly been reached, and it was time to take a much-deserved year off. Dirk Siedlecki was ready for a break and yet was concerned about how to replace the lost revenue to the non-profit Friends of Jacksonville's Historic Cemetery from ticket sales for *Meet the Pioneers*. Profit from the event was an important part of the funding for the Friends' cemetery restoration efforts which were a key reason for the organization's existence.

While the backstory is not completely clear, it seems that Dirk was at some point approached by a local Jacksonville resident, Ron Danko, who offered for 2016 to stage "a unique adaptation of Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology*" at a theater location in Medford and donate the profits from the event to the FOJHC. Ron not only appreciated Dirk's work with *Meet the Pioneers* but had a long and successful background of his own in theatrical production along with his then-day-job at Rogue Community College teaching Communication classes and directing and co-directing productions at the College.

Spoon River became the highly regarded "gap year" substitute for *Meet the Pioneers* and offered a different and unique experience for Dirk's faithful audiences of the prior ten years. From the program notes: *through fifty brief monologues, the characters revealed their concealed values, motives, and actions through unflinching self-reflection on life. The thirty songs comprising the musical score introduce, underscore, connect, and comment upon the characters and situations presented in the monologues.*

Two members of the seven-member *Spoon River* cast, Constance Jesser and David Sours, were veterans of *Meet the Pioneers*, and Jois Harkness and Lea Worcester subsequently performed in *Meet the Pioneers* productions in the Jacksonville Historic Cemetery. Musician David Gordon, and actors Rob Hirschboeck and Ron Danko (also the Director) completed the outstanding cast, and members of Ron's RCC team and Dirk's MTP team provided behind-the-scenes support to help make this adaptation of *Spoon River Anthology* the memorable and very successful production it was!

(Note: this section was not part of Dirk's original manuscript.)

**The Madrone Theatre Company Presents
A Unique Adaptation of Edgar Lee Masters'
*SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY***



Photo by David Gibb Photography, www.dgibbphoto.com

**Medford, Oregon October 7-23, 2016
Rogue Community College Performance Hall**

Cast Members:

David Sours, Robert Hirschbeck, Ron Danko, David Gordon
Constance Jesser, Lea Worcester, Jois Harkness