

Holiday Musical Debuts At Diamond Head Theatre

BY ALLYSON PANG

What do a pine tree and a polar bear have in common? They both are key characters in Diamond Head Theatre's *Piney Needlesmith and the Road Less Traveled* — which premieres this holiday season.

Running from Nov. 21 to Dec. 13, the family-friendly show is DHT's first original musical that the theater has staged in almost a quarter of a century.

Audiences delve into a world before Christmas trees where Piney Needlesmith feels like she doesn't belong in the North Pole. So, she sets out with her Band of Buddies to find her true place in the world — and maybe save a child's Christmas along the way.

A couple years ago, the show's co-creators Roslyn "Roz" Catracchia and *Captain Marvel* composer Peter Seibert serendipitously sat next to each other at a conference hosted by The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers in Los Angeles, California. They began talking and later met for lunch when Seibert visited Catracchia in Hawai'i.

The two began writing together and soon, the initial 20-minute Christmas piece turned into a musical, Seibert says.

They both wrote this with their friends in mind, wanting them to laugh and have a good time, says Catracchia who has written for more than 40 local productions, including the late Lisa Matsumoto's



The cast of *Piney Needlesmith and the Road Less Traveled* at a rehearsal, prepping for opening day on Nov. 21 at Diamond Head Theatre. **PHOTOS COURTESY DIAMOND HEAD THEATRE**

Once Upon One Time trilogy.

"We also hope this show gives people a bit of a road map for how to find their place if they're feeling a little

lost," she says. "To that end, it's a fun, upbeat story with a lot of heart, but also one with a quirky, rambunctious edge."



Catracchia says she enjoyed creating new characters and discovering their unique voices — who are then brought to life through a "freaking amazing cast."

Seibert also shares a similar sentiment to those who have helped to seamlessly transfer a scene, song or joke from paper to life.

He describes Piney as a

troublemaker and someone who "doesn't just do things a certain way simply because that's how they've always been done."

Both composers identify with this mentality.

"To be a writer, you've got to be willing to try new ideas, new formats, new structures — you've got to be willing to take a risk ... you gotta have guts!" Seibert says. "That's our Piney. She's got the guts to do things differently. To leave Santa's workshop and go out and save someone's Christmas — even if she has no idea what she's doing. But, as she finds out, you don't do things like that alone."

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