

# At Play in Western Montana

BY TAMARA MULDOON

*Famous for outdoor recreation*, western Montana provides unlimited opportunity for play among its mountains, valleys, lakes and rivers. Yet, the region offers another type of play that should not be overlooked—live theater. Western Montana has long been a nexus of theatrical talent from across the country. Professional and amateur productions take place year-round, delivering first-rate entertainment to fill your evenings after daytime play.

will be seeing the exact same actors they'd see on a Broadway stage, but at a fraction of the cost. The most consistent reaction from visitors is, "Wow, who knew?"

Whitefish Theatre Co. ([whitefishtheatreco.org](http://whitefishtheatreco.org)) presents a variety of entertainment from September through June. "Visitors should expect polished, high-quality productions with great acting, original sets, costumes that rival the best regional



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From October through May, Missoula Community Theatre ([mctinc.org](http://mctinc.org)) stages four musicals and one non-musical play. Scheduled for spring 2018 are the madcap spy caper *The 39 Steps* and family favorite *The Little Mermaid*.

"Visitors to a Missoula Community Theatre production will experience quality," claims Artistic Director, Joseph Martinez. "In Missoula, we have an amazing talent pool of local actors and stage crew."

While Whitefish, Montana, may be small in size, it looms large in the theater world. Alpine Theatre Project (ATP) ([atpwhitefish.org](http://atpwhitefish.org)) was founded by three veterans of the Broadway stage. Each summer, ATP's shows attract A-list talent the likes of John Lithgow and Olympia Dukakis. Collectively, past ATP actors have performed in nearly 200 Broadway shows, including winners of Tony, Emmy, Golden Globe and Academy awards.

Co-founder, Luke Walrath, notes, "Alpine Theatre Project's hallmark is the high level of talent it brings to Whitefish. Patrons

and excellent acoustics," says Marketing and PR Manager Jen Asebrook. Upcoming shows in this 39th season are an adaptation of *The Great Gatsby* and satirical award-winner *Urinetown—The Musical*.

Bigfork Summer Playhouse ([bigforksummerplayhouse.com](http://bigforksummerplayhouse.com)) is starting its 59th season of live professional theater. Popular actor J. K. Simmons is among Playhouse alumni, formerly spending seven seasons acting and directing there.

"We work hard to bring you the highest quality entertainment, top-notch singing and even higher-quality dancing," declares co-owner, Brach Thomson. "You'll come away thinking you've been to Broadway in the Rockies." This summer, catch a rousing production at this 435-seat, art deco theater. The 2018 line-up includes the classic "Singing in the Rain" and the fairy-tale adaptation "Into the Woods."

To begin planning your Montana play date, visit Glacier Country Tourism at [glaciermt.com](http://glaciermt.com).