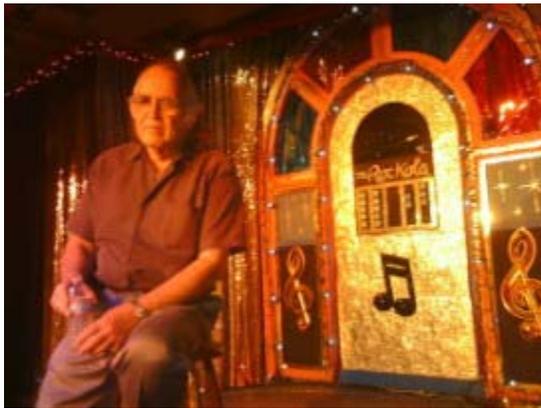


Acting with a Hart in Chatsworth

A funky little theater is the community's best kept entertainment secret.

By [Gordon Durich](#) - [Email the author](#) - May 31, 2011



The show goes on for "Avenue Act One," located behind a big old oak at 22200 Chatsworth St. It is also known as the "**Big Oak Theatre**," for obvious reasons.

Company director Patrick Hart, having accrued more than four decades of experience in the entertainment biz directing some 100 productions, crafted the rustic postage stamp-sized theater in a converted barn on his acre and a quarter off Topanga Canyon Boulevard.

"The house we live in was built in 1913, and was apparently a stagecoach house," Hart relates. "I bought it about 12 years ago."

The enterprising former Los Angeles theater actor spent almost 15 years up north, in Auburn, WA, south of Seattle, where he ran a 600-seat theater called Avenue Act One. "I wanted to be as far out as possible from L.A. at the time," he said.

Flash forward 2011. Hart's production of *Ain't No Spring Chickens! And A Coupla' Hot Chicks!* a zany musical show is enjoying an extended run at the funky theater. Highlights include an all girl trio dubbed the Tweedle Lee Dee-Va's, singing '50s and '60s rock and roll songs. (The show is an offshoot of the popular *Chicken Fried Diner* Hart staged in Tacoma, WA).

Many cast members in *Ain't No Spring Chickens!* were drawn from the perennial seasonal staple *Scrooge*, the musical, which Hart has been presenting in the Pacific North West and California since 1986.

His show *Hootinanny!* is a opportunity to meet Buster the donkey, dwarf goats, other farm animals, and strut your stuff. "I like to help some folks make a fool of themselves," Hart kidded. Poetry, songs, skits. It's all up for grabs at this fun program.

Next on the boards at the 50-seat theater Hart is considering staging the magical musical *The Fantasticks*.

