

# THE PASSION PLAY

April 7, 12-14 | Porter Ranch



## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW:

*Lisa McGloiry sits down with Director, Chip Hurd, and Executive Producer, Susanne Walden, to get a behind the scenes look at The Passion Play.*

**LM: *The Passion Play* is in its 27th year in production. What can we expect this year?**

CH: Think of it as a boutique Broadway show – *Hamilton*® meets *Les Misérables*® – that brings both a traditional and fresh, modernized aspect to the Play. We also have an entirely new set with amazing features.

SW: You'll see a much more choreographed play with seven new scenes and songs that appeal to a wider audience. And, the Play is shorter this year with no intermission.

**LM: Take us behind the scenes. Any interesting facts?**

CH: All the original music is being created via FaceTime and long distance because my co-composer and musical director lives in Texas.

SW: For the past three months, we have been rehearsing four times a week for 15 hours. That's about 180 hours of rehearsal leading up to showtime. The Play has over 200 volunteers including cast, crew, and ushers. Some people have been volunteering for over 24 years.

**LM: What is one message that you want the audience to experience?**

CH: I want people to know who Jesus really is, and that there is still time to get to know him. Don't wait. Seek Him now.

SW: Don't hide in your sins and carry all that weight. Confess your sins to Jesus, so you can be forgiven and be set free. Nikko's scene (The adulterous woman) is a great illustration of this.

CONTINUE INTERVIEW ON OTHER SIDE

**LM: Chip, you've directed many Hollywood productions in your career. Why is *The Passion Play* so special?**

CH: When I directed for Hollywood, I had to please the network executives and producers. Now, when I write and direct for *The Passion Play*, I only have to please Christ.

**LM: You are both professional colleagues and BFFs. Shed some light on your friendship.**

CH: Susanne is my role model, a woman who is real, supportive, and elegant. I can throw her the ball, and I know what she will do with it. When she throws it to me, I run with it, and hit the goal.

SW: Chip and I are kindred spirits and perfect partners with completely opposite gifts. I trust Chip's creativity and she trusts my management. *The Passion Play* comes and goes, and our lives move on, but we don't ever miss a beat when things pick back up.

**LM: Why is it important to invite someone to see *The Passion Play* if they aren't familiar with the Jesus story?**

CH: As believers, we are given the commission to compel others to come to know Jesus. The Play is an evangelism tool that keeps Jesus' story relevant with stylized music that they can easily relate to.

SW: In today's world, the Church is often seen as a pariah because we are anti-this, and anti-that. But, *The Passion Play* is not a church service, so it's much easier to invite others. People get to see the Play's diversity – the rainbow of color in the members of the cast that they can identify with.

**LM: What do you do to take the pressure off and relax during the Play?**

CH: I eat.

SW: I work out.

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