

## A Haunted Conservatory

Music Conservatory of Sandpoint Hosting Halloween Events

By Patty Hutchens

If you are looking for a unique way to spend Halloween, consider joining the Music Conservatory of Sandpoint and the Bonner County Historical Society and Museum for an evening of musical adventure and ghosts from the past.

Karin Wedemeyer, Founder and Director of the Music Conservatory of Sandpoint, shares that she and her team have long wanted to create a Haunted Conservatory in Sandpoint, inviting all the ghosts from the historical building's past and anyone who is not afraid of being spooked and simply looking for a unique way to celebrate this cultural gift to our town.

The historical building, located at 110 Main Street in Downtown Sandpoint, was built in 1910 and was initially utilized as Sandpoint City Hall. At that time, it was home to both the Sandpoint Fire Station and Sandpoint Police Department.

Over a century later, The Music Conservatory of Sandpoint, which was established in Sandpoint in 2009, purchased the building in 2019 and has done much to restore the building to its former glory. The renovations have been possible through the generosity of several community partners such as the Avista Foundation, Confidence Foundation, Idaho Forest Group, the Idaho Pain Clinic, Idaho Heritage Trust, Laura Moore Cunningham Foundation, STCU, and several private donations.

What many are not aware of is that this Music Conservatory is not the first to call Sandpoint home. In 1908 a Music Conservatory opened here with one of the key participants being opera singer Olivia Dahl. Although at a different location, the history of the previous Music Conservatory is extensive and was thought to be one of a very few in the United States at that time.

Of the famous opera singer who held a place in Sandpoint's heart over a century ago, Wedemeyer likes to say that Dahl lives on in the current Conservatory.

“Of course, whenever our lights flicker in our building or anything else unexplained happens, we point our fingers at her (Dahl). We know she is around,” said Wedemeyer with a grin. “At night we hear her sing and lament. In the evening she makes our lights flicker, eats our candy, and who knows what else, especially on Halloween!”

Wedemeyer invites those interested to come to the Haunted Conservatory event on Saturday, October 28 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. and Sunday, October 29 from 2:30 to 4 pm. Guests to this free event will take a tour through time in the Haunted Conservatory and will be treated to live music performed throughout the building by Music Conservatory of Sandpoint musicians.

“We want guests to be prepared to hear scary music, meet skeletons and ghosts, and perhaps even Olivia,” said Wedemeyer, who adds that the Bonner County Historical Society and Museum will host a photobooth at the conservatory for this special event.

In addition, on Halloween evening, the Music Conservatory of Sandpoint invites all trick or treaters to stop by from 4:30 to 6 pm for a treat.

Through the support of the community, the Music Conservatory of Sandpoint is able to make their programs available to all. It welcomes and appreciates donations in support of its students and their musical success so that it can continue to pursue its mission.

For more information on the Halloween event, log onto [SandpointConservatory.org/events](http://SandpointConservatory.org/events).