

>>> FROM THE COVER

an inside look at northeast oregon's
arts and entertainment scene



Seventy-six trombones will lead the big parade at LHS

By Sabrina Thompson
EO Media Group

"The Music Man," the classic story of love and betrayal in small-town Iowa, comes to the stage at La Grande High School, debuting Nov. 20. This story of a con man selling instruments and uniforms he doesn't have turns into a love story revealing that things are not always as they seem.

Directed by Denise Wheeler and Kevin Durfee and with a cast of high school and elementary students and faculty members, the show has been in rehearsal for six weeks. In that time, Durfee has blended the cast's voices into a chorus, while Wheeler has guided the cast in developing their characters, choreographing their movements and getting them dressed.

"We make a great team,"



Photo by Sabrina Thompson/EO Media Group

Led by Chris Kirby as Harold Hill (center), "The Music Man" brings classic Americana to La Grande.

Wheeler said about working with Durfee.

The pair have produced musicals at LHS for the past eight years. This year's show was selected when Durfee came to Wheeler with a group of guys who he said would be great for the quartet, one of the

most difficult parts to cast in this show. The first musical Wheeler directed was "The Music Man," so she welcomed the idea — and the team started rehearsals during the third week of school.

Wheeler also agreed to the show because she thought it would be a good one for the students. While "The Music Man" is full of fun and energy, Wheeler sees it as a calmer production, which keeps the performers from getting exhausted

during the demanding schedule required when putting on a large-scale musical.

"There is a great line from the show, 'You pile up enough tomorrows, and you'll find you are left with nothing but a lot of empty yesterdays,'" Wheeler said. "It just talks about laying back a little bit and enjoying the moment. I think this is something kids need to do nowadays. They're stressed with school, with the media, and this gives them an outlet."

However, no production is without its difficulties. Because the quartet and other members of the cast are also athletes at the school, managing schedules was a challenge, according to Wheeler. Students also have to manage their own schedules, balancing school work and rehearsals.

"It is all rehearsal at this point," said senior Chris Kirby, who

portrays the show's male lead, con man Harold Hill.

"I communicate with my teachers a lot, and that helps a ton," senior Julie Chandler, who plays opposite Kirby as the show's female lead Marian Paroo, said about keeping up academically. "They are really sympathetic because they've been teachers for years so they know how it goes. I try not to abuse the system."

As leads in their final musical at the high school, Kirby and Chandler both said they are especially invested in the musical.

"It feels bigger," Kirby said of this year's show. "I feel more important to this show than any show I've done before."

Additional actors in the musical include elementary school students who play the youngest characters and faculty members, including Durfee and La Grande High School Principal Brett Baxter, who are in the first number of the show.

"I think it gets the actors to see things in a different light," Wheeler said about having the faculty as part of the cast. "It shows the importance of working together for the common good."

The hard work of the cast and crew can be enjoyed at 7 p.m. Nov. 20-23 in the LHS auditorium.

General admission at the door is \$5.

"I hope people leave having had a good time," Wheeler said.



NOVEMBER 22-28

ELTRYM HISTORIC THEATER

1809 1st St, Baker City • eltrym.com

FROZEN 2 PG

FRI: (4:10) 7:10, 9:40
SAT: (1:10) (4:10) 7:10, 9:40
SUN: (1:10) (4:10) 7:10 M-T: 7:10
W-TH: (4:10) 7:10, 9:40

A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD PG

FRI: (4:00) 7:00, 9:35
SAT: (1:00) (4:00) 7:00, 9:35
SUN: (1:00) (4:00) 7:00 M-T: 7:00
W-TH: (4:00) 7:00, 9:35

HARRIET PG-13

FRI: (3:50) 6:50, 9:30
SAT: (12:50) (3:50) 6:50, 9:30
SUN: (12:50) (3:50) 6:50 M-T: 6:50

() Bargain Matinee
Show Times: 541-523-2522
Office: 541-523-5439

Freeze the precious moments...
PRESERVE YOUR WEDDING GOWN.

- Your wedding gown will become your family heirloom. Keep it for the next generation of daughters.
- Wedding gowns kept in plastic bags are exposed to chemicals in the long run that effect the gown's fibers and color.

C & H Cleaning Industries and Dry Cleaning

208 Chestnut, La Grande • 541 963-9210 Open Tues-Thurs 11am-4:30pm
Fri 11am-5:30pm, Sat 11am-2pm