

EOU theater presents 'Rent'

Shows set for May 19-22

Go! staff

LA GRANDE — The theater department at Eastern Oregon University will present "Rent," Jonathan Larson's Pulitzer Prize-winning musical, in four performances this month.

Shows are set for 7 p.m. May 19, 20 and 21 in Loso Hall's

McKenzie Theatre. The final performance on Sunday, May 22, starts at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$15 general admission, \$10 for seniors, veterans and currently military, or free for EOU students. Purchase tickets online at tix.com/ticket-sales/eouuniversity/6521, at the Loso Hall box office, or by calling 541-962-3757.

Director Mike Heather said the musical covers a variety of topics, including "relationships and their challenges, addictions, homelessness, rents, technology destroying society and culture, friendships, abusive police, unchristian Christians, intolerance, and ultimately it is all about love and its power to solve all if we just use it as our approach to life." He said the musical contains adult situations and language.

"I have been most fortunate to have a very talented cast and production team for this show," he said. "This production has been an example of why I have helped to create theater for over 40 years."

He said "Rent" is the first fully produced musical at EOU for more than two years.

"It's been great to work with

students, faculty and staff to create again," he said. "Getting back into the groove of producing has been a challenge. We have been rediscovering the process almost to the point that it has been quite invigorating and new at times."

In addition to Heather, the show is choreographed by Heather Watson, Jessica Durfee is the music director, Heather Tomlinson is handling costume design, and Ming Cho Lee and Robert Edmond Jones are in charge of set and lighting.

As for the student actors, they are happy to be back on stage.

"Being able to both act onstage with my fellow actors and directly address the audience is amazing," Nicholas Vece said. "I get to exist onstage as both character and narrator, taking part in the story while guiding the audience's view. It's really amazing to take part in the show in such a unique way."

Alaina Watson, who plays Joanne, said "Rent" is different than her past performances.

"I love the challenge of embodying a character that is so serious, yet keeps her heart full of love no matter how much hurt she's been through," she said. "Although this show has been challenging, my fellow castmates always are so supportive of each other, which makes being onstage so much more fun. It's been amazing to see this show progress so smoothly, and I can't wait to see and be a part of the finished product."

Durfee, music director and part of the ensemble, has also been challenged by her participation in "Rent."

"I love being in this show because it has pushed me in so many ways — being the music director and lead member of the ensemble has been challenging," she said. "Working with the cast members, making music and telling this story together has been so rewarding. I'm so proud of the hard work and the dedication to their roles. This show is one you won't want to miss."

"Rent" concludes the EOU



Eastern Oregon University/Alyson Yates
Eastern Oregon University presents
"Rent" May 19-22.


Theatre Program's production season. On the slate for 2022-23 are "A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder," "Next to Normal" and "The Tempest."

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