



Hello, Dolly! rehearsal points the way

NICK COTE

Community Spirit

Hello, Dolly! comes to the LCC stage

It's like a high school musical, but with a better orchestra, some professionals sprinkled in the mix ... and your neighbor just might have a role.

Lane Summer Musical Theater's production of *Hello, Dolly!* opens tonight and will perform 10 shows during the next two weeks.

A classic of American musical theater adapted from Thornton Wilder's 1938 play *The Matchmaker*, *Hello, Dolly!* was written by Michael Stewart with music and lyrics by Jerry Hackman.

The show tells the story of Dolly Levi (Sandra Brown Williams), a woman with a bright and generous spirit, who's after Horace Vandergelder (Rick Turnbow), a wealthy but penny-pinching business owner. Dolly's in pursuit of marriage but has a few lessons to bestow along the way.

Director Jack Watson, professor emeritus of the UO's theater department, says that true to Dolly's vision of using monetary wealth to enrich the lives of those around her, the cast of *Hello, Dolly!* works unpaid so that the production's profits can fund scholarships for music, theater and dance students at LCC.

The community theater boasts an all-ages cast whose level ranges from amateur to professional. LSMT is sponsored by the college's music department, which provides the rehearsal and performance space, but is otherwise independent of the college.

Hello, Dolly! adds a sixth show to the company's repertoire, which has performed *West Side Story*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *Kiss Me Kate* and *The Music Man* in recent years.

The cast is comprised of professional and student actors and community members; the orchestra is comprised of professionals, faculty and some students.

Producer Ron Bertucci says the largely veteran staff has allowed the production to run more smoothly than in past years.

"The leads have a lot of experience," Bertucci says. "Some have been in dozens and dozens of professional productions, and then there are the young guys in school and the community folks who just love to do it."

Bertucci says a blending of professional experience with the passion of locals brings a greater community quality to the production and proves that community theater can produce an impressive show.

The theater company serves to remind residents that a strong community element exists at LCC, Bertucci says, something that he thinks is sometimes forgotten in the shadow cast by the UO. One of the company's main goals is ushering audiences away from downtown Eugene and out to the community college where professional and local talent combine to capture an unusual energy.

"For professionally supported community musical theater, we need the best orchestra possible," Bertucci says. "The community aspect really enriches the production and makes the pot that much richer."

Director Watson has seen *Hello, Dolly!* performed professionally and on Broadway several times and says the show is a fun pick for a family audience. Typically, high schools pass up the piece because the roles warrant an older cast. Bertucci says the show hasn't appeared in Eugene since 1993.

The upcoming Oregon Festival of American Music will showcase performances of other classics like *The Wizard of Oz* and *Brigadoon* through the Shedd Institute, but Bertucci says the benefit of LCC is ticket prices at a bargain.

"Get your energy going and your smiles working," Watson told the cast at a rehearsal before their first run through with the orchestra. Audiences can expect both energy and smiles to abound at the show. **EW**

Hello, Dolly! runs July 17-20 and 23-27. Tix at 346-4363 or through tickets.uoregon.edu

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