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McNary alumni make directorial debut

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

Jeremy Clubb and Andrea Bean, two McNary High School graduates who haven't stopped acting, building sets and playing music, are making their directorial debut with Keizer Homegrown Theatre's *Dog Park, The Musical*.

The pair were both heavily involved in the drama department while students at McNary, Clubb as an actor and Bean as a violin player in the orchestra pit.

After high school, both acted in shows at Chemeketa Community College. From there, Clubb had a minor part in Keizer Homegrown's first musical—*I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* in 2014, then joined the theatre company's board and has been involved in nearly every show since. Bean has played violin and conducted musicals for Pentacle Theatre in Salem.

Clubb and Bean were riding back from a show at the Gallery Theatre in McMinnville when the idea of directing *Dog Park* came up. Bean had been asked but didn't want to go at it alone.

"I can sing fairly well but I don't read music very well," Clubb said. "I don't play any instruments. I would not be any help in that regard."

Bean turned out to be the perfect partner.

"Since I'm the musical side and he's more of the technical side and the experienced on stage, putting us together is kind of a dream team because where I lack he's got the knowledge and vice versa," Bean said. "Our ideas just kind of meld. It's been really good."

Dog Park, which debuts in the Chemeketa Community College auditorium on Friday, Oct. 6 at 7 p.m., tells the story of Daisy, a sassy Westie played by Holly Beaman, who is encouraged by her owner to find love at the dog park. Daisy meets Champ the Collie, a charming but full of himself show dog played by Joshua Seitz, Itchy, a neurotic Jack Russell terrier played by Brandon Correa and Bogie, a mysterious loner lab mutt played by Dennis Fisher.

This unusual quartet make their way through the day's scheduled events which include Singles With Friends, Agility Class, Speed Mating, Yappy Hour and Lovers with Leashes.

"Finding that person that you connect the best with, that's what this is about," Clubb said.

Submitted
Andrea Bean and Jeremy Clubb, two McNary High graduates, are directing Keizer Homegrown Theatre's *Dog Park, The Musical* Oct. 6-8, 13-15, 20 and 21 at Chemeketa Community College.

While Daisy does find her mate, everything doesn't go as planned.

"Like every good show you have some misconception and plot twists," Bean said.

The co-directors have added extra characters to the show in three purse dogs—Ginger, played by Hillary Hoover, Trix, played by Stacia Rice and Cookie, played by Amber Traver.

In the original production, the characters are played by the three males using puppets. But when only females showed up to the original auditions in January, Bean and Clubb had to be creative.

"We thought if we have people that want to be involved, let's create that opportunity so we split out all the drag roles and created extra characters," Bean said. "It's adding a lot to the show because you can do more with those extra people. Having those three extra dogs, now you can do a lot more fun things with choreography that's visual. It adds a different flair to it."

Clubb added, "For as much trouble as we had with casting, I'm so happy with the cast that we have right now. They are very talented people."

For choreography, Clubb called in a favor from a former classmate at Chemeketa, Nathaniel Pierce, who now teaches in New York City at the American Musical and Dramatic Academy and worked on the Tony Award winning musical *Dear Evan Hansen*.

At no charge, Pierce flew out from NYC to start the choreography before Clubb and Bean finished it.

"We were watching things that Nate was doing and we did a bunch of research on Youtube and I really think it's well put together," Clubb said. "We built right off of it."

Louise Biffle made the costumes, which includes wigs, ears, collars and painted noses. But no tails.

"She's doing an amazing job of taking what we had as ideas," Bean said. "Turning humans into dogs, you have to decide the level that you want to go with that. We're not doing *Cats*. We're not Wilfred the dog. We're somewhere in a happy medium. There's some fur aspects in their costumes but then they still have the human side of it."

Clubb and Bean have worked to get the community and audiences more involved. Along with face painting in the lobby, Clyde's Confections, a bakery in Salem, is making doggie treats, to be eaten by humans, for sale.

Additional shows are Oct. 7, 13, 14, 20, 21 at 7 p.m. and 8 and 15 at 2 p.m. with doors opening 30 minutes before the musical. Those in attendance for the Oct. 7 and 14 shows will get a special treat as The Joys of Living Assistance Dogs will be doing tricks with some of its dogs during intermission.

"We're trying things that haven't been done with Keizer Homegrown before," Clubb said.

Willamette Valley Animal Hospital is one of the sponsors the show. McNary thespians have been invited to sell concessions during the opening weekend, Oct. 6-8, with Keizer Homegrown donating a $1 to the MHS drama department for every ticket sold at the door.

Tickets are $15 and are also available online through Brown Paper Tickets at www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3091639.

The auditorium is located in Building 6 at Chemeketa Community College on 4000 Lancaster Dr. NE. Closest parking is in the purple lot at the college, easiest to find by entering campus off of 45th street and following the signs to the auditorium.

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