

Elf the Musical debuts at Ken Collins Theater



Gage Dubois will play the lead role of Buddy the Elf in McNary High School's production of *Elf the Musical*. Photo by MATT RAWLINGS of Keizertimes

KLIFE

BY MATT RAWLINGS

Of the Keizertimes

For the first time since January 2020, Ken Collins Theater will be opening its doors to its annual winter musical put on by McNary High School.

The McNary band, choir and theater departments have collaborated to put on *Elf the Musical*, which opened on Wednesday, Dec. 8. There will be showings on Dec. 10-11 and Dec. 16-18 at 7 p.m. There will also be a 2 p.m. showing on Saturday, Dec. 18.

Tickets are \$12 for the general public and \$10 for students and will be available at the door or online at mcnary-theater.ticketleap.com. There will be a North Pole party before the show on Saturday, Dec. 11 starting at 10:30 a.m., which will feature hot chocolate, dessert, reindeer food prep, elf hats and photo opportunities with cast members.

McNary theater teacher Tom

Cavanaugh, who is show's director, said that preparation has been chaotic at times, but that the kids have been eager to put on a quality performance.

"It has been crazy trying to remember how we did this, having not done it for a couple years. My seniors right now were sophomores last time we did something like this. But it has been great. I have never had a group this focused, ready to just dive in," Cavanaugh said.

"I'm so excited, it's the first show we have done in this auditorium in almost two years. It feels so overwhelmingly exciting to be here and be putting on a production. Everyone is so excited to be here", added Ellie Auvinen, who is playing the role of Jovie.

Zoe Banton is the show's choreographer and Andy Thomas is the vocal director.

Elf the Musical, based on the popular 2003 film starring Will Ferrell,

debuted as a Broadway show in 2010 with all original music. The story follows Buddy The Elf, who, as a young orphan, accidentally crawled into Santa's bag of gifts and is transported to the North Pole.

Buddy was raised at the North Pole by elves, not knowing that he is actually human, until his size and poor toy-making abilities force him to face the truth. With Santa's blessing, Buddy travels to New York City in search of his birth father. Although his dad is on the naughty list and his half-brother doesn't believe in Santa, over time, Buddy is able to fill his family with the Christmas spirit.

Cavanaugh says that many around the school and community have expressed their excitement about the show's potential.

"It has been fun to see people's faces light up when they

find out that we are doing Elf. I think there are lot of people just really excited to get back to seeing shows, so having that energy surrounding it has been great," he said.

While there are many similarities in the storyline, the show features unique aspects that will give the audience a different experience than just watching the film.

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— TOM Cavanaugh

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