



Katherine Lacaze

From left: Brittania Williams, Sue Neuer and Heidi Hoffman practice the opening number in the musical "Nunsense."

'Humanity within the divinity'

Although Catholicism influences the musical's setting, religion is not a central theme.

When it does surface, Hull and Bowman said, the approach to it is neither preachy or overbearing nor irreverent or disrespectful. Rather, the central themes highlight various facets of the human condition, such as conflict and resolution, the interplay between vastly different personalities and the occasional tension between personal goals and altruism.

The show also explores the ways in which these devout nuns are, at the end of the day, still human.

"It's really humanity within the divinity," Davis said.

Hull agreed, adding faith and spirituality merely influence the "circumstance through which you get to see into each of these characters."

Bowman has a special relationship with "Nunsense," as seeing the show was his first community theater experience.

Directing the musical was coming "full circle," he said.

His goal throughout the process was primarily to have fun with the actors, but also to teach them something they didn't know, whether that be theater terminology, stage directions or a new skill.

Through collaboration, the crew — which includes music director Darren Hull, choreographer Marco Davis and stage manager Heather Spivey — developed a show full of heart.

The benefit at the high school the sisters are throwing "is coming from a place of love and hope and desperation," Bowman said.

A thrilling alternative

In contrast to the peppy and occasionally bawdy "Nunsense," director Mick Alderman left the dark, detestable traits of each character raw and unvarnished for "And Then There Were None."



George Vetter

A scene from "And Then There Were None."

The show starts with 10 strangers, each bearing a deep secret and troubled past, being summoned to a remote island.

As inclement weather prevents them from returning to the mainland, they begin getting murdered one by one according to lines of a sinister nursery rhyme.

Originally, Alderman's familiarity with the production as he had seen it performed previously caused him to forget "all the horrible things these characters had done," as they generally are glossed over.

A common style now, Alderman added, is to stage Agatha Christie plays in a fluffy, almost lighthearted way.

Although Christie's plays don't bear close scrutiny because of their absurd premises, Alderman said she certainly made this show in particular "as dark as she could and put a whole lot of clues throughout the dialogue and stage directions as to how she wants these characters to be played."

Those directions sparked his interest to do the show "more in the tone that I think Dame Agatha intended," he said.

"I thought, 'I want to emphasize those darker aspects.'" 



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From left: Cast members of "Nunsense" include Sue Neuer as Sister Mary Hubert, the Mistress of Novices; Cameron Lira as Sister Mary Amnesia; Heidi Hoffman as Sister Mary Regina, or Mother Superior; Ann Bronson as Sister Robert Anne; and Brittania Williams as Sister Mary Leo.