# PLAY

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gy of sorts, this one is more abstract, more mythical, and although it has a young female protagonist, it's more about some 'bigger issues.' The folk tale on which the musical is based is a popular one in Northwest Native American tribes and there are dozens of variations of it. My first encounter was through a children's picture book, and it immediately sounded like a good idea for a musical or opera."

The basic plot entails the story of a young Indian princess, Ayasha, who lacks respect for the surrounding animals, especially the bears. After being "kidnapped" by the local bear tribe for her disrespect, she learns that the bears are not merely "big, smelly, and scary," but rather "people" like herself. Soon a friendship emerges between Ayasha, Yuma (one of her captors) and the surrounding animals, leading her to have a change in heart. While a tragic event ensues Ayasha's return to her village, the powerful lesson of respect and love for all changes her outlook on life forever.

"When I first read the script for this musical, I was unsure of how the kids' would react to it," Nederheiser said. "While I believed it to be a very creative and effective story, the issues brought forth within it, were quite different and deeper than the scenarios presented in our first three musicals. However, as I dove into the plot and began to talk amongst teachers and colleagues who would be collaborating on this project, I realized that this musical presented the opportunity for growth in the cast and a worthy challenge. Not only that, but the incorporation of masks, animal characters, and a new set design for bringing the story to life, intrigued me. With the Band Together Grant, our main goal for the year was to present opportunities for all students to have access to our band, choral, and musical, while presenting themes and events that would address issues of diversity. I feel that this project has more than succeeded in bringing that endeavor to fruition.

"I am extremely grateful to Mark Steighner for his innovative creativity, artistry and support. The kids, staff, and everyone involved have benefitted immensely from this project. We dedicate this year's performance of the musical to him in honor of all he has done for our community the past 37 years of teaching. Thank you."

Nederheiser also thanked engineering teacher Andy Angstrom and his studetns "for their enthusiasm and hard work in bringing the set to life," and artists-in-residence Villa and Fox for their help in creating the masks and painting the set, and to teacher Carol Birdsell for her "creativity and support" with the costumes, masks, and make-up.

She also thanked the Gauthier family for its help in making costumes and for our adult staff for investing their time, and to Shelley Toon-Lindberg of Arts in Education of the Gorge "for your artistic connections and support."

**CAST LIST**

Ayasha: Atari Gauthier
Nashota: Sage Fetkenhour
Tiva: Sadie Fetkenhour
Hakan: Liam Baker
Mother: Ocean Kuykendall
Father: Adam Smith
Yuma: Alex Bertidillo
Honon: Brent Emmons
Sapata: Alea McCarty
Mato: Aleeyah Enriquez
Mouse: Frances Dickinson
Dog: Luke Southall
Rabbit: Emma Berens
Crow: Gabe Oliver
Cat: Celia Acosta
Wolves: Sandra Piatt, Mariah Roberts, Maggie Bertrand, Emily Mitchell
Salmon: Emily Lewis, Caroline Hyde, Sydney Cox, Lyric Emmons
Eagles: Aleyah Klapprich, Camille Bushauer, Fiona Rand, Jude Bokovoy
Artistic Coordinator: Ayva Levin
Backstage crew: Jade Dowdy, Kennedy Levitt, Alivea Harsanyi, Taylor Beam, Ellen Sova, Ayva Levin
Lighting/technical Support: Keeley Brownback, Audrey Schlemmer, Lillie Tomlinson
Pianist : Corin Parker

Photo by Kirby Neumann-Rea

Artist Allison Fox, who oversaw the set painting, and artist Toma Villa, who instructed the students in mask-making.

Photos by Robin Dickenson


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