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Legally Blonde: The Musical debuts

A Q&A with director Madison Baker

pretty seamlessly transition from song to lines. It wasn't one of those shows where it was obvious that now it's a scene, now it's a song. One of the keys is from an actor's perspective, figuring out who your character is so that the core of who they are goes with you from scene to song so when you transition, the base of who the character is, is still there. I think that's a key and on the director's side, as an actor and someone who has learned from phenomenal directors like Alan Beck and Tony Rust, they're invested in the story and the actors really find their characters so when the scenes are done, you're invested in that character. So, I took a similar approach and for the few scenes that aren't choreographed, I had a map of what actors were going to do and said, 'At this point I want you here and exit here' and told them to go and see what naturally happened. It became a natural process.

This show has also been a movie and one a lot of people are familiar with. What can audiences expect from your run?

One of the things is that they'll be glad to know is that it's similar enough to the movie in terms of the storyline that it's not something totally different. Instead of two best friends, there's three and you see them a lot throughout the show. That's one of the initial differences I think people will notice. One of the things I love about the musical is that music allows for a depth in the characters that movies and books don't and don't get me wrong, I love books and movies but when it comes to musicals, the show starts with a song called "Omgod you guys" and you get that immediate sorority girl, giddy excitement in your face right at the start. All of that is counter balanced with a somber song when (SPOILER ALERT) Elle gets hit on by the professor. The songs are very cleverly written and add a depth to the show that the movie doesn't have.

Without spoiling it for people who may not be familiar with the show, talk a bit about Elle and her transformation from someone audiences may not connect with right away and her path to redemption.

For Elle and honestly a lot of girls in the show, it's very much a girl power show in a way. You kind of see the two dimensional version of all the girls when you first meet them and then throughout the show, because Elle starts as sorority president and it's all she thought she could be but what's interesting is that as much as she's stuck in this world of west coast rich girl, Vivian has the same thing on the East Coast but I think for her she does it where her family is East Coast royalty, this is her duty. She has to go to Harvard. One of the things I think is so cool about the women in the show in general is you see them go from these girls who are pretty defined by their circumstances and what they've always thought they were capable of, and nothing more than that, to challenging everyone to look at things from a different viewpoint. They end up defying the odds. They lift each other up to this different level of greatness they didn't think they were capable of. What's powerful about the show to me is that at the core, it really does speak to the power of women building each other up. There's something in Elle's story for everyone about not letting circumstances define what you can do.

Is the dog in the show?

There are two love dogs in the show. When I pitched the show I said I didn't want to use a fake dog because everyone would come expecting the dog so I knew that was going to be a thing for me that I was going to have to make happen. Autumn (Elle) actually has a chihuahua, Sasha, and she's a little star. She gets carried around and walks on a leash in the show and we blocked it so the dogs wouldn't have to be on stage a ton. Every time she makes her entrance, the audience has to aww over her. Our other dog, Jasper plays Paulette's dog, Rufus and he's also adorable.

What should audiences look for in this production? Is there a stand-out scene for you?

A fun fact about the show is that there's 28 people in the cast, 13 are brand new to the CT stage and have never been there before. They are absolutely killing it so honestly, the cast as a whole is absolutely phenomenal. I'm incredibly lucky. Opening night, I sat back and watched the show and watched the audience's reaction and was on Cloud Nine. There are a lot of CT regulars too and people will be really, really pleasantly surprised by Autumn Carter who's played in a lot of shows at Cottage Theatre. She has worked really, really hard for this show and does a beautiful, phenomenal in the show. But I'm lucky because everyone is so good. People will be surprised at how many moving parts there are. We have moving set pieces from store racks to doors to salon counters to rotating platforms. It's a big show.

"Legally Blonde: The Musical" is playing through April 29 at Cottage Theatre. For tickets, visit cottagetheatre.org or call (541) 942-8001.

APRIL IS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH



Have you noticed a change on Main St.? It's gone blue in support of Child Abuse Prevention Month. Check out The Sentinel next week for the complete story.

April Free Events to the public

Free Fitness Class Mon-Friday 9:30-10:00am

April 4th Writing Club Meeting 10:00am

April 10th Louis Farro Piano music 2:30pm

April 12th Timothy Patrick Guitar 6:30pm

April 15th Jr. Clark Band 1:00pm

April 17th Sewing and quilting Club meeting 2:30pm

April 19th Spring Flower Arranging 2:30pm

April 20th Toby Moore Guitar 2:00pm

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