

# An Englishman in the South

Central's drama department presents comical play "The Foreigner"

By Emily Mentzer  
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — When Charlie Baker takes his quest to be left alone to the extreme — by pretending he doesn't understand or speak English — he is privy to a lot of private conversations.

Played by Max Lydum, Charlie is an anxious, nervous British man who is taking a holiday at a hunting lodge in the South.

He encounters good and bad in his escape from his real life, a dead-end job and a wife who doesn't love him.

The result is hilarious in "The Foreigner," presented by Central High School's performing arts department tonight through Saturday. Curtain is at 7 p.m. each night.

"The Foreigner" is Lydum's first time in a play at Central, and he said the character Charlie proved challenging for a number of reasons.

"I had to go out of my natural tendency to be confident," he said. "(Charlie is) anxious, nervous. I had to find empathy for those emotions."

On top of that, Charlie is British and pretending to not speak any English, so Lydum has to be able to maintain two accents — British and a vague, sort of Russian or Eastern European accent.

"Holding up those two accents at the same time is tough," Lydum said. "If I reveal my Britishness, it ruins the whole thing."

The play holds challenges for everyone in the cast and on the crew.

Taylor Ashton is used to playing the head-strong, go-getter role, but is double cast as Betty, the old woman who owns the hunting lodge.

"Having to walk around slowly, wear glasses on my



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

Charlie Baker, played by Max Lydum, finds out from his friend Froggy, played by Dylan Lewis, that he will be staying in the hunting lodge without his friend.

nose," said Ashton, who has a bounce and energy inherent to a Central cheerleader, which she is offstage.

The bad guy, Owen Musser, is played by a normally sweet, smiling Lucas Castanon.

"It's a little out of my comfort zone," he said about playing a villain. "I have a hard time not smiling or laughing at the lines."

To find inspiration for the dark side of the play, Castanon watched films and combined aspects from other villains into his character.

"It was a big challenge, but I've enjoyed it," Castanon said, smiling.

The play is the work of students in a drama class, and student involvement spans beyond the stage.

Many students have bigger roles offstage, learning the ropes of lighting, sound, set design and building, and

## Off to the Theater

**What:** Central High School's production of "The Foreigner," by Larry Shue.

**When:** 7 p.m. Wednesday (today) through Saturday.

**Where:** Central High School auditorium, 1530 Monmouth St., Independence.

**Admission:** \$8 for adults, \$5 for students with ID.

**Of note:** The play's female roles are double cast, which means different actors will be playing the two female roles. Wednesday and Friday will feature different stars than Thursday and Saturday.

stage management.

Phoenix Chambers has been in the spotlight, but for "The Foreigner," she's the person most of the cast likes the least: the dramaturge.

"I write down every line they got wrong," she said. "Make sure people are on book."

Her role goes further, as she is in charge of educating the actors about the history surrounding the play, which takes place in the 1980s in Georgia.

The play has some language — two curse words, to be precise — and potentially sensitive material — Castanon's character Owen is leader of the local Klu Klux Klan.

Drama teacher and play producer Jeff Witt said it may not be suitable for all children.

But the play has merits. Lydum said he likes that the show expresses ideologies of togetherness, inclusiveness and antidiscrimination.

## SCHOOL NOTES

### Dallas native to study in Nicaragua

GOSHEN, Ind. — David Pauls of Dallas will participate in the Goshen (Ind.) College Study-Service Term in Nicaragua during the summer semester.

Pauls, a junior art major at Goshen College, will spend 13 weeks studying, serving and living with host families in Nicaragua.

During the first half of the journey, Pauls will dive into the local culture. The second part will involve work on volunteer service projects.

### Students raise money for victims

MONMOUTH — International students from Nepal at Western Oregon University are raising money for victims of the 8.1 magnitude earthquake on April 25 in Nepal.

Western's International Club is holding fundraisers from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. through Saturday at the Werner University Center in front of the bookstore. All proceeds benefit victims in Nepal.

For more information: [www.wou.edu/give](http://www.wou.edu/give), or mail donations to the WOU Foundation office, 345 Monmouth Ave. N., Monmouth OR 97361.

### Nominate a teacher of the year

SALEM — The Department of Education's annual Teacher of the Year award gives Oregonians a chance to recognize teachers who are making a positive impact in students' lives.

Nominations for the 2015-16 Oregon Teacher of the Year are now being accepted.

To nominate a candidate for the award: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/GV3X3XZ](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GV3X3XZ). Nominations are due by May 31.

A panel of legislators, former teachers of the year, community leaders and education stakeholders select three finalists, who are then interviewed by the deputy superintendent's office. The deputy superintendent makes the final selection.

### Retirement celebration Thursday

INDEPENDENCE — A retirement celebration for three educators with a combined 90 years of service is scheduled for Thursday at the Independence Event Civic Center, 555 S. Main St., Independence.

The event will recognize the careers of Wendy Bemrose, Linda Tonagel, Teresa Whitehall from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.

### Students receive WV scholarships

POLK COUNTY — The West Valley Hospital Foundation announced 23 students in medically related fields will receive scholarships for the 2015 to 2016 school year. A total of \$20,000 in scholarships was awarded to students pursuing degrees in a variety of programs. Scholarship recipients:

- Dallas: Mitchell Bollman; Hayden Broadus; Leslie Classen; Amanda Dankenbring; Christina Feil; Brenda Hess; Shaymarie Parker; Danielle Remington; Isak Tichenor; Kristi Tichenor and Savannah Williams.

- Monmouth: Ty Whittemore and Ashley Wiens.

This is the eighth year that the West Valley Hospital Foundation has awarded scholarships. This year's scholarship awards were funded by the proceeds from the foundation's 2014 Moonlight and Vines Gala. The 2015 Moonlight and Vines Gala will be held Friday, Aug. 21, at the Nesmith Readiness Center in Dallas. For ticket information: West Valley Hospital Foundation office at 503-831-3456.

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