

The 'Peanuts' gang is all here

'You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown' plays July 29-30

By Jennifer Colton
Go! Magazine

ELGIN — Characters step out of the comics and onto the stage in "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown," playing July 29 and 30 at the Elgin Opera House, 104 N. Eighth Ave.

Based on the "Peanuts" comic strip by Charles M. Schulz, "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" is a high-energy Broadway musical following a day in the life of Charlie Brown. The production takes place in a series of connected vignettes, just like the Peanuts comic strip, and the entire stage at the Elgin Opera House has been painted to heighten the effect.

"It's like opening the newspaper and reading the comic strips," Abby Hale said. "It's a really fun show."

Hale, 19, portrays Charlie Brown's charismatic beagle, Snoopy, alongside 15-year-old Grant Deem as the title character.

"Charlie Brown is a really fun character to play," Deem said. "He's a really defined character — it's both more work and less



Jennifer Colton/Go! Magazine

Grant Deem plays the title character in "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" at the Elgin Opera House, which plays July 29 and 30.

work. (The show is) very authentic to the original source material."

Rounding out the familiar names of the primary cast are Lucy (Anna Buckley),



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"You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" features a full cast, plus youth from the Elgin Opera House's annual summer theater camp.

Schroeder (Oliver Gorham), Linus (Isaac Morgan) and Sally (Kaylee Davis).

"You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" will also feature youth from the Elgin Opera House annual summer camp for a total cast of more than 80 children and teenagers. Although the campers will learn a dance during the week before the show opens, the core cast and lead ensemble have been rehearsing most of the summer to prepare for the full production.

'YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, CHARLIE BROWN'

Friday, July 29: 2:30 p.m.

Saturday, July 30: 12:30 and 4:30 p.m.

Tickets: \$20 at www.elginoperahouse.com

Making his stage debut, Gorham, 13, said the process has been surreal.

"The lines are pretty tough, learning a whole monologue, but it's a great experience," he said.

While Gorham said he can connect with Schroeder through a love of music — Gorham plays three instruments — other actors have less in common with their characters. As Lucy, Buckley, 16, spends much of her time tormenting Charlie Brown.

"I like that I get to be really mean. I'm not like that at all," she said.

The musical includes 14 songs, some of which have advanced choreography. In addition to playing Snoopy, Hale is also the show's choreographer. She said audience members who have seen Charlie Brown videos may recognize some of the dance moves.

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