

Day By Day

‘Godspell’ – An Updated Musical
Take On The Gospel Of Matthew –
Hits The YHS Stage Next Week

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A slide, swing set, scaffolding and fencing grace the stage. Bright colors, laughter, screams and music set the mood – all in preparation to entertain you with the Yankton High School Theatre’s production of “Godspell.” Performances will be held at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 19, Friday, April 20, Saturday, April 21 and Monday, April 23 at the Yankton High School Theatre. The musical, written by Stephen Schwartz and John-Michael Tebelak, is a series of parables, based on the Gospel of Matthew (though three of the parables featured are recorded only in the Gospel of Luke). Mixed in with the parables is modern music set primarily to lyrics from traditional hymns. The production’s best known song is “Day by Day,” which was a Top 20 hit single in 1972. For director Keith Goeden, “Godspell” is a show he has wanted to revisit since being a part of the 1984 production at YHS.

“It was just one of the most memorable experiences I have had in a production,” he said. “The story demands that the cast and crew pull together, and because of that, they really bond. I remember by the end of the show, we were all pretty close. Add to it, it is the greatest story ever told and I am very excited for this cast to get that same opportunity.”

Beginning in late February, the cast of 16 (13 seniors) and crew of another 10 behind the scenes have been working to perfect the “deceptively difficult” production.

“This is a relatively small spring musical,” Goeden said. “Because the band trip was going on the entire week before we opened, I had to make the decision that nobody who was going on the trip would be able to try out for the play. It just wouldn’t have worked. So it was a good opportunity to do a smaller show.”

However, Goeden said, the smaller show in no way means the production isn’t large scale.

“I like plays that offer wide open creativity,” he said. “This musical is all about creativity. I love shows where I can give the kids general ideas of what I am thinking and then letting them develop the show from there. This show is about 95 percent the kids’ ideas.”

Because the show was written in the late 1960s, Goeden said it does have a kind of hippy feel to it.

“The kids are all kind of playing exaggerated versions of themselves,” he said. “I told the kids right from the start that this is a cast of all leads and no chorus. Everyone is on stage all the time and, because of that, there can’t be any let downs. No one can be a weak link.”

Goeden said that, because of the uniqueness of the show and how the play is written, he was able to assign songs and lines to which ever cast member fit the line the best.

“Jesus and Jacob are really the only two roles that had to stay pretty true to the script,” he said. “Everyone else, we assigned as we went along. That way every cast member gets their own moment in the spotlight. Everyone gets to shine.”

Cast members for the show include: Rob Schmidt (Jesus); Hunter Baugh (Judas); Sarah Barkley (Sarah); Brandon Folkers (Brandon); Lexi Fokken (Lexi); Tanisha Hollingsworth (Tanisha); Kelsey Huntly (Kelsey); John Iverson (John); Jace Likness (Jace); Maddie Mines (Maddie); Vanessa Rockne (Vanessa); Paden Schmidt (Paden); Gabrielle Swenson (Gabrielle); MiKayla Vetter (MiKayla); and Taylor Wendt (Taylor).

Crew members include: Lights/Sound: Dusty Dvorak, Cameron Luken, Alex Rehurek
Tech Crew: Dylan Stephan, Dillon Beckmann, Tim Landwehr, Devin Westerman, Liz McMellen, Tucker Kennedy, Luke Neumann, Allison Olson and Beth Braun. Lights/Sound: Dusty Dvorak, Cameron Luken, Alex Rehurek; Costumes: Pam Kallis; Music Director: Angela Larson; Set Director: Sheana Eggers; Choreographer: Katherine Reimler; and Student Directors: Nathan Rausch and Kayla Sylvester.

Orchestra: Piano: Angela Larson; DrumKit: Steve Roux; Guitar: Dot Stoll; Bass: Kim Evander; and JoAnn Lambertz: recorder.

Because the story is familiar to the audience, Goeden



Left

The crucifixion of Jesus (Rob Schmidt), as portrayed in the Yankton High School spring production of the Broadway hit musical “Godspell.” Keith Goeden directs the performance, which takes place April 19, 20, 21 and 23 at the YHS/Summit Activities Center theatre. (Kelly Hertz/P&D)



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