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Sweet Mystery Of Murder

LCTC Closes Its Season With A Little 'Death By Chocolate'

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For first-time director Stacie Peitz, the final show of the Lewis and Clark Theatre Company's (LCTC) 53rd season, "Death By Chocolate" by Craig Sodaro, has been an exciting learning experience. "Death By Chocolate" opens Thursday, Feb. 5, with half price night. It continues Feb. 6-8 and 12-15. Shows begin at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday, with Sunday matinees at 2 p.m.

"It is just a quirky, whodunit, mystery comedy that will, honestly keep you guessing until the end," Peitz said.

The show's main character, Nick Noir (played by Zak McComas), is kind of lost in time, Peitz said.

"He's really kind of an idiot," she said. "He believes he is film noir detective. He is very down on his luck, so much so that his office is currently in an alley."

Noir is hired to look into the death of a customer by a chocolate cup of coffee - and from there the shenanigans begin.

"The whole show is trying to figure out who committed the murder," Peitz said. "But honestly, no one who has watched the show from beginning to end has been able to guess who the murderer is. I was surprised even when it came right down to it. The resolution of the show makes you go, 'What!?!'"

Peitz said the show is very funny, made more so by the mostly veteran cast and the timing and personality they are bringing to their characters.

"We held auditions just before Christmas break, had a few read-throughs before the New Year, and then really hit the rehearsals hard," she said. "I am super excited the board trusted me to do this because I have been having so much fun."

Peitz noted casting the show was the most terrifying aspect of the process to date.



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

"Sue Fields (a veteran director at LCTC) came and helped me with auditions - walked me through them," she said. "Now that the roles are cast, the parts are so obvious. I couldn't have written a better part for some of the actors."

Joining McComas on stage are: Ronni Pospisil (Selma), Suzanne Leonard (Bobbie Sue), Vicki Geiser (Bonbon Purvis), Nathan Porras (Henry Higgins Hickenbottom), Tara Gill (Coco Purvis), Scott Plath (Francois Lepew), Katie Fargo (Georgia Gore), Tracy Taylor (Yolanda Lamb) and Tawnee Weiland (Juniper Berry).

Assisting behind the scenes are: Olivia Hudson (assistant director and costumes), Quinn Fargo (stage manager), McComas (light/sound design), Beau Fleming, Michael Schumacher and Jordan Kuipers (light and sound operators) and Russ Leonard (set builder).

"It has been interesting staging the show," Peitz said. "I thought it would be so easy because it is a small cast, but what is unusual is that they are all on stage together, a lot. It is almost like choreographing a dance. I would think something was going to be one way, and then I would step back and watch and it wouldn't work."

Peitz, who also costumed the show, said that is the one thing she would change.

"It was just a lot to focus on," she said. "I



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

TOP: A sweet "whodunit" at the Precious Perks Cafe sets the scene for the Lewis and Clark Theatre Company's production of "Death by Chocolate," which debuts at the Dakota Theatre Feb. 5. **ABOVE:** Nick Noir (Zak McComas) is tied up in a scene from "Death by Chocolate." Surrounding McComas are, from left: Tracy Taylor, Scott Plath, Nathan Porras, Tawnee Weiland and Ronni Pospisil.

tend to be very OCD and want things to go a certain way and if I was focused on costuming, I would catch myself not watching the staging. So, in that respect, it was difficult, but

honestly, I don't know that I could have let someone else costume for me. That has been what I have done the most and I would have driven another costumer nuts saying, "No, that isn't what I want. This is what I want."

Admitting she will probably be a basket case next week on opening night, Peitz said she and the cast are ready to open.

"I am ready to sit back and watch the results," she said. "The cast has been working so hard. Just the other night, we had a line read-through and then ran the show start to finish and when we got done it was 10:30 p.m. No one complained and they made it work."

Peitz noted that LCTC will be having a wine bar both Saturday performances. In addition, LCTC has joined with Czeckers Bar and Grill to offer a dinner and a show on Valentines' Night, Saturday, Feb. 14.

"This has been an amazing, record-breaking season for LCTC and 'Death By Chocolate' is the perfect way to cap it off," Peitz said.

To make reservations for the show, call LCTC at 605-665-4711 during box office hours 10 a.m.-2 p.m. and 4-6 p.m. Monday-Friday.

To follow Shauna Marlette on Twitter go to www.twitter.com/shauna.marlette. To comment on this story go to www.yankton.net.

{JAN. 31 - FEB. 7}

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TBD INDOOR TRACK - CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY - SEWARD, NE
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4:00 PM HOMECOMING WEEK STARTS
4:00 PM HOMECOMING MASS - PEACE CHAPEL

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2

7:30 AM THE ST. JOHN'S BIBLE DISPLAY BEGINS DAILEY
10:00 AM COMMUNITY HOUR - GOLD RUSH - CIMPL ARENA
6:00 PM WOMEN'S JV BASKETBALL - MORNINGSIDE COLLEGE - CIMPL ARENA

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3

1:00 PM CENTER FOR ACTIVE LEARNERS: "EBOLA AND OTHER EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES" WITH DR. VICKI GEISER - ASNC 153*
6:00 PM YANKTON CHILDREN'S CHOIR PRACTICE - BISTRO SECOND STAGE
9:30 PM ROSARY - PEACE CHAPEL

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4

9:00 AM-2:30 PM BLOOD DRIVE - CIMPL ARENA PARKING LOT
10:00 AM COMMUNITY HOUR AND MASS IN BISHOP MARTY MEMORIAL CHAPEL
12:30 PM CENTER FOR ACTIVE LEARNERS: "THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SPEED OF MODERN SOCIETY" WITH DR. ALAN FERRIS - BEDE 205*
2:00 PM CENTER FOR ACTIVE LEARNERS: "EARLY 20TH CENTURY MUSIC: CARMINA BURANA" WITH DR. KENNETH TICE - BEDE 237*
6:00 PM WOMEN'S BASKETBALL - MORNINGSIDE COLLEGE - CIMPL ARENA
8:00 PM MEN'S BASKETBALL - MORNINGSIDE COLLEGE - CIMPL ARENA

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5

12:00 PM NOON FORUM: "SIMPLE NUTRITION FOR A COMPLEX LIFE" WITH KENNY TOMEK, HYVEE DIETITIAN
1:00 PM CENTER FOR ACTIVE LEARNERS: "STAMP COLLECTING: LEARNING ABOUT THE WORLD ONE STAMP AT A TIME" WITH DR. TERRY NELSON - BEDE 326*

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5 (CONTINUED)

5:30 PM CENTER FOR ACTIVE LEARNERS: "THE SAINT JOHN'S BIBLE PROJECT: IN LIVING COLOR!" - BEDE 205*
7:30 PM WINTER CHORAL SHOWCASE - MARIAN AUDITORIUM

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6

10:00 AM COMMUNITY HOUR
7:30 PM HOMECOMING CORONATION - MARIAN AUDITORIUM
8:30 PM HOMECOMING CORONATION RECEPTION - CYBER CAFE

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7

1:00 PM WOMEN'S SOFTBALL SCRIMMAGE - BRIAR CLIFF UNIVERSITY - SOUTH SIOUX CITY
2:00 PM WOMEN'S BASKETBALL - HASTINGS COLLEGE - CIMPL ARENA - HOMECOMING GAME
4:00 PM MEN'S BASKETBALL - HASTINGS COLLEGE - CIMPL ARENA - HOMECOMING GAME
TBD INDOOR TRACK - UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA
TBD WOMEN'S TENNIS - OTTAWA (KS) - RED OAK, IA

*PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. CALL 1-855-MtMARTY FOR REGISTRATION INFORMATION.

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