

# Musical

From Page 1

was fairly well known so that we weren't starting from scratch," Miller said. "We wanted to start with a story that people had some familiarity with. "So I actually drafted three different storyboards for three different familiar stories, and the team chose Robin Hood, and so that's what we began to work on," he said.

The story of Robin Hood takes place in Sherwood Forest during medieval times. It features castles, royalty, yeoman and archers, but Miller notes the story and its setting have a special appeal that South Dakotans can identify with.

"Robin Hood is actually, in many ways, very rural and agrarian — it's a battle of the haves and the have-nots, and big business and big church and big money versus Robin Hood, the rich and the poor," he said. "It may not be so much agriculture, but the wood, the green has this sense of the setting. The spirit of that magical green is the centerpiece of the show."

After the four men decided to base the musical on the story of Robin Hood, Miller created a more specific storyboard to serve as a guide.

"Each of the four of us brought our gifts and our ideas, and once it started to expand, we began to make assignments," Miller said. "Some of us were more toward the music, and some of us were more toward the script. Dan Miller was a good scriptwriter, so he did more in that area. Anthony and George and I were more into the music. I do a lot of lyrics, and so I did a lot of those kinds of things."

As the foursome's work progressed, it also kept evolving.

"The story made several changes as it went along," Miller said, "including what I would call our surprise ending which isn't the traditional Robin Hood ending — but I'm not going to tell you what that is."

It took approximately a year for the four men to craft the musical. They met weekly at a Vermillion restaurant.

"We would take an hour lunch break, and at first it was always that hour," Miller said. "We'd all have homework, and come back and report and share and do. One of the goals was, with a huge cast which we're kind of used to, can you write a show that has parts for little kids, that has parts for older people, that can run the gamut?"

Creating a musical may be fun, but the process is not without challenges.

"There would be times when we would bring stuff in and we'd be really excited about it," Miller said. "Then there would be scenes in which we finally had to agree that it wouldn't work and we'd have to get rid of it. There were moments where I can remember, specifically, that we were just kind of brainstorming, and somebody would say 'what about this?' and 'what about that?' And all of a sudden, I remember it was George who came up with the surprise ending, and when he said it, all of us said, 'Yes, that is the way this show will end.'"

Dan Miller was the first director of the musical a decade ago.

"Because this was our first musical, we would tweak it, and rewrite songs, and when we saw the cast we would make changes to adapt," Steve Miller said.

This year, Miller and Burbach have dusted off the 10-year-old work and made a few more changes.

"We've worked on a couple new songs, a little bit of the script was changed, and we've rewritten all of the orchestrations," Miller said. "Ten years ago, we had a piano, a drum, a guitar and a flute. Now we have a full 15-piece orchestra, so we have rewritten for a full orchestra, and it will be a little grander in that sense. If you've seen the musical before, this version will be a little different, but not completely different."

Burbach serves as orchestra leader. Several ballads, each telling a different version of the Robin Hood story,

have been developed over the centuries.

Audience members who attend "Robin Hood: Spirit of the Greene" will view a musical tale about Robin Hood as a child. "And you will learn, in this version of the story, that Robin's best childhood friend is Warwick, who becomes the sheriff of Nottingham," Miller said, "so these two who will become arch enemies are actually best friends as children."

Many of the traditional characters of the Robin Hood ballad will be introduced to the audience as children in the first act, which ends with Robin killing one of the king's deer.

"It is near the end of the very first act that the killing of the deer makes him an outlaw," he said. "And then in the second act, you see Robin years later as a 25-year-old. He is the Robin that we all know, robbing from the rich and giving to the poor, but several surprising things happen."

This version of the Robin Hood story works so well for the Vermillion Community Theatre, Miller believes, because "there are no huge parts. Clearly, Robin Hood and Marian are leads, but everybody has a little part. Almost everybody — 104 in the cast — has something to say. Even the little ones have little lines, and that's really fun."

Jen Dickenson, a Vermillion native who supervised the VCT's popular production of the musical "Annie" last summer, is fulfilling the same role in the director's chair this year.

"It's been so much fun, because we have so many repeats (cast members) from last year, but we also have a whole bunch of new kids and adults who weren't able to be in the performance last year," Dickenson said. "We've got new people and old people together, and it's really great experience."

Show dates are July 19, 20 and 22 at 7:30 p.m. and July 21 at 2:30 p.m. All performances are at the Vermillion High School Performing Arts Center. For more information, log on to [vermillioncommunitytheatre.org](http://vermillioncommunitytheatre.org).

# Shrine

From Page 1

child dies, he or she goes to be with Jesus. On one of the statues, we have a symbol for an aborted or miscarried infant, as well."

The "Rachel Weeping For Her Children" statue is a symbol of a Bible verse from Jeremiah 31:15.

"The statue is really a symbol for a mother who lost her children," Hames said. "Rachel lost a child but realized God would be taking care of her child, so the symbol also represents life after death."

In addition to the new statues, officials have also added a "Way of the Saints" area to the Shrine.

"The Saints area features 36 pillars, with a story of a saint on each," Hames said. "About half of the pillars have been claimed so far, and people can make a donation if they want their favorite saint represented on a pillar."

The shrine first began when a young Catholic couple bought property by the lake area in 1957. They showed the land to a chaplain from Mount Marty who told them not to sell any of the land for home sites; rather, they should save some of it to be "an edifice to God."

In 1971, a dozen wooden

crosses were carried up the hill by their donors, representing the Stations of the Cross. This was the beginning of the shrine as it is known today.

Now, masses are held at the shrine on Monday and Saturday evenings.

Hames said this has been the first major addition to the shrine since a new entrance was constructed a few years ago.

He added the shrine is all volunteer-based.

"Volunteers here talk to people coming through the shrine, and also do some of the landscaping," he said.

Hames has been volunteering at the shrine since 1998 and said he has done "a little bit of everything" since he began volunteering there.

"I've helped to put together some of the new areas we have here and have helped to plan them out," he said. "I wanted to do something to honor Mary, because I've had good experiences with her."

Hames added that he hopes people that come to the shrine have a positive experience, too.

"For some people, this place can give them a sense of peace," he said.

For more information on the shrine, visit [www.the-houseofmaryshrine.org](http://www.the-houseofmaryshrine.org).

You can follow Andrew Atwal on Twitter at [twitter.com/andrewatwal](https://twitter.com/andrewatwal)

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