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KELLY HERTZ/P&D

The cast of the Lewis and Clark Theatre Company's production of "Oklahoma!" represents a mixture of familiar local talents and newcomers to the stage. The beloved musical will be presented at the

Dakota Theatre in downtown Yankton July 25-29 and Aug. 2-5. For ticket information, call the Dakota Theatre at 665-1298.

# OKLAHOMA!

## LCTC Presents Classic American Musical At Dakota Theatre

BY EMILY NIEBRUGGE  
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The Lewis and Clark Theatre Company is bringing new talent not only on stage, but behind the scenes with its summer production of the classic musical "Oklahoma!"

New faces will share the spotlight for the first time among the actors and actresses, and although Zak McComas and Michael Schumacher have performed in Dakota Theatre productions before, "Oklahoma!" marks their first experience directing. Musical director Kenneth Tice is also sharing his talent for the first time with the theatre.

"It's like putting shoes on the wrong feet," McComas said. "The first play I ever did was in 2005, and I had no idea it was going to be as important as it turned out being for me. Starting in 2005 from not having a clue, and then here it is 2013 and I'm directing a show with Michael, you can be a part of that. You just have to show up."

"Oklahoma!" will be presented July 25-27 and July 29 at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, July 28, at 2 p.m.; Aug. 2-3 and Aug. 5 at 7:30 p.m., and Aug. 4 at 2 p.m. For ticket information, call the Dakota Theatre at 665-1298.

Schumacher said he recognizes the challenges of taking on such a classic show.

"It's been a lot to bite off," Schumacher said. "We're jumping in with both feet taking on a musical, especially a musical of this scale as first-time directors. There's been a lot of coordination. From this point on, if I ever decide to direct again, it'll be so much easier. I don't think you can get more complicated than a musical of this size."

"Oklahoma!" tells the story of Curly (played by Jared Mogen), a cowboy, and Jud (Jason Pasco), a hired hand, who both fall in love with Laurey (Vicki Geiser). The show is a Broadway production written by Rodgers and Hammerstein, and opened March 31, 1943. It has gone on to become one of the most popular musicals in the history of theater.

Set at the turn of the century, the musical was the first of its kind to integrate the music with the actual plot line, McComas said.

"Getting the actors going is one thing, and putting the music together is another thing," he said. "When you finally start pulling them to-



gether, something happens. It's hard to explain, but it's just something magical."

Tice, who moved to Yankton last summer is now chair of the Mount Marty College music department, also shares the passion for this particular show.

He said music has always been a part of his life, and actually acted in "Oklahoma!" years ago for his first show.

"That was really special for me to come back to this as a musical director," he said. "It's really nostalgic in some ways. I did theatre in middle school and high school, but when I taught, that was one of my duties: to produce and direct a musical. Since then, there have been other areas that I have assisted with. It's nice to be in a

community where I can engage in a local theatre like this and be a part of a greater team."

With a cast of 30 and an orchestra of 15, Schumacher, McComas and Tice are also working with a mix of new and veteran cast members.

"The mission of a good community theatre is to give folks an opportunity to experience it — to be a part of it whether as an audience member or on the stage or behind the stage," Tice said. "It's our job as a community theatre to train people to be actors,



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

LEFT/BELOW: Aunt Eller (Nichole Vetter) breaks up a fight at the box social in a scene from the Lewis and Clark Theatre Company's production of the musical "Oklahoma!" LEFT/TOP: Two local gals (Olivia Hudson, left, and Evan Schroeder) fawn over Will Parker (Jacob Fokken) in "Oklahoma!" which will be presented by the Lewis and Clark Theatre Company at the Dakota Theatre in downtown Yankton for two weekends beginning Thursday, July 25. ABOVE: Pa Carnes (Nathan Porras, left) sings about the differences between farmers and cattlemen while Cord Elam (Jacob Smith) looks on in "Oklahoma!" To see or purchase images from this event, visit spotted.yankton.net.

actresses, to be musicians, to be back stage running lights sound, stage managing, directing — all those things. And that's what we're doing."

The actors and actresses are doing just that, Schumacher said, as they make the characters their own.

"They're really focusing on the details," he said. "Now that you look at it, you can't imagine anyone else in these roles. That's when you know that you have really good people: when you can't say, 'I wish somebody else had taken this and it would have been great.' I think that all the way through with our

cast. Even with our minor characters, we have really good people. We're so blessed."

As usual with the community theatre, those actors and actresses who put in so much time focusing on the details are all volunteers, making the shows even more special, McComas said.

"This is something with no professionals, no paid performers are being flown in from other states or other countries," he said. "This is all the people next door, the

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