

Henry & Ramona

YCTC Bringing Beloved Children's Stories To SAC Stage

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The Yankton Children's Theatre Company invites you to journey back to your childhood and share it with your children as it presents Newbery Award-winning author Beverly Cleary's "Henry and Ramona," as adapted by Cynthia J. McGean, at the Yankton High School Theatre. The production will run Thursday, June 3, through, Sunday, June 6. Showtimes are 7:30 p.m. with a 2:30 p.m. Sunday matinee.

"Everyone remembers Henry and Ramona, we all grew up with them reading (Cleary's) books as children," co-director Amy Bruening said. "We will share Klickitat Street, and beloved characters Henry Higgins, Ramona the Pest and all the other characters we loved as kids."

In "Henry and Ramona," Henry wants to deliver newspapers, just like Scooter McCarthy and the other boys. But first, Henry has to prove to his parents he can handle the responsibility. Along the way Ramona throws Henry and the boys into chaos, setting up a show full of trials and triumphs of being a kid.

"This has just been an amazing experience," said co-director Sandy Vavra. "We could not have gone out and handpicked a better cast — they have been so wonderful to work with. Our parents have stepped up and provided amazing support. No matter what we needed, they have been there for us. It has just been so seamless."

In particular, the directors cited parents Shellee Heinemeyer, Jen Larson, Cheri Garcia, Jill Paulson and Loren Shuey as having gone above and beyond what could be expected.

"Loren is doing a photo CD for us. He has gone out and gotten the bike we will need; even better he has had the bikes donated, so we will be able to raffle them off," Vavra said. "We are going to sell raffle tickets for the bikes throughout all of the shows, and then at the Sunday show, we will draw the winners."

For the cast of more than 40, ranging in age from 7-18, it has been more than a month of fun and commitment.

As the majority of the rehearsals were done during the final month of the school year, Vavra and Bruening held rehearsals only three nights per week. Because of that, the cast members had to be on their best behaviors and ready to go when asked.

"They have been so easy to work with," she said. "We put up lists on the walls saying which scenes they were in, and you would see them checking to see when they had to be on again. We had sodas that we used as rewards, and every child has earned at least one reward. Because we are teachers, we know how to work with kids and that has really helped us with this project, especially since it is the first play we have directed ourselves."

This is also the first full season for the Yankton Children's Theatre Company.

"I think knowing that we are offering a full season helped us when deciding how many to cast for this show," Bruening said. "In the past when we only did one children's show per year, we felt like we almost needed to cast everyone because there were limited opportunities for them to participate. Now with doing a full season, we were able to choose the children we felt were right for the parts, knowing that if we didn't cast someone, there would be other opportunities for them this summer to get involved."

The cast for "Henry and Ramona" includes: Shane Truax (Henry Huggins); Zach Hanzlik (Scooter



SHAUNA MARLETTE/P&D

The Yankton Children's Theatre Co. brings the popular children's tales of "Henry and Ramona" to the Summit Activities Center theatre next week. ABOVE: Brandon Shuey (Bryon Murphy), Shane Truax (Henry Huggins) and Ryan Eichacker (Robert Kelly) work to build Thorvo the Robot (played by Kendal Kozak). LEFT: Zoie Lee Marcotte (Ramona Quimby) and Hailey Gokie (Lisa Kelly) practice their wedding march as they step down Klickitat Street. BELOW: Marcotte "swims" in to disrupt a meeting of the newspaper boys; Avery Brockberg (paperboy Max), Jordan Meshoto (paperboy Joe) and Truax (Henry Huggins). The play will be presented June 3-6, with showtimes at 7:30 p.m. June 3-5 and 2:30 p.m. on June 6.



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