

Pageant Brings History Alive

A Historic Retelling Of Yankton's Past Part Of 150th Party

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For those wanting to get an idea about how Yankton came to be settled by Native Americans and later by Europeans, the Lewis and Clark Theatre Company will provide a dramatic portrayal of those events during next week's sesquicentennial celebration.

"A History of Yankton: A Pageant," a program originally written almost a century ago, will be performed at 2 p.m. June 4-5 in the amphitheater at Riverside Park. Admission is free.

The City of Yankton, MT & RC Smith Insurance and the Yankton County Historical Society are also sponsoring the performances.

"We're not looking to make any money off this show," said Chuck Lambert, executive director of the Lewis and Clark Theatre Company (L&CTC). "We want good entertainment for the public and help them celebrate the 150th."

He has been putting together the show along with director Jessie Atkinson.

This is only the third time "A History of Yankton" will be performed. Written by early Yankton native Joseph Mills Hanson in 1916, it was performed that year and again during the centennial of Dakota Territory in 1961. Both versions were presented at the Garden Terrace Theatre on the Yankton College Campus. A change of venue was required now that the college has been converted into the Yankton Federal Prison Camp.

Hanson was born in Yankton in 1876 and went on to become a respected author and military historian.

"A History of Yankton" tells the story of Yankton's beginnings — ranging from settlement of the area by the Sioux Indians and the passage of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the founding of Yankton College.

Of course, the pageant doesn't note anything beyond 1916.

"We could have added things, but that's not what we're trying to portray," Lambert said. "We're trying to portray the beginnings of our beautiful city."

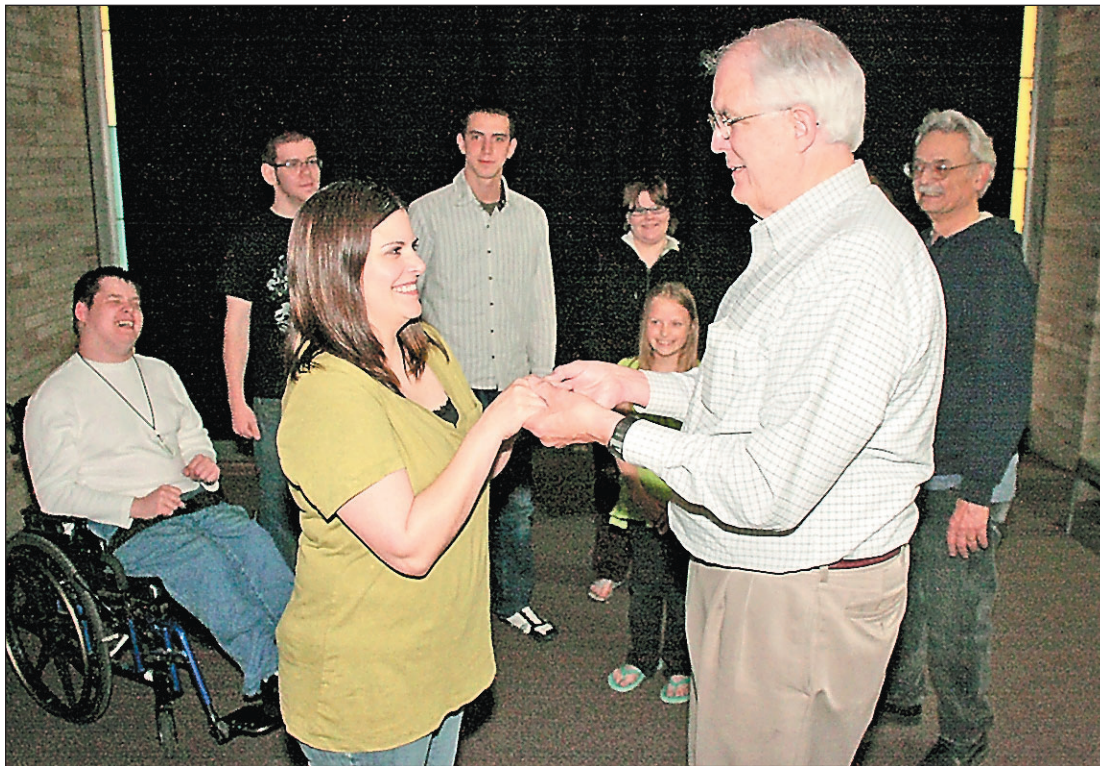
However, he noted that L&CTC will take some creative liberties with the show.

"I met with the Sioux tribe, who is going to be joining us to do the first scene," Lambert said. "Currently, it is very politically incorrect. They're working to bring a more factual basis to it. Back in 1916 and 1961 when the pageant was performed, it was all white people who did the show. I'm trying to bring more realism into it."

The performances will also feature far fewer actors than in the original incarnations.

"It was easy to find 100 people in 1916 and 1961," Lambert said. "That doesn't happen anymore with two-job family situations and all that. We're doing it with less people — about 40 — but it's still going to be fun."

In fact, he said the performance could use a handful more



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

ABOVE: During a rehearsal this week, this scene from the "History of Yankton" pageant depicts Gov. William Jayne (right, Paul Maynell) escorting Miss Edger (Shana Marcotte) to a celebration of the founding of Yankton. Also pictured are, from left: Thomas Bixler, David Cotter, Caleb Olson, Ann Woodmancy, Zoie Lee Marcotte and Chuck Lambert. Not pictured: JoAnn Lambert. BELOW: This scene shows workers, constructing the first buildings of Yankton, pausing to greet new arrivals Mr. and Mrs. Ash (right, Chuck and JoAnn Lambert), who would open the Ash Hotel.



men and women for those interested in participating. Practices and lines would be minimal, Lambert promised.

He is also inserting a narrator into the pageant.

"We're going to introduce each of the scenes and fill in the history with narration," Lambert stated.

Randy Hammer, a personality on Yankton radio station 106.3 KVHT-FM, will perform narration duties.

"Being that it's the 150th, I

feel honored to be a part of this — especially since it's only the third time the pageant has been performed," Hammer said. "I couldn't resist."

Performances in Riverside Park will also feature concessionaires in historic garb selling refreshments for low prices.

Lambert estimates the show will run 75-90 minutes.

The pageant will also kick off L&CTC's 50th anniversary season. "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" debuts

the following weekend.

Casting for the next show, "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory," began this week, as well.

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COURTESY PHOTO

Trumpeter Jim Spiers will be part of the Dakota Jazz Collective when it performs at the Summit Activities Center June 2 as part of Yankton's sesquicentennial celebration.

Dakota Jazz Collective Ready To Talk The Talk

BY DEREK BARTOS
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While members of the Dakota Jazz Collective have played in Yankton before, the particular ensemble that will be performing in June should give the city a new sound to enjoy.

"Even though the folks have probably heard the musicians at one point or another in different groups, this will be the first time this specific lineup will have played together in Yankton, and I think it will be the first time a lot of people will hear the tunes we'll be playing," said Dakota Jazz Collective trumpet player Jim Spiers.

The Sioux Falls-based band rotates musicians mostly because of availability reasons, but Spiers said it also helps their music.

"Jazz is a language, and the way I express, or 'talk,' a tune will be totally different than the way a saxophone player does," he said. "We like to have new sounds for people to hear, and changing the lineup helps with that."

The group will play a free concert at 7 p.m. Thursday, June 2, at the YHS/Summit Activities Center as part of Yankton's 150th anniversary celebration.

"We'll have a variety of styles, from Latin to New Orleans to swing to ballads," Spiers said. "It will be a very diverse concert."

The group also plans on playing tunes from numerous eras, including songs that are more than 60 years old. While people may recognize the music, Spiers said the tunes often evolve through improvisation.

"Jazz is an improvised music; that's really the heart of the music," he said. "It's created on the spot. There are certain rules that we follow, but the core of jazz is all about improvisation, and that's what we'll be doing in Yankton."

Spiers said a lot of what is played is based on the reaction of the crowd.

"It's an interactive music. It's a communication with the audience," he said. "As we play, we look for their involvement and their feedback to what we're playing. We're hoping that what we're saying with our instruments is being realized by the audience."

City Manager Doug Russell said the type of music the Dakota Jazz Collective plays was the main reason it was invited to Yankton.

"We were looking for a performer for Thursday night and we wanted to expand on the types of music, and one thing that kept

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Dakota Jazz Collective

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