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KELLY HERTZ/P&D
ABOVE: Tansy (Emily Morman) threatens to dump a plate of spaghetti on the socially clueless Rick Steadman (Randy Fields) in a scene from the comedy "The Nerd," the season-opening production of the Lewis and Clark Theatre Co. The play will be performed June 6-10 and June 14-16 at the Dakota Theatre in downtown Yankton. RIGHT: Rick talks to fellow party guest Celia Waldgrave (Vicki Geiser) about working in a chalk factory in a scene from "The Nerd," which opens the theatre company's 52nd season.



'Nerd' Alert

LCTC Opens Season With Laughs In 'The Nerd'

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She Fields said she first became drawn to the Lewis and Clark Theatre Company's (LCTC) upcoming production of "The Nerd" by digging through the archives at the theater.

"When I was decorating the stage for 'Harvey,' the first production I directed, I needed books for the stage. When I went into the archives I saw the book for 'The Nerd,'" she said. "The next play I directed we also needed books for the stage so I saw it again. Something was telling me I needed to read the play and when I did, I thought it was hilarious. I have wanted to direct it ever since."

Performances of "The Nerd," which opens LCTC's 52nd season, will take place Thursday, June 6, through Monday, June 10, and Friday, June 14, through Sunday, June 16, at the Dakota Theatre. All productions start at 7:30 p.m., except Sunday shows which are 2 p.m. matinees.

Fields, who is directing the show, said the play is about an architect, William Cubbert (played by Zak McComas), who is a bit weak-willed. When he was in Vietnam, Rick Steadman (played by Randy Fields) saved William's life.

"The two men never actually met, so (Cubbert) doesn't know who the other person is," she said. "They kept in touch through the mail and (Cubbert) told (Steadman) that he would always be there for him if he ever needed anything."

Steadman eventually takes Cubbert up on the offer, shows up at his house and then will not leave — causing upheaval in Cubbert's life. The theme of the show is about Cubbert and his friends largely trying to convince Steadman how strange the town is so that he will want to leave.

"One of the themes of the play is best friends trying to help each other out," Fields said. "The play tells people they need to watch out when they make promises telling



KELLY HERTZ/P&D
William (Zak McComas), Alice (Katelynn Weinandt) and Tansy (Emily Moran) brace for a night of uncertainty as they prepare for a very important party in a scene from "The Nerd," which will be presented during two weekends at the Dakota Theatre.

other people that they will always be there no matter what, because the person might not end up leaving at all."

She added that the play is a non-stop comedy.

"Usually when you watch a play, the first act is a setup and you have to wait a while for a climax," Fields said. "This play is only two acts, and it's funny right from the beginning. Audience members will be laughing all the way through the show."

She said that castmates' friends and significant others who have shown up for rehearsals have been laughing out loud while watching the practices.

"One cast member's boyfriend has been at about three rehearsals — each time at about the same point in the production. Every time he's ended up belly laughing," Fields said. "This is a really good show, with great actors."

As a director, Fields said one of her goals is always to have someone new in the cast that she has never worked with.

"I enjoy bringing new actors into the theater family and exposing

ing them to theater," she said. "Katelynn (Weinandt.) who plays the part of Alice in this show, was in 'Annie,' but only had a small part. In this play she's taking on a larger role. I've never worked with her before, so that has been really fun."

Fields said the production is popular in large cities, including many off-Broadway areas. One of the things she enjoys about "The Nerd" is that it has never been made into a movie.

"I think it's a good thing that it has never been a movie. It's strictly a theatrical, live performance," she said. "I kept bringing up wanting to direct 'The Nerd' and people thought it was overused, but the last time we did 'The Nerd' in Yankton was more than 20 years ago."

Fields got her start directing plays a few years ago, but began acting on stage around a decade ago.

"My husband (Randy) and I directed 'Harvey,' which was a comedy, together a few years ago," she said. "We also directed more serious productions like 'Wait Until Dark.' That one was when I first began to really like drama and mystery productions. I always enjoy directing small casts, so I also was able to direct 'Dial 'M' For Murder,' which I did alone because my husband was an actor for that show."

Now, it's back to comedy for Fields, which she says she has been enjoying.

She added that this production is a friendly play, but does have some language people might find offensive.

"One of our characters does have a mouth on him," Fields said. "However, there are no 'f bombs' in the play. Beyond that, I would bring my kids to the play. The character that curses does not offend you when he does it because you just start laughing when it happens."

Tickets for "The Nerd" are avail-



KELLY HERTZ/P&D
ABOVE: Rick (Randy Fields) shows up at his friend's home thinking it's a costume party, which scares the daylights out of young Thor Waldgrave (Sam Slowey). BELOW: Rick reluctantly takes off his costume at the behest of his old Army friend, whose life Rick saved in Vietnam.



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