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LCTC Phones In A Crime Gone Awry With ‘Dial M For Murder’

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Murder, mystery and intrigue will hit the stage at the Dakota Theatre next week when the Lewis and Clark Theatre Company (LCTC) presents the third show of its 51st season, “Dial M for Murder.”

In the Frederick Knott play, ex-tennis pro Tony Wendice (Ben Gothier) secretly discovers his wealthy wife Margot (Emily Norman) is having an affair with writer Max Halliday (Zack McComas). Tony hatches a plan to have Margot killed, blackmailing Captain Lesgate (Aden Springer) into committing the murder. However, when things go awry, Tony must act quickly to alter his plan and avoid being caught.

“It’s like a whodunnit-whodunnit-whodunnit,” said director Sue Fields. “We have an inspector who is like Columbo, Kojack and Matlock combined. He stretches a lot to the gray to get his man. You go through the whole show, and it’s not until the final page you see if the bad guy gets caught.”

Fields said the play, which will be presented Oct. 25-29, is great entertainment for anyone who likes a good mystery.

“It’s that type of thriller that will put you on the edge of your seat,” she said. “And there’s a lot of clues along the way if you want to try to solve the crime.”

This is the second thriller Fields has directed for the LCTC. She also co-directed last year’s performance of “Wait Until Dark” with her husband Randy.

“I really like the thrillers,” she said. “I like it when all of the sudden everything goes dark, and you don’t know what’s going to happen next — when you can hear the audience sucking in their breath and say, ‘What’s going to happen next?’ It’s great.”

Fields said directing a thriller is much different from directing other types of shows, as it requires her to “feel it more.”

“With comedies, it’s more timing. With thrillers, it’s totally different,” she said. “You have to make somebody get on the edge of their seat. You have to bring out a dark side instead of trying to be funny.”

While thrillers can be more challenging for a director, Fields



SHAUNA MARLETTE/P&D

Tom Wendice (played by Ben Gothier, left) looks on while his wife Margot (Emily Norman) and Max Halliday (Zack McComas) look at old newspaper clippings from Tom’s days as a tennis pro in a scene from the Lewis and Clark Theatre Company production of “Dial M for Murder.” The tale of jealousy and a murder plot gone wrong opens next week at the Dakota Theatre in downtown Yankton.

said it can have the opposite effect for the actors.

“I think it’s easier to get into a part when you are in a serious play, just because you can turn into that person so much easier instead of trying to be comical and funny at the same time,” she said. “By the time they start on the stage, it’s not going to be Emily and Ben and Zack, it’s definitely going to be Margot, Tony and Max. They get totally into their character, and they feel like that character the whole time.”

Fields added that she had so much interest from actors for “Dial M for Murder” that she had to create several parts by having different actors perform various phone voices.

“The last couple of plays I’ve had to recruit people. With this

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Mount Marty College is preparing its fall theater production of the musical “Opal,” which will be presented at Marian Auditorium Oct. 25-27 in conjunction with the school’s annual family weekend. RIGHT: Narrators Molly Henrickson (left) and Haley Lind (center) chase the pig Peter Paul Rubens with Opal (Danieka Novak) in a scene from the musical. ABOVE: A musical needs music, and pitching in to play pianos for the production are James and Marilyn Nyberg of Yankton. (Kelly Hertz/P&D)



MMC Production Sings Happy Tune With ‘Opal’

Musical To Be Presented Oct. 25-27 At Marian Auditorium

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This year, the fall musical at Mount Marty College (MMC) will take on a whole new meaning for director Andrew Henrickson.

Not only will he be directing the musical, but he will also be conducting the orchestra for the first time in his 16 years at MMC.

“It’s a challenging just figuring out how I can direct the orchestra and see the play because the orchestra is performing back stage,” Henrickson said. “But that’s the way it is and that’s what I chose to do.”

This year’s musical is “Opal,” which is a story about a young girl in Europe.

The story is only about 20 years old, which is relatively new for a musical. The play was originally written by Robert Lindsey-Nassif.

The girl loses her parents and finds herself orphaned in a community where she would eventually become a slave. However, despite the challenges she faces, her outlook on life continues to be positive and upbeat.

“Her goal in life is to make the Earth glad,” Henrickson said. “She is a lover of nature, and all living things and when she meets people in need, she always helps out. The play is a really about a young girl’s journey and quest for happiness, not just happiness for her-

self, but happiness for everyone she comes in contact with.”

He said that this year the musical is earlier than it has been in years past.

“It’s been a shorter process this year. Usually the show goes up in November during family weekend, but this year that weekend is at the end of October,” Henrickson said.

Rehearsals for “Opal” began in the middle of September and features a cast of 16 students, many of whom are freshmen to Mount Marty College.

“So far, rehearsals are going well and now we’re getting right down to it and we have a great group of students to work with,” Henrickson said.

The orchestra for the musical features three people, including a two-piano score, to be performed by Yankton residents James and Marilyn Nyberg.

“They’ve taken on this project head on,” he said. “It’s great having them up here at Mount Marty participating with the students in the play. They’re really big music lovers and we are fortunate to have players of their accomplishment playing the show.”

Henrickson said he is learning a lot about music and how to wave the hand properly when he directs the orchestra.

“It’s a lot more work, but it gives me such an appreciation for musicians and music direc-

tors,” he said. “I’ve done dozens of musicals in my career and now I appreciate the music directors even more.”

Challenges that Henrickson faces with the play includes the difficulty in finding a rehearsal time that works for many of the actors in the show.

“Fifteen years ago, it wasn’t really a problem here, but now

we have sports and evening classes which complicated things,” he said. “Our students here have always been heavily involved and in a lot of activities, so we try to use the time that we have to rehearse wisely.”

Another challenge is that Marian Auditorium is now being used more often, so Henrickson and his cast must value the time they have in the space.

“It’s great having the facility

being used, but it challenges us to get things done,” he said.

Henrickson said that he was drawn to this play because of the story and themes it presents.

“When the script was first given to me, I didn’t have the music,” he said. “I lived with this story for about a month and fell in love with the story without even hearing the music.”

Once he got the music, he loved the musical even more.

“The play is really perfect for family weekend and it speaks of the values we have here at MMC,” Henrickson added. “We know we do our show during family weekend, so we want something families can relate to. This play has it all — poignant things, sad things and a little bit of comedy. It’s a very poignant and beautiful story.”

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