

USD's Theatre Dept. To Open Season

VERMILLION – The University of South Dakota Department of Theatre will bring to stage for the 2015-16 season comedies, thrillers and musicals in four productions.

The season opens Sept. 25-Oct. 4 with William Inge's comedy "Bus Stop." It's March 1955 when a freak snowstorm forces an interstate bus of passengers to pull over and take shelter in a rural diner just outside of Kansas City. It shows what bad weather can do to our emotions and attitude toward others.

USD actors next travel to Transylvania and produce one of Mel Brooks' famous comedies, "Young Frankenstein," from Nov. 20-Dec. 6. All characters from the film make their way to stage in this energetic musical as Fredrick Frankenstein creates a creature just like his infamous grandfather.

In the spring, the department moves from hilarity to the shadowy world of playwright Martin McDonough as it presents his dark comedy "The Pillowman" Feb. 18-21. This play contains adult themes and languages as the audience watches fiction writer Katurian being interrogated by two police about some gruesome child murders.

The main stage season concludes April 14-24 with Stephen Sondheim's musical "Assassins." This Tony Award winning musical brings to life people who attempted or achieved the assassination of U.S. presidents.

A form for ordering season tickets can be downloaded from www.usd.edu/theatre or requested by calling 605-677-5400 or emailing theatre@usd.edu.

YHS 'Evening With The Stars' Sept. 29

The Yankton High School Chorus will present its fundraiser "Evening with the Stars: Hits of Today" at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 29, at the YHS/Summit Activities Center theatre.

Tickets may be purchased from the YHS choir members or at the door. Activity tickets will not be accepted.

'Picture This' Workshop In Vermillion

VERMILLION — The Edith B. Siegrist Vermillion Public Library, 18 Church St., is hosting a "Picture This" hands-on workshop Saturday, Oct. 3, running from 2-4 p.m.

This hands-on workshop will expose participants to wide variety of common plants found in urban areas, and creative things to do with them. Most materials provided.

Grace Freeman has been studying wild plants since 1980, in the woods around Cincinnati. In college in Montana, she studied with local herbalists informally, until she attended an exchange program in Maine and worked as a farm apprentice under the Maine Organic Farmer and Gardener Association program. After graduation she continued to work the land in the woods in the Pacific Northwest and Montana. More organic farming opportunities brought her to western Wisconsin, and then to Madison, Wisconsin, where she began taking herbal classes and worked for a large scale beekeeper. In 2004, she graduated from the Nursing program at USD, and now studies with the University of Minnesota towards a graduate certificate in Integrative Health. She runs an organic farm raising bees, greens and herbs and works to develop an herbal product business in rural Vermillion, called Prairie Moon Herbs.

Registration is encouraged. Stop by the Circulation Desk, or call the library at 677-7060 for more information.

Hay Country Jamboree at Gayville Oct. 3

GAYVILLE – Gayville Hall presents its monthly musical variety show, "The Hay Country Jamboree," at 8 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 3, in Gayville.

Jamboree regulars, including country music host John McNeill, East of Westville guitarist and singer Boyd Bristow, and Good People bassist Bruce Gray, will be joined by the duo of singer-guitarists Matt Kiger and Joe Sokolowski, making their first appearance at Gayville Hall, for a lively, two-hour show.

Jamborees always feature three-or-more musical acts on stage together trading classic American popular songs, country, and other styles of popular music, as well as humor, by turn. The fast-paced shows include a short intermission midway and are presented in an alcohol-free, family-friendly setting.

Gayville Hall is at 502 Washington Street in Gayville. Call (605) 267-2859 for ticket information.

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'Steel Magnolias'

Popular 'Dramedy' Poised For Dakota Theatre Run

BY REILLY BIEL
reilly.biel@yankton.net

After recent shows like "The Rocky Horror Show," "Nunsense" and "Young Frankenstein," the Lewis & Clark Theatre Company (LCTC) is scaling back and returning to more traditional play roots with "Steel Magnolias."

The play will run from Oct. 1-4 and 8-11 at 2 p.m. Sundays and 7:30 p.m. on the other days. All shows are at the Dakota Theatre in downtown Yankton.

The play, a drama/comedy (dramedy) focuses on a group of southern women and the bond they share through the ups and downs in their lives.

Taylor Clemens, a theatre major currently in his third year of earning his Masters of Fine Arts degree at the University of South Dakota (USD), is a first-time director to the LCTC. He has previously directed one-act plays at USD and will direct "The Pillowman" there this February.

Clemens became the director after one of his fellow theatre friends suggested him for the job after she was unable to do it.

"It's been going well," Clemens said of his first directing experience at LCTC. "We have some good actresses that have been working really hard to develop their characters nicely. We're in the final stages of fine-tuning and getting it to where it needs to be for an audience."

After getting the directing job, Clemens visited the theatre when he viewed their most recent production, "Young Frankenstein," to get an idea of the kind of environment in which he would be working.

"It gave me high hopes for the quality productions that rival some professional theatres," said Clemens.

Working with an all-female cast created a unique challenge for Clemens, especially when he had to work with hair-styles from the 1980s in a beauty salon set in Louisiana.



"I had to rely heavily on the cast to help me with that," he admitted.

The play was also a new challenge for Clemens as its dramedy tone was one that he hasn't dealt with much before.

"Most of the plays I'm attracted to have a darker subject matter about something people don't want to face or talk about," Clemens explained. "This one is pretty straightforward and doesn't have that dark subject matter, though it can be sad and emotional."

After the play's run is over, Clemens will focus on directing his next play at USD while also finishing his thesis defense for the masters degree he will earn in May. After that, he hopes to become a professor in a college theatre department.

Until then, Clemens is enjoying his new directing experience.

"One of my favorite lines from the play is, 'One of my favorite emotions is laughter through tears,'" said Clemens. "Some things happen that are upsetting to the ladies in the play, but they work together in humor."

To purchase tickets for the play, visit the Dakota Theatre or call 605-665-4711.

CAST LIST:

Truvy Jones — Ronni Pospisil
Annelle Dupuy — Christine Felts
Clariree Belcher — Lin Benstrup
Shelby Eatenton — Emily Nelson
M'Lynn Eatenton — Melissa Nelson
Ouiser Boudreaux — Tara Gill
Director — Taylor Clemens
Stage Manager — Katie Fargo

Follow @ReillyBiel on Twitter.

Beyond Trick-or-Treating: Fun Family Activities for Halloween Season

(StatePoint) Trick-or-treating may be the standard Halloween tradition for most American families, but the holiday has branched out extensively over the last decade.

Today, Americans spend over one billion dollars visiting Halloween-themed attractions. Where are they going, and what are the best activities for your family? The experts at Hauntworld.com are offering some spooky answers in this ultimate fall to-do list.

Farm Fun

Many farms offer tons of fall activities ideal for families with young children, including picking the perfect carving pumpkin, finding your way out of a corn maze and drinking homemade apple cider. Other fun activities include pony rides, hay mazes, non-spooky hayrides,

petting zoos and even shooting pumpkin cannons.

Ghost Tours

Ghost hunting television shows have really increased the popularity in finding haunts and eerie tours. Learn more about your local area's spooky history by taking family or out of town guests to haunted mansions, cemeteries, prisons and more.

Zombie Runs

What could be scarier than a 5K run? One with zombies of course! Zombie runs are a good time for the whole family, providing a fun reason to get kids and teens moving, using obstacle courses, contests, prizes and more as incentives.

Haunted Hayrides

Hayrides can be as sophisticated as a Hollywood movie, complete with fog

machines and lights. Some have even adopted new twists. For example, on a zombie paintball hayride, guests go on a high adrenaline adventure, hunting and shooting zombies with paintballs. Haunted hayrides make guests and especially smaller kids feel safe as they ride in groups.

Home Haunts

Americans are now decorating their yards and homes into spooky graveyards with high tech lights, animations and more. Some homeowners take it further by also decorating their home's interiors and creating mazes in the garage or backyard. Finding a spooky home haunt or neighborhood near you can be a great Halloween activity to do if you're on a budget. For tips and tricks on haunting your own house, visit www.hauntedhousesupplies.com.

Escape Rooms

Escape rooms offer an immersive and interactive experience like none other. These Halloween-themed attractions involve working together to solve puzzles and riddles in order to escape a room in under an hour.

Haunted Houses

Haunted houses come in all shapes and sizes, ranging from three-dimensional black light attractions to haunted trails to major scream parks. Haunted houses also change regularly, so it may be very different from visit to visit. Today, most haunted attractions don't rely as much on blood and guts as they do on interactive special effects, sophisticated costumes, story lines and computer-generated imagery. To celebrate the scary side of Halloween, get the family together for an unforgettable night filled with fun and screams.

To find America's scariest haunted houses, trickiest corn mazes, spookiest zombie runs and every pumpkin patch, ghost tour and escape room near you, you can review a comprehensive directory of these attractions at www.Hauntworld.com.

While tradition never gets old, novel Halloween activities provide different thrills than a standard trick-or-treat trip around the block.

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