Drama club recreating classic American production

BONNEY LAKE High School presents 'Oklahoma!'

BY AVANI NADKARNI
of The Herald

As a high school drama teacher, Brenda Williams knows sometimes you find yourself with the perfect cast for a particular play.

That's how she felt when she chose "Oklahoma!" as Bonney Lake High School's newest production.

"(This show) takes a lot of certain types of male parts, certain female parts and you don't always get that combination," Williams said. "I had the cast that I thought would be great for the show."

"Oklahoma!," the first musical written by dynamic duo of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, tells the story of kind-hearted cowboy Curly McLain and his love, shy Laurey Williams. Curly asks Laurey to accompany him to a dance, but she accepts an invitation from evil Jud Fry instead.

"She realizes she made a huge mistake," said Kirstie Walrath, who plays Laurey to Bradley Stafford's Curly in the production.

For the play, Bonney Lake students transformed Sumner's Performing Arts Center stage into an early 20th century old west town, complete with bales of hay, buildings with swinging doors and male actors donning cowboy hats and boots.

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>
> KIRSTIE WALRATH
> Female lead in 'Oklahoma!'

Walrath, a senior, said she had seen the movie before but never a live production of the play. Until she became comfortable in Laurey's skin, Walrath said she borrowed ideas from the film.

"Laurey is a very modest, kind of shy girl who is in love with (male lead) Curly, but doesn't want to let him know," Walrath explained. "I took a lot from the movie at first in terms of playing Laurey, but then I tried to make (her) my own character."

The 45-person cast began rehearsing before the holidays, said ensemble cast member Hannah Stejskal, also a senior.

"It's been hard work but so much fun," said Stejskal, who's acted in the high school's past four productions.

Musical director Amy Fuller combined three musicians, one student and two faculty members to play the piano, bass and drums so the musical will have a live band. Rehearsing with the cast each day, Fuller and the band know how to punctuate each line in the script; for example, just as an actor raises his prop gun, a staccato drum beat serves as gunfire.

"It's great to see it all coming together," Williams said.

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'OKLAHOMA!'

Who: Bonney Lake High School drama club

What: 'Oklahoma!' a Rodgers and Hammerstein play directed by Brenda Williams

Where: Sumner High School Performing Arts Center, 1707 Main St.

When: 7 p.m. on March 6 and 7, 2 p.m. on March 7 and 8

Ticket Information: Tickets are $6 for students and senior citizens and $9 for adults and are available at the box office one hour prior to the show.