

American Heritage to present 'Fiddler on the Roof'

Barbara Christiansen - Daily Herald | Posted: Friday, January 14, 2011 12:04 am

Months of preparation will culminate in the first large-scale, Broadway-style musical undertaken at American Heritage School in American Fork, "Fiddler on the Roof," today and Saturday.

The curtain rises at 7 each evening on the musical, which focuses on a Jewish family and its traditions. However, the directors, Johanne Perry and Melissa Brinkerhoff, say the show is about more than that.

"'Fiddler on the Roof' is above all a celebration of community, and the joys and hardships that come with living in a community," the directors' note in the program says. "This is a subject with which the students, faculty and families at American Heritage are very familiar. As such, it is a wonderful first Broadway musical for this venue."

"'Fiddler is not primarily a show about being Jewish," the note continues. "Yes, Tevye is Jewish, and his relationship with God is an integral part of its storyline, but the themes of the show -- love, family, tradition, dignity and religious faith, are clearly universal. The challenge for us, and indeed for Tevye, is finding the balance of our traditions with a constantly changing world."

The cast includes Walker Johnson as Tevye, Mariane Sorensen as Golde, Kelsey Carlson as Tzeitel, Rachael Breaux as Hodel, McKaylla White as Chava, Brianna Crampton as Sprintze and Emily Roberts as Bielke.

The role of Yente is played by Lacey Monson with Keegan McGhie as Motel, Steven Duncan as Perchik and Adam Bushman as Lazar Wolf.

Other cast members include Drew Bowen, Tanner Weyland, Ammon Haymond, Christopher Holmstead, Ian Boggess, Chloe Johnson, Jenny Van Zant, David Pack, Jacob Kleinman, Kaitlyn Hansen, Guillermo Bustamante and Misha Duncan.

The production includes familiar numbers like "Tradition," "Matchmaker," "If I Were A Rich Man," "Sunrise, Sunset" and "Do You Love Me."

Perry explained how they chose the production.

"The No. 1 reason is that it's such a beloved, well-known musical that touches on so many things that are important to people in our community," she said. Another reason is one of the cast members, Walker Johnson.

"We knew that we had someone that could knock your socks off playing Tevye," she said. "He's a senior this year. He's been the lead in all the productions that have happened at the school. It's not just the talent, but the type of person he is. He's such a delightful person, and it comes across."



Johnson said he was looking forward to the play.

"I am really excited about it," he said. "It has been a lot of fun so far. This is a bigger production than we have done in the past."

Mariane Sorensen, who plays Golde, said the production would be good.

"It is going really well," she said. "Both the group numbers and the little scenes are going to be really good. I am really excited to put it on." She said she was familiar with the show, having seen it when she was in the eighth grade.

Co-director Brinkerhoff praised the cast.

"The students have been working so hard and well on this production," she said. "We started at the beginning of the year."

Unlike most plays or musicals put on at schools, "Fiddler On The Roof" is not an after-school program. Anybody who wanted to be in the show could sign up for the drama class. They have met twice a week for 45 minutes each day since the beginning of the school year. Almost 50 students are in the cast.

"We didn't have auditions, except for the leading roles," Perry said. "It's a good opportunity for kids who wouldn't otherwise have the chance to be in a musical."

Tickets cost \$7 for adults, \$5 for students and \$25 for a family. They are available at the door or online at american-heritage.org.