

Children's Theatre of Elgin presenting 'Music Man Jr.'

Suburban Chicago News/Batavia Sun

October 21, 2009

What do you get when you cross a Tony Award-winning musical with a shortened script intended to be performed by children and youth? You get an emotionally demanding production for the cast.

Starting Thursday and running through Sunday, Children's Theatre of Elgin presents "The Music Man Jr.," a school adaptation of the 1959 hit musical, at the Hemmens Cultural Center in Elgin. While this adaptation will ring familiar to fans of the show, it will be shortened to an 80-minute running time to keep the evening shows from running late for the young cast members.

"The result will be a true test of character for the performers," said Jen Prise, director. "The actors will have slightly less music and dialog to convey the development of the characters. Although most of this show's most notable songs will be included in this production -- such as "76 Trombones," "Goodnight My Someone," "Good Night, Ladies," "Gary, Indiana," and "Till There Was You," -- the slightly abbreviated script will mean that cast members will need to be emotionally charged for each performance in order to lead the audience through the full range of character development within the slightly shorter running time than the original musical."

Tri-Cities cast

Seventy-six young students who reside in communities from throughout the Fox Valley region will be featured in the production. Cast members from the Tri-Cities are:

Geneva: Alex Simko and Elise Watson.

St. Charles: Sebastian Bielski, Ellie Hueneke, Brigid McCarthy, Morgan Mroz, Jake Murphy, Skylar Ratliff.

The Thursday night show, scheduled for 7 p.m. on Oct. 22, will offer general admission seats as well as a special offer for groups and organizations. That will follow the 10 a.m. premiere performance scheduled that day for area school students who will attend on field trips with schools.

"Music Man Jr." will also be presented at 7 p.m., on Friday and Saturday, Oct. 23 and 24, and end with a Sunday, Oct. 25, matinee at 2 p.m. Cost is \$10 for adults, \$8 for students and seniors.

The Hemmens is located at 45 Symphony Way. For tickets, contact the Hemmens Box Office at 847-931-5900. The theater troupe's Web site is www.cteelgin.com.

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