

Suburban Life

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(F118)



Real puppets — not live ones — were used in both the stage and screen version of "The Sound of Music." But because there is no dancing in the show, and there is a lot of dance talent in Mercy High School, a puppet dance was choreographed into the musical. The puppet dancers from left are Jill Jenkins, Audra Lindenmuth, Lori Williams, Tonia Rex, Mary Gormley, Renee Lossia and Kelly Meagher.

'The Sound of Music' staged at Mercy High

FARMINGTON HILLS will be alive with the sound of music when teens from 19 surrounding communities join to perform in the musical that was the last collaboration between Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein.

Showtime for Mercy High School's production of "The Sound of Music" is at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, March 30-31, and at 3 p.m. Saturday, April 1, in the school on the corner of 11 Mile and Middlebelt.

All seats are reserved. Tickets are \$5, or \$4 for seniors and students. Advance tickets are available from Vincle Misura, 356-7582.

"The Sound of Music" opened on Broadway in November 1959 and continued for 1,443 performances. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the equally popular movie version, co-starring Julie Andrews and Christopher Plummer, which was released in 1965.

The musical is based on the true life story of the von Trapp family singers and has so captured the hearts of American audiences that between 300 and 400 professional and amateur productions appear annually throughout the U.S.

Set in Salzburg, Austria, in 1938, the show tells the story of Maria Ranier, a free-spirited postulant who must decide between the religious life and her love for Captain von Trapp.

When the Nazis invade Austria, the family is forced to flee their homeland and the escape is planned around a concert appearance where the family von Trapp are competing for vocal honors.

A sub-plot of teenage romance is provided by von Trapp's eldest daughter Leisl and Rolf Gruber, a young Austrian who becomes a Nazi.

JEFF DUNCAN, a resident of Berkley whose credits include 16 performances of "The Sound of Music" with Michigan Opera Theatre in the role of Friedrich, takes the role of Captain von Trapp.

Maria is played by Novi resident Leslie Erin Gaiser, who has amassed a host of awards for her vocal talents and debuts as student choreographer.

Sherry Law, a resident of Orchard Lake, takes the role of Countess Elsa Schraeder and debuts as student choreographer.

Rebecca Bonnell of Bloomfield Hills takes the role of Leisl von Trapp. Tamara Johnson of Farmington Hills portrays the Mother Abbess.

Nick Tomasin, who plays Rolf Gruber, and John Hutchison, who plays Max Detweiler, are both students at North Farmington High School.

Patrick Camplon, who takes the role of Friedrich von Trapp, and John Michael Wilder, who plays his brother Kurt, are both students at Beahan Junior High School.

Marta and Gretl von Trapp are played by Tricia Rblew and Katie Dennis, both residents of Farmington Hills. Brigitta von Trapp is portrayed by Natasha Marin of Sterling Heights, and Louisa von Trapp by Valencia Davls of Inkster.

PRODUCER, director and choreographer for the show is Roberta Camplon, an alumna of Mercy and University of Detroit who has been active in dance and theatre since she was a child.

"The Sound of Music" is the seventh production she has worked on for Mercy. She has also been the choreographer for the Mercyaires, the school's show choir group. She choreographs for spring concerts, teaches dance and performs with Los Flamencos Dance Theatre.

Vocal and orchestra director for the show is Larry Teevens, head of Mercy's music department for 29 years. He initiated and directs The Mercyaires, who give about 80 performances a year, many for the elderly and disabled.

Technical director for the show is Ronald Sili, chairman of Mercy's drama department since 1973.

Production manager is Vincle Misura, a retired pharmacist who is volunteering her services in this capacity for the fifth year. Student director is Jennifer Ahern, a Southfield resident.

The score for the musical includes "Sound of Music," "Do-Re-Mi," "So Long, Farewell," "Glimpse Every Mountain," "Lonely Goatherd," and the emotional "Edelweiss" which symbolizes love for Austria.



Captain von Trapp, played by Jeff Duncan of Berkley, sings "Edelweiss" for his family. At left is Patrick Camplon, Katie Dennis and Natasha Marin, who play three of the von Trapp children, and Leslie Erin Gaiser, who portrays Maria von Trapp.



Young lovers Nick Tomasin and Rebecca Bonnell sing "Sixteen Going on Seventeen."



The singing nuns in the Nonnberg Abbey are portrayed by Damlen Wilburn, Maura Phoney, Jon Hohler, Sarah Imrick and Abha Mangrukar.

staff photos by Randy Borst