

Thespians hope to weave a (God) spell on audience

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News/Wire Editor

The Niles West theatre department will open the season with a unique twist on the musical *Godspell* Friday, Oct. 13 and Saturday, Oct. 14 at 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. with a free community performance Thursday, Oct. 12 at 10 a.m. All performances will take place in the Black Box Theater.

Godspell, with music and new lyrics by Stephen Schwartz, tells the story of Jesus Christ with a modern day approach. According to theatre director Elizabeth Levin, Niles West has put a “non-traditional” spin on the show. Unlike the original, this performance of *Godspell* is set in a warehouse and centers on runaway teenagers to allow students and the audience to connect with the play, Levin said.

Because *Godspell* is a musical, it is geared toward children, adults and families, said Levin, but, “at the same time there is a deeper, underlying message.”

Levin stressed that the play is not completely religious, but that it illustrates, “the creation of a community and bringing lost souls together.” Levin said this is her reasoning for choosing *Godspell*.

“This is a play about community and ensemble. That’s something that is so fundamental to theatre,” Levin said. Levin also chose *Godspell* because she believes it, “plays to the strengths of the students in our department.”

Sophomore Andreas Nicholas noted that the production has progressed immensely since rehearsals began in the first week of September.

“It seems like everyone’s character really clicks and everyone feels connected to each other. It’s coming together,” Nicholas said.

According to Levin, this is the first time that a musical has been staged in the Black Box Theater.

In addition to Nicholas, the cast includes seniors Jen Darling, Theo Kim, Calli Leventis, Katie Paustian and Danielle Rukin; juniors Ethan Itzkow, Gina Koontz, Robert Morales, Lisa Perlmutter, Kalani Rycraft, and David Zaia; and sophomores Mike Jones and Jason Suran.

Tickets are \$8 for adults, \$6 for senior citizens and children and may be purchased at the box office or reserved at (847) 626-2633.



Theo Kim leads the *Godspell* cast in a musical number.

Photo by Jenna Temkin