

'Charlotte's Web' reaches out to all ages

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By Kristen Takeuchi



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Liam Edwards, 14, playing the older Wilbur, talks to Rachel Dean, playing Charlotte, Wednesday night in the Little Theatre at Montana State University Northern during a rehearsal of the Montana Actors' Theatre production of "Charlotte's Web." The Joseph Robinette adaptation of E.B. White's children's classic opens Friday at 8 p.m.

Friday will be the opening night of the Montana Actors' Theatre production of "Charlotte's Web," written by Joseph Robinette and adapted from the book by E.B. White.

The director of the play, Oriah Williams, who is also making her debut as a director on the main stage, said that they aimed this production toward children, but she is sure all ages will enjoy it.

MAT's website echoes that sentiment.

"Charlotte, Wilbur and all the rest of the lovable characters will be present in this heartwarming tale which is sure to delight both children and adults alike," the entry on the site says.

Auditions were held in late February with practices starting in early March. Williams said that they asked for children and adults to come audition and the cast consists of adults and children, with a majority of the ensemble being children.

Williams said working with so many younger actors has its own issues.

"It is fun and challenging," Williams said, adding that all the kids are great.

She described them as confident and dedicated. Williams said she was happy with how well the children did at memorizing their lines.

Since many of the cast consisted of children, Williams said, she tried to end rehearsals around 8 p.m. each night, but for the last two weeks rehearsals usually lasted until 9 p.m. as they added costumes and lights to the production.

Williams said another good thing about working with the children was how supportive the parents and families of the actors were.

She said the parents were always asking what they could do as well as donating props to the show.

Williams said she is also appreciative of the wonderful set for the play that was designed by Montana State University-Northern theater classes.

She said she hopes that the performance will inspire budding area actors to join the KidsMAT summer theater camp for children ages 5-15, being held in Havre and Chinook.

A performance of "Bugsy Malone," which will be starring middle school and high school students and directed by the 2018 Summer Youth Interns, is opening in July.

"Charlotte's Web" will run May 4-6, 10-13, and 17-19 at 8 p.m. in the Little Theater in Montana State University-Northern's Cowan Hall. 2 p.m. matinees are set for Sunday and May 13.

Doors and the backstage lounge will open a half hour before each production starts.

Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$10 for students, seniors and military, and \$5 for children K-8. Tickets are available locally at Fivehead's, Computer Center and Bear Paw Meats, or online through <http://www.mtactors.com/>.

This production is sponsored by Havre Ford

The cast list, which includes a mix of ages is:

- Fern: Shay Hauer
- Arable: David Chambers
- Ms. Arable: Kate Hagen
- Avery: Ethan Davison
- Zuckerman: Martin Holt
- Mrs. Zuckerman: Michelene Edwards



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- Lurvy: Deanna Stevenson
- Young Wilbur: Asher Brinkman
- Older Wilbur: Liam Edwards
- Templeton: Koby Preputin
- Charlotte: Rachel Dean
- Goose: Jamie Lynn Sherman
- Gander: Bill Chambers
- Sheep: Angela Murri
- Lamb: Marlee Thivierge
- Ensemble: Mark Cichosz, Jeremy Woodwick, Toby Fisher, Allyssa Schoen, Kate Hemmer, Mara Edwards, Dentin DePriest, Izzy Hagen, Kelcee Garcia, Tyley Hemmer, Maddy Hagen, Becca Dean, Dever Everingham.

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