

## Director Finds Magic In Ageless Fairy Tale

By HOWARD KOLUS  
Staff Writer  
Lebanon Daily News  
Lebanon Daily News

indsay Mauck is a young woman who has fulfilled a dream.

"Every little girl wants to be a Disney princess," she said, referring to the 1950 Disney animated film "Cinderella."

The 20-year-old Temple University music education major is cast as the classic put-upon chagrined girl in the Hershey Area Playhouse production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Cinderella," which opens Wednesday for a four-day run at the Lower Dauphin High School auditorium in Hummelstown.

"You dream about it when you're small, and now, when I'm an adult, I can actually be her!" she said, her voice rising in excitement as she anticipated her first appearance on the HAP stage.

That's not to say Mauck lacks theatrical experience. Her resume includes performances at Allenberry Playhouse and Theatre Harrisburg, among other venues.

To prepare for her current role, Mauck studied a recording of Julie Andrews in the 1957 TV version of the musical fairy tale and found it helpful.

"(Andrews) has a way about her that you can study" and learn from, Mauck explained. "She's a goddess of acting for women."

Mauck, however, holds strong views on her interpretation of the character, noting that Cinderella is not "timid and innocent" as some have portrayed her.

"I think she knows more than she lets on," Mauck said. "She has big dreams and gets very excited about the possibility of them coming true. ... She has an inner confidence and, although outwardly shy, knows what's she's capable of."

The Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Cartwright, an instructor of speech communication and theater at Millersville University and the production's director, has allowed the large cast — some 50 actors, singers and dancers, including approximately 15 children — to largely bring their own characterizations to the roles.

"The tale has been told many, many different ways," the veteran HAP director and actor noted. "The performers are bringing their own nuances" to the show. Cartwright, who last directed "The Crucible" in 2002, is working with an approximately 20-member orchestra for "Cinderella," which features music by Richard Rodgers and book and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein. The score includes such classics as "In My Own Little Corner," "Do I Love You Because You're Beautiful?" and "Lovely Night."

Such songs are a delight for the enthusiastic director.

"My hobby is musicals," he said. "I saw nine New York shows (not all musicals) in nine days last year and have similar plans this year."

"Cinderella," Cartwright continued, has been a pleasant surprise to direct, even though it wasn't originally on the theater's schedule.

"The initial choice was 'The Music Man' but we couldn't get the rights," he explained. And while "Cinderella" may not have been Cartwright's first choice, he's thoroughly pleased with the outcome.

"Lo and behold, I wasn't expecting it to grow on me as it has," he said, noting that he views the tale as a classic transformation of the major characters.

" 'Cinderella' is ageless. In the way it's written, there is subtle humor for adults" interwoven in a plot that traditionally has had great appeal for children, Cartwright said.

"This is a feel-good, love-triumphs-in-the-end," story, according to Cartwright, who noted humorously that attempting to fit into the glass slipper is among its acting challenges.

Mauck's foot is a size 10 and the other actresses must pretend the shoe is too small.

"That's where real acting comes in," the director laughed.

The production's numerous scene changes have also proven challenging, but not impossible, Cartwright added. Settings include Cinderella's home, the palace exterior, a royal dressing room, the palace garden and ballroom, and a public square. "There is more scenery than I've ever done in any show," he said.

Period costumes help set the mood and were obtained from various sources, including theater stock and rental; others were handmade.

While costumes and scenery may have challenged the production staff, resident Scott Payonk, who portrays the Prince, admitted that he finds singing somewhat demanding.

"It stretches my range a little bit," said Payonk. "But (I'm having) a good time." He described his character as "a very independent person" who "doesn't want to be forced to find a wife; he wants to make the choice himself."

Payonk's greatest personal challenge may be his royal status, he mused, "the notion that everyone's your servant."

"I'm not used to that but it's actually pretty cool. Everyone waits on me!"

-----

Hershey Area Playhouse will present Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Cinderella" Thursday through Saturday at 7 p. m. at the Lower Dauphin High School auditorium in Hummelstown. Tickets, which are \$16 for adults and \$14 for ages 12 and under, will be sold at the door and are also available at <http://www.hersheyareaplayhouse.com>.

In conjunction with the production, a preshow ball for children will be held Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. in the high school cafeteria. Cinderella and the Prince will sign autographs, and cake, beverages and souvenirs will be available. The \$10 cost includes a \$2 reduction in show tickets. Reservations are required and may be made by

calling 533-8525 or by e-mail at [info@hersheyareaplayhouse.com](mailto:info@hersheyareaplayhouse.com).