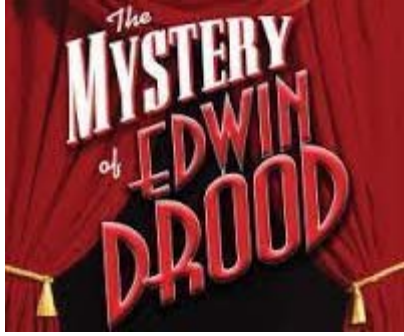


'Drood' mystery to be solved on AU stage

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For the first time in seven years, a musical will grace an Alfred University (AU) stage when the Performing Arts Division presents award-winning “The Mystery of Edwin Drood” Thursday-Saturday, April 10-12, at 8 p.m. in Miller Theater, Miller Performing Arts Center.

The “playful comedic and risqué ‘whodunit’ ” is the creation of Rupert Holmes, who wrote the book, music, lyrics, and full orchestrations for the show, his first musical.

Tickets are required for the performances; reservations are encouraged. To purchase tickets, visit the online Box Office at las.alfred.edu/performing-arts/events, or call 607.871.2582.

“The Mystery of Edwin Drood” is an adaptation of an unfinished novel, of the same name, by Charles Dickens. Dickens died while in the midst of writing and since the book was incomplete, no one knew what the ending was to be. To that end, “Drood” incorporates a convention which had never before been seen on Broadway - audience members choose the ending.

Holmes took a big risk with this approach, but it was well worth it considering the enthusiastic raves that followed. The original 1985 production was nominated for 11 Tony awards and was winner of five, including Best Musical, Best Book, and Best Original Score.

The play has since been on two national tours, a highly successful run on London’s West End, and a 2012 Broadway revival. The AU production is one of the first since the closing of the revival and will be the first musical to be staged in Miller Theater.

AU’s production is directed by Stephen Crosby, professor of theater. Dr. Luanne Crosby, professor of voice and chorus, is directing the vocals, and Dr. Christopher C. Foster, associate professor of music and director of bands, is leading the orchestra.

“AU students have been clamoring to do a musical for years,” said S. Crosby. “In the past, the Division of Performing Arts aimed to do one (musical) every three years, so students would have the potential of working on at least one during their time in Alfred. We stayed on schedule up until a recent dry spell. The Division’s hesitancy doing musicals in recent years has been in large part based on not knowing what obstacles might pop up using the untested and untried Miller Theater, but we’re finally taking it on with all its challenges and discoveries - it has been quite the journey.”

“Drood” is staged as a play-within-a-play with each Alfred performer portraying a fictional English actor from 1892, who in turn portrays a Dickens character from the novel. It tells the story of young Englishman Edwin Drood whose sudden disappearance throws the fictional townspeople of Cloisterham into a panic. Suspicions arise about who is responsible for Drood’s vanishing, with fingers pointing every which way, including at the dashing but villainous John Jasper, Drood’s fiancée Rosa Bud, opium den proprietor Princess Puffer, and mysterious siblings Helena and

Neville Landless. As the investigation pushes forward, everyone who came into contact with Drood is included in the lineup of suspects.

Holmes' success with "Drood" was called "remarkable." He was a well-known popular songwriter, perhaps best known for "Escape" (the Pina Colada Song) and as a successful night club performer. Based on his inventiveness and talent, Holmes was encouraged to move forward with his interest in writing a musical by Joseph Papp, originator of the New York Shakespeare Festival. The result was "Drood."

The AU cast includes Dana Harris, a junior theater major from Alpine, as Miss Jane Throttle and Stage Manager; OJ Shepard, a junior sociology major from Rochester, as the Chairman and Mayor Sapsea; Rachel Romack, a junior psychology and theater major from Candor, as Edwin Drood; Paul Dingman, a visiting assistant professor in human studies, as John Jasper; Jessica Antrobus, a senior English and communication studies major from Orange, Ohio, as Rosa Bud; Cassidy Teagle, a sophomore from New York, as Helena; Nathaniel Yard, a junior biomaterials engineering major from Quakertown, PA, as Neville; Lucas Rougeux, a freshman from Niagara Falls, as Crisparkle; Rebecca Hayes, a senior English and theater major from Manorville, as Princess Puffer; Daniel Gray, a junior art and design major from Madison, WI, as Durdles; Darren Palmer, a senior theater major from Wingdale, as Bazzard; and Marc Widerman, a freshman from Huntington, as Durdles Deputy.

Additional students in the production include Elaine Temple, a sophomore art and design major from Hauppauge; Holly Durand, a senior theater major from Schenectady; Nick Labate, a freshman art and design major from Middleburg Heights, Ohio; Nathan Earley, a senior theater major from New Ipswich, NH; Julie Yendall, a freshman from Tonawanda; and McKenzie Murdock, a sophomore business administration major from Downingtown, PA. Additional voices in the production will come from Shannon Cirulnick, a sophomore from Ozone Park, and Trisha Fromm, a senior psychology major from Christiana, PA.

The production crew includes Meredith Laubert, a junior material science and engineering major from Mays Landing, NJ, stage manager; Niki Kimball, a freshman theater and interdisciplinary art major from Farmington, assistant manager; Chloe Theodosiou, a freshman arts and design major from Mahopac, assistant manager; Raffi Jansezian, a senior communication studies major from Providence, Rhode Island, assistant director; Luc Hammond-Thomas, a junior art and design major from New York, NY, light board operator; Quinn Porzio, a first-year renewable energy engineering major from Bowmansville; and Isaiah Cassin, a senior art and design major from Candor, on spot light.

Also, Luke Ketchum, a senior interdepartmental major from Brattleboro, VT, is rigging operator; Jonathan Brand, a first-year student from Port Jefferson, sound board operator; Stephanie Scheib, a senior mechanical engineering major from Rochester, assistant scene shop manager; and Robert Lamb, a senior theater major from Geneva, master electrician.

Carpenters and electricians on the show include Anderson Bass, a senior art and design major from Santa Fe, NM; Jonathan Brand; Chiannna Calabrese, a first-year student from Worcester, VT; Chelsea Chandanais, a senior philosophy major from Lowman; Eileen Cody, a senior communication studies major from Hamburg; Claire Dvorak, a first-year graduate student studying ceramic engineering from Tully; Daniel Forsman, a sophomore art and design major from Buffalo Grove, IL; Jakob Gordon, a sophomore mechanical engineering major from Camp Hill, PA; Richelle Jenkins, a sophomore student from Camillus; Robert Lamb; Tyler Litz, a first-year student from Clinton; and Ryan Martin, a first-year mechanical engineering major from Gainesville.

Also working in carpentry and electricity are: Nicole Meeker, a senior art and design major from Brewerton; Lindsay Neubeck, a first-year art and design major from Long Valley, NJ; Brian O'Connor, a first-year student from Chittenango; Brian Pierce, a senior psychology major from Overbrook, KS; Quinn Porzio; Micheal Pikunka; Lanina Roby, a senior art and design major from Springwater; Carly Sober, a sophomore art and design major from Scottsville; Hannah Schilsky, a junior art and design major from Pleasantville; Alexandra Schurr, a sophomore art and design major from McLean, VA; Matthew Stoddard, a senior political science major from Baldwin; and Meaghann Stoelting, a sophomore student from Ransomville.

The costume design team includes Bellisant Corcoran-Mathe, a senior theater major from Kendall; Holly Durand; Cassandra Hall, a sophomore history major from Bath; and Amanda Mangerpan, a senior psychology major from Hewitt, NJ. Costume Shop workers include Maggie Baska, a junior engineering major from Springfield, IL; Allison Burrell, a senior art and design major from Corning; Denise Espinoza, a sophomore biology major from the Bronx; Katie Groh, a sophomore student from Highland; Rachel Henry, a first-year art and design major from Candor; Amanda Mangerpan; and Chloe Theodosiou.

Scenic painters include Ava Carney, a sophomore art and design major from Chicago, IL; and Jason Dearing, a junior art and design major from Endicott.

Box Office workers include Allison Argento, a junior art and design major from West Islip; Hannah Clark, a junior marketing major from Rochester; and Courtney Hopkins, a senior psychology major from Rochester. Abby Schmeichel, a sophomore environmental and geology student from Lancaster, PA is the house manager.

The orchestra includes Emily Rechin, a junior biology major from Silver Creek, on clarinet; Jasper Wright, a second-year graduate student studying material science and engineering from Pattersonville, on bassoon; Jay Horwath, a sophomore general science major from Doylestown, PA, on trumpet; Brooke Tillotson, a senior art and design major from Canandaigua, on horn; Peter Metz, a second-year graduate student studying ceramics from Syracuse, on trombone; Scott DeFranco-Norton, a senior biomedical materials engineering major from Salisbury Mills, on bass; Hunter Haddad, a senior biomedical materials engineering major from Putney, VT, on drums; and Kyle Merrifield, a sophomore renewable energy engineering major from Amherst, on percussion.

S. Crosby is an Equity actor, director, and writer. He has worked professionally in New York, Los Angeles, and in regional theaters, most notable the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis. He graduated with a master of fine arts degree in directing from Florida State University.

He has appeared in film and on PBS television, including in “The School for Scandal,” part of the popular “Theater in America” series. His stage performing credits include Oedipus in “Oedipus,” Harpagon in “The Miser,” Banquo in “Macbeth,” Bottom in “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” and Scrooge in “A Christmas Carol.”

Prior to coming to Alfred, S. Crosby taught at Kalamazoo College, Gustavus Adolphus College, and the University of Alaska, where he organized a Native Alaskan Theater program which toured nationally and internationally presenting original works based on cultural and social issues. He has also been a faculty member for the Semester at Sea program.

L. Crosby directs the AU Chorus and Chamber singers. She graduated with a DMA in vocal performance from the Cleveland Institute of Music Case Western Reserve University. She has sung professionally with the Cleveland Opera, Aspen Opera Theater, and Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Chamber Orchestra, Orchestra of the Southern Finger Lakes and the Fredonia Chamber Players.

Foster directs the Concert Band, Jazz Band, Brass Choir, and teaches music theory and lessons on wind instruments. He earned his doctorate of musical arts in performance at the University of North Texas, a master of music and bachelor of music education degrees of Music degrees from the University of Nevada, Reno, and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Trumpet Performance and Wind Conducting from the University of North Texas.