

# Dakota presents 'Mary Poppins' musical



Cast members of Dakota High School's production of "Mary Poppins," starring students Bethany Moses as Mary and Peter Dedaj as Bert. Photo courtesy of KELLY SCHMIDT AND ART TACDERAS

By Nicole Tuttle , For The Macomb Daily

Posted: 01/30/16, 2:30 PM EST |



Bethany Moses and Peter Dedaj will portray Mary Poppins and Bert in Dakota High School's upcoming production of "Mary Poppins" Feb. 4,5,6 and Feb. 11, 12 and 13. Photo courtesy of KELLY SCHMIDT AND ART TACDERAS

Dakota High School students are offering a "Jolly Holiday" for Disney and musical fans in February with a production of "Mary Poppins."

"This production has been in the works for some time. Our artistic directors started dreaming of this show as soon as the rights came out to let high schools perform it," Dakota teacher and theater director/producer Kelly Schmidt said. "It has been a long time since our school did a Disney show and it felt that the community was ready for a huge production."

The stage musical “Mary Poppins” is based in part on Disney’s 1964 film, but is also derived from P.L. Travers’ books. It focuses on a magical and “practically perfect” nanny who helps the Banks family overcome their problems with the help of her friend Bert, and features familiar songs such as “A Spoonful of Sugar,” “Jolly Holiday” and “Feed the Birds.”

“Mary Poppins’ is a delicate story with an important message. It has sparkle, magic and surprise, but behind all the glitz, is an important message about family, growing up, learning lessons and being human. At the heart of it, sometimes we forget that it is OK to dream big if we just believe in ourselves, that we need to have fun even when the job’s a chore, we need to understand others, and put love and family first,” Schmidt said.

More than 70 students ranging in ages three to 18 are a part of the cast. The crew, backstage help and pit orchestra includes more than 40 students, according to Schmidt.

Senior Bethany Moses, age 17, will portray Mary Poppins in the show, and junior Peter Dedaj, age 17, was cast as Bert.

“Bethany is musical theater. She is incredibly talented and we expect that you will see her performing professionally in the future. She is a wonderful leader and very involved with every aspect of our performing arts at Dakota, section leader and student conductor in choir, and head drum major in marching band,” Schmidt said.

The role of Bert is Dedaj’s first lead role.

“Peter Dedaj has raw talent which brings a great big smile to your face every time he becomes Bert. His ability to light up the stage and connect with the audience is a talent that cannot be taught,” Schmidt said.

Professionals and volunteers have been brought in to assist on the show as well. Set graphic design was completed by Darrin Hollinsk, and the majority of the over 100 costumes for the production were handmade or altered by parent Laura Schmitt, according to Schmidt. Engineering was done by Horst Roman and Eric Roman, Dakota’s auditorium coordinator.

“Our set is bigger and better than any set we have done before under the design and leadership of Eric Roman,” Schmidt said.

Performer “flying” effects will be created by Hall Associates Flying Effects, a division of Nunnally Enterprises, Inc.

“We have also brought in a tap expert to bring the Broadway feel of ‘Step in Time’ to come to life on our stage with our students,” Schmidt said.

The show will be held at the Macomb Township school’s auditorium. Cost of tickets is \$10. The show will be held Feb. 4-6 and Feb. 11-13 at 7 p.m. One matinee show will be held on Feb. 6 at 1 p.m. Tickets are available at [dakotamusical.seatyourself.biz/](http://dakotamusical.seatyourself.biz/) or at the door a half an hour prior to the start of the show, if not sold out in advance.