

Northwest to Present 'Footloose: The Musical' April 5-7

Northwest Missouri State University's Department of Fine and Performing Arts will present the musical version of a hit movie, "Footloose: The Musical," April 5-7 at the Ron Houston Center for the Performing Arts.

"Footloose" is the story of a young man who knows exactly who he is and is on a mission to help the repressed teens of a small town express who they are. When Ren and his mother move from Chicago to a small farming town, Ren is not prepared for the ban on dancing instituted by the local preacher. The heartfelt story that emerges is of a father longing for the son he lost and of a young man aching for the father who walked out on him.

With its Oscar and Tony-nominated top 40 score, dynamic new songs for the stage musical, and energetic, toe-tapping dance, "Footloose" celebrates the wisdom of listening to young people, and guiding them with a warm heart and an open mind.

"Footloose" is a show with much more depth than most people realize," Dr. Joe Kreizinger, a professor of theater and the director of the production, said. "The movie is enjoyable, but the musical version combines a storyline of deeper substance with the energy that only a live production can create. The live show has memorable characters, many survivors in their own ways, and of course it has the great dancing and music that will leave people humming or singing the popular tunes."

The production combines the collaborative efforts of Kreizinger and Professor of Music Dr. Brian Lanier, who serves as the show's musical director.

"The music in the show ranges from rock to disco to contemporary ballads, which all combine with an extraordinary script to create an amazing journey through the lives of the characters," Lanier said. "The choreography for the show is fantastic and brings the great music to life."

Kreizinger and Lanier are eager to see the final production come together.

"It's so exciting to get to those moments when I see students reach full potential and create and become their characters," Kreizinger said. "Those are special moments, and these cast members are really starting to develop strong, believable, characters that easily flow in and out of the individual scenes."

Elizabeth Geier, a junior organizational communication and Spanish major from

Council Bluffs, Iowa, plays the role of Ariel Moore, one of the lead roles in “Footloose.”

“I think I’m gaining a great sense of commitment and work ethic with my participation in ‘Footloose,’” Geier said. “It’s long hours and lots of work, but it’s unbelievably rewarding to me. Seeing the growth in all the aspects of the show within myself and the whole cast is really cool to see.”

Geier and other students involved with the production build a range of skills, including teamwork, communication, organization and time management. The cast consists of 24 students.

“The students involved in the production have the opportunity to come together from a variety of backgrounds and work together for a common goal that is an outstanding theatrical experience,” Lanier said. “The spirit of collaboration is rich among the students. The students also have the opportunity to work with professional directors and musicians who bring an element of heightened expectations to the production.”

Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$10 for students and senior citizens. They may be purchased at the cashiering office, located on the first floor of the Administration Building between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, or by calling 660.562.1212 and providing a valid credit card. Tickets may also be purchased at the door beginning one hour before the show.

All show times are 7:30 p.m., and the production is recommended for ages 13 and older.