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BG OnStage to perform musical adaptation of 'Elf'

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Music director Maddie Hughes instructs vocal warmups during rehearsal for Elf Jr. the Musical by BG Onstage on Tuesday, December 11, 2018, at Van Meter Hall. (Austin Anthony/photo@bgdailynews.com)

Austin Anthony

BG OnStage is working with roughly two dozen local youngsters to deliver a theatrical version of a contemporary holiday classic.

“Elf The Musical JR.” takes the Christmas movie “Elf” and twists it into the format of a stage musical while keeping the storyline about a human who was raised by elves at the North Pole traveling to New York City to find his real family.

Elise Charny, the show’s director, said she was looking for a Christmas show BG OnStage had never performed that would be fun for the kids participating in it, who range from 6 to 18 years old.

“We always look for good music, fun stuff the kids want to dance to,” she said.

The only public performance of the show is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Friday at Van Meter Hall at Western Kentucky University, according to bgonstage.org. Tickets are \$5 for children 5 and younger, \$8 for children aged 6 to 18 and \$10 for adults.

Charny said preparing for the show has been relatively easy because the kids are already familiar with the characters and the plot.

“They knew the characters,” she said. “They knew what was going to happen.”

Maddie Hughes, the show’s music director, said the show’s musical numbers are frequently used as a way to delve deeper into the relationships between characters than was done in the movie.

“The music allows you to explore the character relationships a little bit deeper,” she said.

“There are certain songs that bring that out. The show goes into more detail with the relationships.”

Throughout, “Elf The Musical JR.” remains an upbeat Christmas show, Hughes said.

“Every single one of these songs is such an earworm,” she said.

“They’re upbeat and they’re entertaining.”

Andrew Zies, 12, who plays Buddy, the show’s protagonist, said he’s participated in roughly a dozen stage shows and was drawn to “Elf The Musical JR.” because it has a more contemporary setting than many of the other shows BG OnStage has put on in recent years.

“A lot of the shows that they do, I like them, but they’re just not as modern as I want them to be and when I saw this, I was like, ‘Wow, this is a lot more up to date,’ ” he said.

“One day he figures out that he’s a human. Santa sends him to New York to find his dad, then all this other stuff just starts spiraling,” he said.

Through it all, though, Zies said Buddy manages to get everyone else into the Christmas spirit.

Rileigh Gosseth 13, who plays Jovie, Buddy’s love interest in the show, said she was drawn to the show because of the different personalities of the characters and was excited to play a “sassy” character like Jovie.

“It has been a lot of hard work,” she said. “We’ve been working at it for a long time, but I definitely think we’re ready to do an amazing job.”

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