

[print](#)

## A bit of this and that from Broadway

by [Nathan Orme](#)

02.08.12 - 07:00 pm



RENO — For anyone who is looking for a bit of Broadway in northern Nevada, Sierra School of Performing Arts has three performances left of its annual show “Broadway Bits” at the University of Nevada, Reno.

Now in its fifth year, the theme of this year’s show is “Sing Happy!” and Janet Lazarus, director of the show and of the acting academy, said she chose this year’s medley of songs to fit both the theme and the abilities of the performers. In addition, she said she wanted five good dance numbers that weren’t overly difficult, as some of the numbers have been in the past.



“We did do something different this time around,” Lazarus added. “For the first four ‘Broadway Bits,’ we were condensing four or five shows and presenting about 25 minutes of each

show, we ended up with a very long show, and lots of set changes. But I think it is really fun for the audience to see the same actors in very different roles, and it is good training for the actors. So I tried to stick with the idea of actors playing multiple roles, but I wanted to try more of a revue format this year. I thought it would be shorter, and easier.”

The result is a two-act show with 19 song-and-dance numbers all from different Broadway musicals. Most of the songs aren’t the standard fare, drawing from obscure musicals as well as lesser-known material from a few well-known productions. Among the numbers are “Seize the Day” from “Newsies”; “Lots of Livin’ to Do” from “Bye Bye Birdie”; “Wonder of Wonder, Miracle of Miracles” from “Fiddler on the Roof”; and “America” from “West Side Story.”

The performers are mostly students from Sierra School of Performing Arts with a sprinkling of experienced singers and actors. Sparks resident Cindy Sabatini is the vocal director for “Broadway Bits” and for the first time also is performing in the show. She is familiar with both roles, having performed in countless local plays and musicals and working as the musical director at Sparks United Methodist Church. For this show, Sabatini said she particularly likes the number “Run Freedom Run,” a song she had never heard before.

“It’s got great harmonies,” Sabatini said. “It’s upbeat, almost gospel-type and then it also has a choir of a cappella without musical accompaniment. There’s a

little of everything in that one.”

The most difficult number in the production is “America” from “West Side Story,” she said.

“Leonard Bernstein is a genius but he writes some difficult rhythms, so that’s probably the most challenging number for singers and musicians,” Sabatini said.

Performer Annelise Laughlin, 12, said “America” is one of her favorite parts of this year’s “Broadway Bits.” The young girl from Reno said she likes it because it is “peppy,” but perhaps another reason she favors it is because her older sister, Ashley, is in it. The sisters are each in several numbers, but it is Ashley who hopes to make a career out of performing while Annelise said she is doing it just for fun.

“I love it but it’s more of a hobby,” Annelise said.

Ashley, who has been taking singing lessons for about five years and is performing in her fourth “Broadway Bits,” said she is excited about her solo number, “Much More.” She has dreamed of becoming a professional performer since seeing the musical “Wicked” in the seventh grade.

“I saw it for the first time on a school trip in New York City,” Ashley said. “I was blown away.”

Matt Wilkerson, a business intelligence analyst at IGT who plays Conrad Birdie in “Broadway Bits,” said audiences will be blown away by the talent of his younger co-stars.

“I became their biggest fan,” said Wilkerson, 42. “I root them on constantly. Anyone who sees the show is going to see it: There’s some amazing talent with these kids.”

“Broadway Bits” will be performed at 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday and at 2 p.m. Sunday in the Redfield Proscenium Theater in the Church Fine Arts Building at the University of Nevada, Reno. Tickets cost \$16 for general admission and \$12 for students and seniors over 60. To buy tickets, visit <http://sierraschoolofperformingarts.org>.

‘Broadway Bits:

Sing Happy’

Act I

“Sing Happy” (from “Flora the Red Menace”)

“Seize the Day” ( from “Newsies”)

Lunchtime; Suppertime; Happiness (from “You’re a Good Man Charlie Brown”)

“Our Time” (from “Merrily We Roll Along”)

“Freedom” (from “Shenandoah”)

“Hey Look Me Over” (from “Wildcat”)

“Much More” (from “Fantastiks”)

“Lot of Livin’ to Do” (from “Bye Bye Birdie”)

“Consider Yourself” (from “Oliver”)

## Act II

“Run Freedom Run” (from “Urinetown”)

“No Time at All” (from “Pippin”)

“Wonder of Wonder, Miracle of Miracles” (from “Fiddler on the Roof”)

“For Good” (from “Wicked”)

“This is the Moment” (from “Jekyll and Hyde”)

“America” (from “West Side Story”)

“I am Who I am” (from “La Cage Aux Folles”)

“Pretty Women” (from “Sweeny Todd”)

“Here’s to the Ladies Who Lunch” (from “Company”)

“Always Look on the Bright Side of Life” (from “Spamalot”)

---

© dailysparktribune.com 2012