

Woodstock Community Unit School District 200

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Contact: Kevin Lyons

815.337.3071



‘Head Over Heels’ hits WHS stage April 22

With foreboding prophecies of doom, what will become of the Renaissance-era Kingdom of Arcadia? Our lips are sealed, but audience members can find out opening night at the combined Woodstock and Woodstock North high schools’ production of “Head Over Heels.”

There are 80 students among the cast, crew and orchestra who’ve been working on the tongue-in-cheek musical comedy that combines elements of Shakespeare with the energetic ‘80s rock of the Go-Go’s.

“The students really enjoyed themselves when we first read through the script together. There was a lot of unexpected laughter, and we concluded the rehearsal with high hopes for a fun show,” said Christy Johanson, one of the “Head Over Heels” directors. “It’s a mix of over-the-top humor, heart-warming realizations, and touching connections between characters.”

Two seniors play the king and queen: Breanne Walker (WHS) and Zach Blalock (WNHS), with the princesses being portrayed by Mary Martin (junior, WNHS) and Kamila Kay (sophomore, WHS). The royal servants are WNHS seniors Elijah Freundl and Sam Neff, and the poor heartthrob shepherd boy is portrayed by Emerich Parpart (sophomore, WNHS). Rounding out the leads is the non-binary oracle played by senior Chase Simonton.

This year’s performance is particularly meaningful for the cast and crew because the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the tradition of a combined school musical for the past two years. Many of the students from both high schools have performed together in Woodstock Children’s Summer Theater and are thrilled with the chance to work together again.

The show is led by mixing director teams of WHS, Christy Johanson and Billy Seger with WNHS, Tish Lyon and Sue Lewis, supported by WHS band director Rich Stiles as the pit orchestra conductor and Christina Cummins as the rehearsal/pit accompanist.

Showtimes and dates for “Head Over Heels” are as follows: 7 p.m. Friday, April 22; 7 p.m. Saturday, April 23; 2 p.m. Sunday, April 24; 7 p.m. Friday, April 29; and 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Saturday, April 30. All of the performances will be held at Woodstock High School.

A silent auction benefiting the theater programs will be held at each performance. Parent Shannon Martin, who helps with theater publicity, obtained an autographed photo of Jane Wiedlin, co-founder of The Go-Go’s. “She wrote me a lovely email back about how excited she was that we were putting on ‘Head Over Heels’ and wished our cast and crew the very best of luck,” Martin said.

Tickets are \$5 for students and seniors and \$10 for adults. They can be purchased at the door, online at whst.booktix.com or by calling the box office at 815-337-8625.