



Alton Little Theater announces production of Beauty and the Beast

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ALTON LITTLE THEATER'S **Summer Showcase Production**



Disney's **Beauty** **AND THE** **Beast**

July 7th-16th
Eight Performances

Adults \$20

Youth under 18 just \$10

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ALTON - Alton Little Theater's Summer Showcase Production is Disney's BEAUTY AND THE BEAST playing for eight performances Friday July 7th through Sunday July 16th.

As soon as the royalty rights were re-released for amateur production, the Community Theater 's directors Lee Cox and Kevin Frakes made application for performance rights, believing that the beloved and grand Musical would be the perfect summer family-friendly theater experience. Loftin Woodiel joins Cox and Frakes as the Musical Director for the production which heralds in a talented cast of 34 performers.

"The voices and talents who came out to audition are simply incredible" says Cox who goes on to say that the search for the perfect Belle was so challenging but we've found her in 19 year-old Margaret Sommerhof a new theater major at SIUE. "

"Margaret just embodies the sweetness and spunk of Belle and is one of the most disciplined young performers I've ever seen" says Frakes, who designed and co-directs the production AND takes on the role of the Beast.

The role of the Prince will be portrayed by Nick Trapp and some measured thought was put into staging the transformation of characters so easily done in movies but much more challenging in live theater where the front row audience sits six feet away!

Frakes has once again redesigned the huge playing space needed for a castle and French Village with the help of Anne Bailey (set- artist) and co-director Cox who also takes on the creation of eighty-six costumes with the help of Carol Hodson of Curtains Up Theater group. Dennis Stephenson ("First Cue" Productions), Dave Caires (SOUND), Sydney Brecht (make-up artist) and Chelsei Chavez (Stage Manager) complete the Production team but Cox stresses that it truly "take a village" to produce a show this big in five week's time.

Cox says that ALT's four summer intern-scholarship students, Margaret Sommerhof, Anthony Shephard, Nathan Bielsmith and Kate Costello are all getting involved in the performance and production aspects of the show and providing a thrilling experience for the young and young-at-heart who will have the opportunity to have pictures taken with the cast, receive a rose from the Beast, purchase commemorative T-Shirts and enjoy Ice-cream treats in the Dorothy Colonius Foyer.

The Theater offers a discount for Tickets - \$20 for Adults and just \$10 for anyone under 18 and the public is encouraged to purchase Tickets early because advanced sales would indicate a likely sell-out! Michael Cox will take on House Management for the show and will do his best to make sure that "everyone gets to come in and feel a part of this magical production!"

Other featured cast members are Kurtis Leible (Gaston), Sawyer Burton Lefor), Robyn

Harders (Mrs. Potts), David Bishop (Lumiere), Brant McCance (Cogsworth), Kayla Robinson (Wardrobe), Nick Brunstein (Maurice), Nadja Kapetanovick (Chip) and Mary Grace Brueggermann (Babette); Brueggermann also takes on choreography for the show with "Waltzing lessons" provided by Kristina Bemis. The ensemble of players from ages 10 to 64 then take on multiple roles as Villagers, wolves, dancing dining accessories and MORE for the big production numbers that are part of the timeless love story between two unlikely soulmates.

Cox states that her goal is to make the production a visual and auditory treat for the audiences but to also give a message about tolerance and kindness and looking beyond appearance when measuring the value of another human being. She is thrilled that so many people have re-embraced the magic of Disney's biggest success with BEAUTY AND THE BEAST and she and Frakes have been dreaming about mounting this production even while producing MAN OF LA MANCHA in May.

Tickets can be secured through the ALT Website (altonlittletheater.org) and/or by calling the Box Office (462-6562). Two photo sessions with Make-Up Artist Sydney Brecht and Sommerhof and Frakes will be released on June 23rd to media outlets but Interviews and photo sessions can be arranged through Lee Cox (531-3777). A complete Cast listing will soon be available online as well, with photos by Vernon Hamel.