

Metro-East Lutheran High School theatre department to perform musical “Willy Wonka”

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EDWARDSVILLE – The theatre department from Metro-East Lutheran High School will take to the stage this weekend for a magical performance of the musical “Willy Wonka.”

Based on the novel by Roald Dahl, “Willy Wonka” tells the tale of Charlie Bucket, a poor boy who wins one of five coveted golden tickets and earns a whirlwind tour of the mysterious Wonka chocolate factory.

“There is something very magical and innocent about this story of a boy who literally has nothing and goes on this crazy adventure and turns out to be just the boy needed to carry on Willy Wonka’s legacy,” said Judy Brown, director of the theatre program at MELHS.

Performances will be held Friday, April 22, and Saturday, April 23, at 7 p.m.; and Sunday, April 24 at 2 p.m. in the Ronald Henschen Alumni Hall at Metro-East Lutheran High School, located at 6305 Center Grove Road. Ticket prices range from \$5 for children to \$12 for adults. Tickets can be purchased at the door or in advance online at our.show/metro-east-lutheran-high-school/candy.

The cast for the musical includes: Parker Gearn as Willy Wonka; Ethan Massa as Charlie Bucket; Christian Broekemeier as Grandpa Joe; Lukas Liefer as Augustus Gloop; Katherine Donovan as Veruca Salt; Harry Mueller as Mike Teavee; and Sofie Stiller as Violet Beauregarde.

Musical accompaniment for the production will be performed by a live orchestra that includes both MELHS students and professional musicians. Karen Shimkus, music teacher at MELHS, is the musical director for the performance.

In addition to MELHS students, the cast also includes grade school students from five local elementary schools, playing roles such as the oompa loompas in the candy factory and Charlie’s friends in the candy shop.

Due to the pandemic, this is the first time MELHS has been able to perform its spring musical in front of a live audience in three years. In 2020, the spring musical was canceled when schools were shut down just weeks before the performance, and in 2021, the school’s theatre department presented a virtual musical production via Zoom.

“I’m thrilled our seniors are getting to have this experience one more time before they graduate,” Brown said. “God is good. He’s bringing us full circle.”

Metro-East Lutheran High School has been providing academic excellence in a Christ-centered environment for more than 40 years. For more information go to www.melhs.org.