Hats Off to My Fair Lady

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HATS OFF TO MY FAIR LADY

This fall’s production of My Fair Lady is the first mainstage musical the Dordt theatre department has put on in four years.

To director Teresa Ter Haar, head of Dordt’s theatre department, My Fair Lady is a complex classic.

"Characters trying to become more than they were born to be is a trope in our culture, and this show tells that story in such a delicious, interesting way," she says. "Higgins is a bit misogynistic, yet we still root for him to get the girl, and we also want to see Eliza transform herself and best Higgins. I want to tell the story in a way that honors what was originally written but doesn’t let it necessarily stay there."

Portraying leading man Henry Higgins in a more positive light is one of the ways in which Ter Haar and junior Zach Dirksen are making My Fair Lady more personal and multifaceted.

"I want to explore Higgins differently than Rex Harrison did in the film," says Dirksen, who plays Higgins. "I want to make him less of a villain, so that the audience is rooting for him even though he is a less-than-benevolent presence."

Senior Holly Hiemstra makes her Dordt theatre debut as Higgins’ young prodigy, Eliza. Hiemstra loved theatre in high school but thought she would be too busy to participate in college as a nursing major. Still, she decided to audition for My Fair Lady, and the rest is history.

"I love the transformation," says Hiemstra as she prepared for the show. "I play two different characters: a rough and uncultured girl who transforms into this elegant lady. I hope the audience falls in love with her at every stage of the show."

Ter Haar hopes that My Fair Lady delights the audience but also causes them to think about the complicated nature of relationships.

"The traditional Henry Higgins and Eliza Doolittle relationship in the musical is problematic by today’s standards," says Ter Haar. "In our production, we try to complicate that relationship in ways that open up our audience’s understanding of friendship, what it means to live in community, and of grace."

KATE HENRECKSON