



"Being the Jester was really fun because I got to act silly in front of the whole audience."
-Adam Dostlik

"Doing the whole run through because it was fun to see everything come together."
-Tea Grady

"During the performance there is a part where the Jester comes and sits on my lap and he accidentally knocked my crown off."
-Tiani Swallow

1. Turning his head towards the audience with a disgruntled look, junior Ben O'Connell performs as Roger Dunbar in the spring musical "Footloose." O'Connell's character was strict and rude toward the main character Ren, played by Seth Tack, because of Ren's teenage rebellion. (Photo by Ashley Long)



2. With all attention on the two students, junior Nick Ronker speaks to senior Hannah Miedema to wrap up a scene in the spring musical. "Footloose" performed three showings from April 22-24. (Photo by Ashley Long)



3. Giving junior Cameron Mitchell, who played Les Powell, a gentle smile, senior Abbie Rogers acts out her scene as Serena Swan in the fall play "Two Heads are Better than One." "My character was very over the top, and very not me," Rogers said. "It was fun to play someone who was extremely different than my personality." (Photo by Ashley Long)



5. Expressing his character through hand movements, junior Ben O'Connell plays Max Mercedes, the director of the movie being produced in the play. A total of 20 students acted in the fall play. (Photo by Ashley Long)



4. In one of the after-school practices, junior Madie Clabaugh goes through the choreography with her cast for the spring musical. "Finding costumes was one of the most fun and challenging parts of my role," Clabaugh said. "Jill Boeschen helped a lot with them and it was super fun to go to thrift stores and look for 80's clothing." (Photo by Kate Lichter)

Dominant: With his knees on the ground and a Bible in hand, junior Luke Safris performs his solo in the spring musical "Footloose" as Reverend Shaw Moore. "The most challenging part of the role was finding the balance between being a sad father and a serious and commanding presence over a congregation," Safris said. "Especially when I've never been either of those things." (Photo by Ashley Long)



7. Performing a scene with senior Lauren McDowell and junior Will Linder, senior Becca McDowell plays Beth Jeffers, an assistant to the director of the movie being made in the fall play. "The most challenging part of this role was the comedic part," Becca said. "Beth has a dry humor, one that not many people laugh at, so I had to get the comedic timing down perfectly." (Photo by Ashley Long)



6. While holding hands, senior Seth Tack and senior Sarah Henry sing the duet "Almost Paradise" in the spring musical. "The best thing about being in a musical is when you develop little things that aren't in the script with people on stage," Henry said. "Little things like looks you give each other and lines you give out on stage only to laugh about it behind stage later." (Photo by Ashley Long)

Cut Loose

Spring musical "Footloose" showcases inexperienced dancers

Before the spring musical junior Nick Ronker had only danced once at a wedding, and not very well. He had never sung except at home. "I was sitting at home one day and my mom said 'You should go out for the musical.' And I was like 'Okay, mom!'" Ronker said.

Ronker earned one of the leads, Willard, in the spring musical "Footloose." Of the 27 students in the musical only 13 had participated in show choir or had dance lessons. Ronker was the only lead to have neither dancing or singing experience.

"Footloose" was about a teenager named Ren who moved from big-city Chicago to a small Midwestern town. Ren quickly found out that the town made rock music and dancing illegal because of a deadly accident that happened years back. Ren, his love interest Ariel, and his classmates wanted to get rid of the strict laws, but only Ren had the courage to battle the minister who was responsible for the them. The musical is well known for its complex dancing and popular songs such as "Let's Hear It For The Boy" and "Footloose."

Senior Hannah Miedema played a friend of the female lead in the musical. Rusty had a crush on Willard, a country boy who cannot dance. In order to get better at dancing, Ronker, who played Willard, would go home, put on the music and practice dancing his solo on his own. "I know it is really nerdy," Ronker said. "But I had to make it look good and messy, like how Willard would have done it."

Cast members often compared Ronker to Willard because of his inexperience. "When I told the cast, 'I don't know how to dance!' They said, 'It's perfect!'" Ronker said.

Miedema, an Innovation member and participant in last year's musical, found it interesting to dance with Ronker. Because Miedema and Ronker were romantic interests in the musical, the two had multiple scenes where they would dance together. "At the beginning it was difficult dancing with Nick since he had no experience," Miedema said. "Once he got a hang of it, it really wasn't much of an issue. He picked it up pretty quickly. He always insisted that he couldn't dance, but I think he was a better dancer than he thought he was."

Show choir experience helped a lot of the actors and actresses. "I think the show choir kids got the dancing right away because we are used to getting choreography thrown at us," Senior Greta Hammond said. Hammond played Vi Moore, the wife of the minister and mother of Ariel. Hammond participated in seven of the high school musicals, starting in seventh grade.

The choreographer, Emma Henry, helped students like Ronker get through the dancing. "Knowing some of the students had no dance background I taught the first few choreography sessions at a fairly slow pace," Henry said. "I took time to repeat all of the material as many times as was needed." Henry, a 2014 graduate, was offered the job from director Jeremy Fitzpatrick because she choreographed the production "Thoroughly Modern Millie" three years prior.

While some students had problems with dancing, others like the lead actress senior Sarah Henry, who played Ariel, were having a different issue. "Going into it, I was way more worried about the acting than I was with the singing and dancing," Henry said. "I have so much more experience singing and dancing than acting." That worry seemed to disappear for Henry during the closing scene in her final live performance. Although unscripted, Henry and male lead senior Seth Tack would look at each other in the final dance and laugh together. "It may have come across as acting or being in a relationship," Henry said. "It was more like, 'Wow! We made it through another show. I am proud of you!' The stress of the musical seemed to go away in that moment."

Fitzpatrick entered the musical into the Iowa High School Musical Theatre Awards for the first time. Every night they performed, a judge watched and scored the musical in multiple categories. The winning schools performed a scene at the Awards Showcase in the Civic Center in June. The individual award winning students performed an opening with the other winners from different schools. The musical group won Outstanding Overall Performance, Outstanding Ensemble and Outstanding Student Orchestra. Hammond, Tack, Miedema and junior Luke Safris received Special Recognition for their performance in a leading role.

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