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HELL WEEK. "Hell week is nightmare. You spend five days getting next to no sleep, having six hour rehearsals and there's crowded changing spaces, layers of stage makeup and so much rehearsing you think you'll never be able to act again. But as soon as the show is over, you can't stop smiling because you know that it was all worth it," Kailey Stiers ('17) said.

**PREACHING.** Telling a story about the handsome preacher that came to town is a chracter played by **Sam Hanson ('16)**. In order to pull off such a dramatic scene, the actresses needed to stay focused. "It's (hard work) worth it for all the times you nail your character's emotion because you let go in the scene and really reacted like your character," Hanson said.

Photo by Vanessa Kime



**SOARIN', FLYIN'.** Pursuing the character of an ex-preacher in *The Diviners* is **Gabe Gotera ('17)**, who never wishes luck upon his castmates, but for good reason. "Before a show, I go around to reassure people, though I don't tell them 'good luck,' but that 'we've got this' because up there on our stage, luck has no place. Our performance will be dictated by the hard work and effort that we put into every rehearsal," Gotera said. Photo by Vanessa Kime

# The Divine Star

## Senior gives performance as opposite gender

Looking into the mirror, **Claire Chenoweth ('16)** wiped off her makeup and pulled on her overalls. She pulled on a binder that wrapped tightly around her abdomen, restricting her from breathing freely. Her once mature composure receded and her inner child emerged, creating a curious and playful character. She placed all of the stress, jokes and knowledge she experienced that day aside, for now she was no longer a teenage girl; she was a 14-year-old boy with a mental disability.

*The Diviners* was a challenge for everybody; it takes place in the 1930s, the language is not modern and it's a rather mature piece — but Chenoweth's role was the most challenging to play. "I had to practice pitching my voice really low and making sure it didn't get really high when I was excited. I also had to push my voice a lot in terms of volume because there are a lot of scenes where I become hysterical or I'm really upset, so it's definitely made me a little hoarse, and I've definitely had to adjust to it," she said, but that change in her voice was only a small obstacle for the talented girl. "For the show, I'm wearing a binder, so I do have to compress my chest and keep everything really flat during the show, and the binder really constricts your breathing. I had to be really aware of that."

Besides Chenoweth's physical difficulties in pursuing a diverse character, the struggle in pursuing a young boy with an unknown disability was even harder. The character refers to himself in third person, asks questions that are difficult to answer and refuses to wear shoes, which leads to an excessive itching in the young boy's feet.

"There is some disability or difficulty that Buddy has. I've read all the notes in my script, but the writer doesn't specify what it is. It drew a little bit from autism, but nothing really specific, and that was the really hard part because I don't intend to offend anybody. Buddy is not stupid, and I think that people will worry that I will make him come across that way. He is not stupid. He's just kind of more like a child," Chenoweth said.

Chenoweth has been involved in plays since her first

year at the high school, but she had never played such a challenging role. "This is the biggest role I've ever had. I've had a few lead-type roles before, but those were all female, and those were all comedic. I've always been the funny person, so this is my first big dramatic role I've had."

Even though the hard work and time spent in participating in this production was stressful, the role only seemed to deepen Chenoweth's desire to act. "I think it's made me work a lot harder and making sure I can do a dramatic role because I wasn't sure I could do it. That's meant a lot. It's also reinforced the idea that I want to be an acting minor in college. I don't think I can major in it, but I want it to be my minor and my focus. It just feels affirming to me because in some capacity it can be a dramatic or a really emotionally draining role."

Though the strenuous role required perfection, Chenoweth made it easier to portray Buddy by loving the character and being able to relate to him. "The whole thing about acting is like, if you get into your character enough or into your situation, you kind of forget what person you are. If I'm working hard enough in a practice, the line blurs, and I forget if I'm Buddy or I'm Claire, and that's really exciting," Chenoweth said.

Because of Chenoweth's adoration for Buddy, the character showed through. "I love playing Buddy because he goes through a lot; you can tell that people think he's strange and people don't respect him. People see he has use, but they talk down to him, so he's had to deal with all of that, but you can still see he's enchanted by the world. If somebody is kind to him, he will love them unconditionally. He understands things. Not everything. It might take him longer to get things, but he's a lot wiser than anybody gives him credit for."

At the end of the play, Chenoweth looked into the mirror and saw herself, a teenage girl, but from now on, every time she gets an itch on her foot or asks a question that has no answer to it, she will find Buddy.

by Leah Forsblom



"The whole thing about acting is like, if you get into your character enough or into your situation, you kind of forget what person you are."

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**WE ARE NEVER GETTING BACK TOGETHER.** Playing a fed-up girlfriend is **Albie Nicol ('17)** in *Variations*, a one-act play that showed the many ways two people can break up. *Photo Vanessa Kime*

# Moving On & Moving Away



**GOOD\*OL BUDDY.** Played by **Claire Chenoweth ('16)**, Buddy gets pulled away for a bath by his older sister, played by **Brooke Prohaska ('17)**. *Photo by Vanessa Kime*

**JUST IN TIME.** Checking the time for her train's departure is a character **Katarina Walther ('16)** plays. Walther said she was pleased with her role this year. "Even though I had a small part, not having to focus on remembering lines made it easier for me to play around with characterization and the acting aspect," **Walther** said. *Photo by Vanessa Kime*



**SEEU YOU LATER.** Ready to leave the train station to embark on the road to college is **Olivia Mickey ('16)**. *Photo by Vanessa Kime*

Fall Play **61**

Designed by Leah Forsblom & Vanessa Kime

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