

Local theater production modernizes a consummate classic

News [FOLLOW NEWS](#) | January 7, 2020



Sophie Dingle [FOLLOW](#)



Reed Anstine plays the role of Tiger Lily in "Pan." She is a ninth grader at Steamboat Mountain High School and a SAA Academy-level dancer, training 20-plus hours each week in classical ballet, pointe, modern, west African, Latin and Hip Hop.

Courtesy

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS — What does it mean to grow up? Is it scary? Would it be fun to be young forever? These are just a few of the themes that Steamboat Arts Academy students will explore in their upcoming production, "Pan: Neverland and Beyond".

The show is a modern take on J.M. Barrie's classic "Peter Pan."

“We didn’t want to do the traditional version of Peter Pan,” said Celina Taylor, Steamboat Arts Academy owner and artistic director. “Some of the ideas are very antiquated for modern children, such as a fairy and a girl fighting over a boy who isn’t even mature enough to know what’s going on.”

Instead, Taylor sat down and wrote new dialogue for her version of the show, based on what she knew of each of her students and their personalities.

The only catch? There are nearly 100 students in Taylor’s production.

“It was kind of a huge undertaking,” Taylor says laughing. “I made sure that every student who takes a class with us at Steamboat Arts Academy had at least one or two speaking lines and a named part in the performance.”

Students who enrolled in a dance or theater class through Steamboat Arts Academy in the fall or winter were automatically cast in the show, based on what part they wanted to play and what their strengths and weaknesses are.

i If you go

When: 6:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 10 and 1:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 11

Where: Steamboat Springs High School Auditorium

Tickets: \$25/adult, \$17.50/children, under 5 are free

The academy, which officially opened in 2018 with the goal of igniting passion for the arts, offers acting, voice and dance as well as various classes including playwriting, songwriting and costuming.

“The kids are so excited for this and we always work really hard to incorporate their ideas into how the production is finalized,” Taylor said.

While that might not be traditional in theater, it was important to Taylor that it was done purposely at Steamboat Arts Academy.

“The kids are more emotionally invested when they can see pieces of their own creation in the show,” Taylor said. “And they learn more. They can see how everything works together in theater.”

After rewriting the play to come up with a completely original storyline, Taylor created a show in which Peter has to come to terms with whether or not staying a child forever is actually a good thing.

“All the characters have a realization that they have to be true to themselves, that being a good friend doesn’t mean that you just have to go along with whatever your friends want you to do,” she said.

The production includes the perfect trifecta of singing and dancing — according to Taylor, nearly every genre of music is included — and, of course, acting.

And while some of the students are seasoned, such as Jake Washburn who plays Peter Pan and Delaney Parker in the role of the crocodile, others are first-timers.

Washburn, who moved here from Durango last year, has been doing theater for nearly 10 years.

“Steamboat Arts Academy is a really great program,” he said. “When I moved here last year, it was a great way to meet new people. It’s inclusive to anyone and everyone who wants to learn theater and that welcoming spirit is found throughout the entire program.”

The students, who have been rehearsing since October, are ready and excited for opening night.

“A lot of the students have never acted before and are trying something new,” Washburn said. “It’s going to be spectacular.”

Sophie Dingle is a contributing writer for Steamboat Pilot & Today.

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