

**ANASTASIA**, from page 1A

had it the youngest daughter, Anastasia, had somehow escaped death. Several imposters surfaced in the years after claiming to be the Grand Duchess.

The story was revisited and rewritten for Broadway by Terrence McNally with music and lyrics by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty. It premiered on Broadway in April 2017.

Last weekend the Solon High School Drama Department presented Anastasia, The New Broadway Musical in the Center for the Arts.

“I believe Anastasia is a musical that embraces love, loss, and perseverance through the challenging parts of life,” said director Sami McAtee. “We all know that life has its ups and downs, but it’s how you get back up and dust yourself off after the fact.” In the show Anastasia (known as Anya) finds herself as an orphan with an unknown past. Through the help of a pair of scheming conmen, Dmitry and Vlad, she is not only able to find herself again, but is also able to answer her grandmother’s dying wish and find love herself, in the process, McAtee explained. “They had to face challenges from Gleb (a General who pursues her) and the Soviet Army, as she was not supposed to survive. Even though the world had changed, from what she once knew, she now knows that she is Anastasia, and she has the power to rewrite her future story.”

McAtee said when researching and looking into shows to present she (and other directors) spend much time digging into various options. “We think about what strengths our incoming cast, as a whole, has, and what area of the musical we want to showcase more. Will it be a tech heavy show, more musically focused, or more complex blocking and choreography. This show checked all of the boxes. When I was listening to and researching Anastasia, I was blown away by the musical numbers. They were beautiful and the messages within them were so clear. Not even ten minutes into the show, I knew it was the one. I called all the directors right away and said, I found the one! I knew our students could embrace the story line, and they could use their beautiful voices to bring the story to life.”

Auditions were held in May with practice starting in late August.

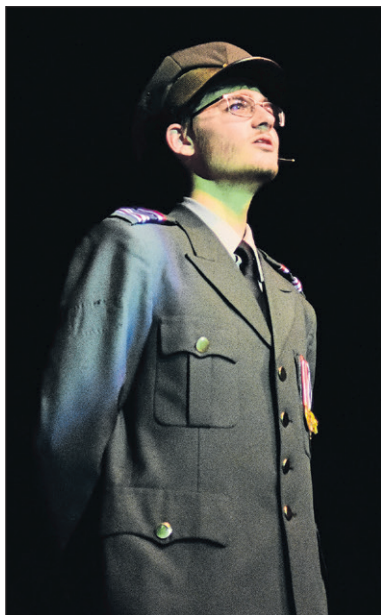
“The kiddos have all been working so very hard this fall and the hard work has completely paid off,” she said. “All of our cast and crew have been phenomenal. They have all stepped up, came prepared, and were so ready to put on a show for the community.”

McAtee added, “Sometimes the community just notices the actors on stage, but the truth about a musical production is that there are so many working parts. Not only do we have talented and dedicated actors on stage, but we also have musical directors (Joel Foreman and Desmond Cervantez) and pit musicians that play the beautiful musical numbers from below the stage. Without them, we would have no music to sing to! We also have an amazing costume director (June Maiers) who spends hours creating and designing all of the costumes and accessories for all actors. Lastly, our technical director (Jeni Tucker) as well as her tech crew, make lights and sound come to life. They build the set, call cues, and position set pieces



Chris Umscheid • Staff Photos

Dmitry (Brady Evers, at left), Vlad (Jakob Bovenmyer), and Anya (Kerrigan Lyons) dance with cast and chorus members during the Solon Drama Department’s production of Anastasia. The musical, based on events during the Russian Revolution and its aftermath, was performed last weekend in the Solon Center for the Arts.



Gleb (Daniel Tearse), a General in the Red Army, laments rumors that never seem to end, his father’s participation in the execution of the Romanov family, and the possibility that Anya might be Princess Anastasia in the Solon Drama Department’s production of Anastasia.

on stage. I need all of them to make the shows all come together and in the musical theatre world, it truly does take a village!”

Kerrigan Lyons was Anya/Anastasia, Brady Evers was Dmitry, Jakob Bovenmyer was Vlad, and Daniel Tearse played Gleb. Also in the cast were Sabina Allen (The Dowager Empress), Liona Rocca (Countess Lily), Kayla Young (Tsarina Alexandra), Mia Stahle (Olga Romanov/Marketeer), Maria Milliman (Tatiana Romanov/Marketeer), Grace Ivey (Maria Romanov/Drunk), Emma Olsem (Little Anastasia), David Allen (Little Alexei), Grace Fiala (Teen Anastasia/Drunk), Ben Duckett (Count Leopold/Sergei), and Joshua Milliman (Gorlinsky).

Camdyn Lyons, Trevin Wilcox, Kassie Rummel, Isabella Miller, Peyton Knight, Lucy Miller, Nora Dibble, Kira Burkum, Addison Burden, Reagan Seaton, Logan Rudish, Emerson Scott, Olivia Bonnema, Madisen Kleppe, Grant Bumsted, and Elinor Werner also appeared on stage with chorus members Paige Anderson, Taryn Anderson, Marin Ashbacher, Chloe Benjamin, Andi Billerbeck, Rayne Dooley, Jordyn Dunbar, Kate Ellison, Ashley Farnsworth, Evann Frerks, Grace Fiala, Madyn Hahn, Morgan Holm, Delaney Kriz, Callie Levin, Camden Lyons, Alannah Mahoney, Jackson Messenger, Kyla Pizzini-Mercer, Kate Richards, Kassie Rummel, Layla



Danger from the Bolsheviks: The Romanov family huddles together for safety as the Bolsheviks arrive to execute them in a scene from the Solon Drama Department’s production of Anastasia. Tsar Nicholas II and the Romanov family (a dynasty lasting three centuries), were executed by Vladimir Lenin’s Red Army (Bolsheviks) in July 1918.



Gleb (Daniel Tearse), a General in the Red Army, announces that St. Petersburg is now Leningrad.

ShIPLEY, Madison Singbeil, Piper Stahle, Cora Sutton, Mallory Wigle, and Trevin Wilcox.

The director gave a shout out to the entire cast and crew, thanking them for their commitment, determination, and passions to always strive for greatness. “Our work and preparations are not always easy, but you always give 110% to achieve great things. The talent and work ethic of this cast has exceeded my expectations, as always! They sound amazing, look amazing, and make me so very proud! Each practice you brought joy, laughter, and smiles to my face. The relationships and memories you made here will be ones you remember and cherish for a lifetime! I know you all will continue to do amazing things in the future, and I am so excited to always be cheering you on, no matter where your musical journey takes you.”



Countess Lily (Liona Rocca) helps The Dowager Empress (Sabina Allen) after she has learned Lenin’s Bolshevik Red Army executed Tsar Nicholas II and the Romanov family, thus ending a three-century dynasty and paving the way for communism.



Vlad (Jakob Bovenmyer), a conman, tries to educate Anya (Kerrigan Lyons) about the history of the Romanov family as fellow con Dmitry (Brady Evers) looks on.