

CSU Theatre brings classic 'Christmas Story' to life

Written by Stacy Nick
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'A Christmas Story'

When: opens today through Dec. 15 with shows at 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays (no performance on Nov. 22)

Where: University , 1400 Remington St., Fort Collins

Cost: \$18; \$8 for CSU students and youths 17 and younger

Information: (970) 491-2787 or www.csutickets.com

On Thursdays, CSU students can receive free tickets; space is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis.

The story of Ralphie and his efforts to possess a Red Ryder BB gun is one many of us are more than familiar with. Now, CSU's Theatre Department is bringing Philip Grecian's stage version of the 1983 classic comedy film "A Christmas Story" to life.

While CSU doesn't usually do holiday theatrical performances, CSU Director of Theatre Walt Jones said it was time. And choosing "A Christmas Story" was a no-brainer.

"The play is so iconic and people know the dialogue by heart," Jones said.

While not the musical version that is taking Broadway by storm, this version is a must for those who loved the film, he added. Beloved references including Ovaltine, the leg lamp, Chinese turkey, and fire departments and soap poisoning all show up.

Set in the weeks leading up to Christmas, in 1939, in the fictional northern Indiana town of Hohman, the play follows a young Ralphie, who desperately wants a Red Ryder BB Gun. Thwarted by the constant concern that he will "shoot his eye out," Ralphie plots a way to ensure that one is under his .

Audiences should expect a performance that follows the movie very closely, said director Laura Jones.

"The audience will recognize many of their favorite moments from the film, such as Ralphie's obsession with the official legendary Red Ryder BB gun everyone is sure he'll use to 'shoot his eye out' — as well as his translation of Little Orphan Annie's secret code after receiving his mail-order decoder pin," said Jones. "And of course, when his father wins the infamous leg lamp, much to his mother's chagrin; and not to mention the theft of the turkey by the Bumpus hounds who live next door."

However, bringing the story to the stage does offer the audience a new way to experience it.

While the film's writer, Jean Shepherd, did the narration of the reminiscing Ralphie for the movie, in the play, the adult Ralphie is an actual character played by CSU theater alumnus James Burns, Jones said. The show also features children from CSU's summer theater camp "Kids Do It All," including Andrew Nosler and Nate Wozniak, who share the role of young Ralphie.