

Starting up a musical tune, junior James Marx looks to junior Collin Richardson. Marx was cast as himself.

photo by Mike Abell

In a dual role, junior Jackson Spencer speaks to the audience. For his first appearance in the play, he walked in front of the audience and "baptized" everyone in the front row.

photo by Chora Apostolakos

Singing her solo, senior Elena Rogers sits in the spotlight with junior Collin Richardson. Most cast members had solos in the play.

photo by Chora Apostolakos

ROCK N ROLL RELIGION

godspell musical a lesson on love, forgiveness for cast, crew, audience

The lights dimmed and the crowd fell silent as "Godspell" was about to start. The stage reflected a world of evil, with Nazi flags and swastikas, Ku Klux Klan masks, pictures of Osama Bin Laden and pictures of the Twin Towers burning.

"As you walk into the theatre, you see a world of hate, and as the story unfolds it is ripped down to show the beauty of the world," theatre director Mark Swezey said.

The actors came on stage, and Jesus, played by junior Collin Richardson, started to teach them about God and heaven. While the musical was based on the gospel of Matthew, it included contemporary music, lots of lights and bright colorful costumes.

"Godspell" has always been received well. It's a rock musical, so it has music appealing to students. It's fun, but it gets serious at the end," Swezey said.

Unlike most plays, "Godspell" was unique in that it involved audience interaction.

"There's a lot of improv [in 'Godspell']," senior Elena Rogers, who played Peggy, said. "This is the first show that I've done where I've been able to go out into the audience and pick on people, which is fun."

At the end of the first act, actors went into the audience and pulled people up on stage to dance with them.

"[My favorite part is] right before intermission when we sing "Light of the World." It really connects the characters to each other and to the audience. It's the song that unites everyone," Rogers said.

The cast of 13 people became close, had fun and members were always there for each other.

"After a bad day, we'd all go get ice cream," Richardson said.

Despite many years of theater experience for some members of the cast, other cast members had never been on stage. Senior Leah Heathcote, who played Sonia, had been in every musical since freshman year.

"It all started in first grade, when we had a musical with Mrs. Chavez, and it was the first time I've ever sang in front of people, and it appealed to me," Heathcote said.

This was Richardson's first play.

"I've never been in a play before, but it seemed like a really fun, cool thing to do with my friends," Richardson said.

Being the only freshman on the cast, Rose Smithson, who played Robin, had a lot to live up to.

"I like being the only freshman because I have a lot of mentors that I can go to for help now," Smithson said.

The cast spent every day after school from 3-6 p.m. rehearsing.

"It is definitely a lot of hard work; you have to give up 90 percent of your life. I think it's been a good experience on how to work with people and perseverance," Richardson said.

After four performances, the cast and crew's hard work paid off when they learned "Godspell" had been selected as one of four plays to be performed at the Kansas State Thespians Conference.

"I freaked out when I found out. It is so amazing to be a freshman and experience the same honor as seniors," Smithson said.

by Emily Wollard

During the end of the first act, the cast of "Godspell" sang "Light of the World" together. Multiple people had solos within the song, including junior Jacob Elliott. "Godspell is not a traditional show...we all got to know each other and bond, and it showed on stage and made for a better show," Elliott said.

photo by Chora Apostolakos

Singing a group song, seniors Leah Heathcote, Alex Rhein and Christina Rabb, juniors Jacob Elliott and Rendi Doran and freshman Rose Smithson dance along with the music. "Godspell" had a rock musical twist to it.

photos by Chora Apostolakos



Favoritment

In the beginning of the play, senior Leah Heathcote and the cast of "Godspell" acted out the things junior Collin Richardson spoke. Richardson played Jesus while the others played themselves.
photos by Chora Apostolakos



"One of the nights they were pulling the fly down, and it hit the set, and they had to quickly pull it back up."
freshman Laura Kariuki



"When there was downtime the crew would all sit around in one big circle and wait for cues. It really brought us together and was a great bonding experience. Now that we're going to the state conference, we get to do it all over again."

junior Remy Lierz



"During Patron Night, Collin was playing piano, and his book fell hitting a button, which triggered a drum beat. [It was] a little mistake that you couldn't do anything about, but it was covered up pretty well."

senior Dillon Palmer

Using props to add to the show, the cast of "Godspell" runs through a dance routine for the audience. The backstage crew used new effects for the play, including new lighting techniques as well as fog and smoke machines. "I thought [the new effects] added depth to the show and made it look more professional. They helped convey the message 'Godspell' was trying to teach," senior Leah Heathcote said.

photo by Chora Apostolakos

