

Legally Blonde
By: Samantha Yancey

The curtain dropped. Senior Lauren McDonald rushed off the stage to begin her next costume change. Less than a minute later, the curtain rose and Elle Woods stepped onto the stage. With 18 costume changes throughout the entire musical, McDonald had to cooperate with the costumes crew to ensure that the show ran smoothly.

“I had to change really fast and work with the costumes crew to make it easier for them to change me,” McDonald said. “That was probably the most difficult part because if I didn’t come in on my cue, there was an awkward silence.”

Making sure that didn’t happen and that the show went as planned was the job of production manager senior Christa Brown. Overseeing a cast of 49 and more than 20 crew members was not easy, according to Brown.

“It was just kind of crazy,” Brown said. “It was probably one of the most difficult productions North has ever done.”

With difficult scene and microphone changes, the cast had to spend two rehearsals dedicated to practicing them. The musical aspect wasn’t easy either; with music having over 202 key changes, practice was necessary.

“It was hard scenically, microphone changes were crazy and the music was incredibly difficult,” director Maureen Davis said. “It’s a fun musical though. I had no idea what I was getting into when we picked it.”

With three-hour rehearsals every day, homework and other school activities became harder to manage. Trying to stay on top of schoolwork while learning lines and lyrics was a challenge for many of the cast members.

“The hardest part was learning how to manage my time after rehearsal,” McDonald said. “I didn’t really have time to do a lot of extra things.”

Time management wasn’t the only problem the cast faced, though. While spending so much time together, sickness spread easily throughout the cast.

“We had kids sick the week of the show and the week before the show,” Davis said.

One of the main concerns of the cast was for junior Carina White. Having lost her voice to laryngitis, rest and recovery were vital. With the possibility of not being able to perform as Paulette, the Irish hair stylist, White agreed that downtime was necessary.

“I couldn’t stop singing,” White said. “Committing to rest was the hardest part, and then knowing that I might not actually be in the show.”

With scratchy throats and coarse coughs, ill cast members did everything possible to try and keep their voices for the show. Tea, cough drops and plenty of water were an important part of recovery.

“I’d be drinking tea, like two cups before the show and drinking water constantly,” senior Austin Skibbie said, “but I think overall it ended up being fine. I think it helped me get more into my character by trying to focus so hard on overcoming other obstacles.”

Getting into character was another one of the challenges the cast faced. Through exploring different parts, the cast was able to grow in their acting skills. Being able to become a completely different character was difficult and exciting for senior Skylar Cowdry.

“It’s really fun,” Cowdry said. “You think it’s going to be uncomfortable, but then when you get up there it’s really nice and it’s a good way to express yourself as a different person.”

Not only did the cast learn more about themselves, they also developed as people too. By playing a preppy sorority girl, a snide lawyer, or a hair stylist with a heavy accent, cast members were able to learn from their roles.

“For me, it’s kind of like Elle Woods taught me more than anyone else,” McDonald said. “I had to learn to become her character. We’re alike in a lot of ways; we’re both stubborn and want what we want. It helped me realize some of my flaws by playing her.”

For senior Joel Steelman, portraying the part of the cynical professor Callahan was a fun way to become a new person too.

“Callahan was a mean person,” Steelman said, “but it was fun being mean. Getting into your character and performing, it’s just exhilarating.”

Being able to perform wasn’t taken for granted by White though. Still learning more about her acting abilities, White said listening to her voice teacher and doctor helped her most in recovering.

“I learned that things aren’t always going to work out the way I planned them to,” White said. “Listen to your voice teacher when she tells you to stop singing so you feel better. Doctors know what they’re talking about.”

Although unplanned obstacles and sicknesses were a major set back in producing the show, the cast and crew were able to push through and represent North Theater.

“We just have such high expectations for our department,” White said. “You have to maintain the reputation of North Theater, but it’s so fun.”