

Chippewa Valley drama group ready for 'Clue'

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By Thomas Franz 



Chippewa Valley High School students act out a scene in "Clue: The Play," March 8. The school's drama club will host productions of the show March 30-31. (Photo by Deb Jacques)

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CLINTON TOWNSHIP — The drama group at Chippewa Valley High School is tackling a new set of challenges as it prepares for its spring productions of "Clue: The Play."

The show that is based off of the board game and 1980s movie is giving students an opportunity to portray violent murderers with an element of dark humor.

That is a sharp contrast from its production of "Rosie the Riveter" last spring, said drama club chair Nick Marinello, but the students have embraced the challenge and are ready to perform a very different type of show.

"Humor in general is a different skill set," Marinello said. "In comedy, if you get the timing off by a beat, you lose the whole joke. It's not always something that they get inherently, but they've picked it up very well."

About 40 students will be a part of the performances March 30-31 at the Chippewa Valley auditorium, 18300 19 Mile Road in Clinton Township. The show is double cast, which means that about 20 students will be a part of the March 30 show, and the other 20 will be in the March 31 show.

One of the lead characters in the show is Mrs. White, who will be played by Chippewa junior Nina LoGrasso. She said her character is quite different from previous ones she's played.

"I'm used to playing very bubbly and energetic and outgoing characters. She's very quiet and reserved," LoGrasso said of Mrs. White. "She's constantly anxious and is a bit of a darker character. You realize throughout the show that they're all being blackmailed for different reasons, and her reasons are kind of interesting as to why she's being blackmailed."

In addition to blackmailing, the show follows a group of strangers who are brought together in a gothic New England mansion in the 1950s.

Their mission is to solve the mystery of what they all have in common, which turns out to be that they're all connected to each other, to the murder victims and the murderers.

“So they all have to solve the puzzle, figure out who did it, where and with what, before the police show up. That’s kind of the ticking clock,” Marinello said. “There’s pressure to solve this before the police show up, but there’s more murders that are happening as they work to solve the other murders.”

Playing dead is something not many Chippewa actors and actresses have had to do in the past. In senior Lukas Kampel’s case, his character is dead for a big portion of the show.

“I don’t move,” Kampel said. “I breathe slowly so I hope nobody sees I’m still breathing, and I actually have to lie there for about 45 minutes.”

While Kampel must lie still for a long time, others in the show will be active on stage for the duration of the performance without a break. That creates a unique test of stamina for the cast members.

“By and large, for the entire two acts, the entire cast and the murder victims are on the stage for the whole time, which is a different challenge for them because they don’t get a moment to get water or to get a break other than the intermission. But, they’ve handled it really well,” Marinello said.

For other key roles, senior Ethan Gettings will play Wadsworth, and senior Dominick Panetta will act as Col. Mustard. Freshman Curtis Howard will play a cop who appears at the end of the show.

“This year (Panetta) kind of jumped into theater. This is his first play, so he’s new to the stage but he’s doing a great job,” Marinello said. “Curtis (Howard) has been to every rehearsal and has been a real workhorse. He does anything you ask him to.”

Both shows will be at 7 p.m. March 30 and 31. Tickets cost \$10 and will only be sold at the door.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Staff Writer Thomas Franz covers Macomb Township, Chippewa Valley Schools and the Macomb County Board of Commissioners for the Macomb Township Chronicle. He also covers sports primarily for the Shelby-Utica News. He has worked for C & G Newspapers since 2013 and attended Michigan State University.
