Willy Wonka - Spring Musical 2017

Come with me and you'll be in a world of pure imagination

Willy Wonka is the story of Charlie Bucket (Clayton Allen), a poor boy who lives with his parents and four grandparents. Everything changes when Willy Wonka (Kevin Simonson), the world’s leading chocolatier and candy maker, holds a contest and invites five children to visit his factory and receive a lifetime supply of chocolate. It’s a story of positive thinking and resolve, a well-watched musical for all, children and adult alike.

This year, retired art teacher, TR Kennard replaces the beloved Jacob Pactor as our theatre department’s director. Performing this task couldn’t have been easy, and a classic like Willy Wonka is, in itself, a challenge. However, Mr. Kennard was well equipped to handle this, as he has 30 years of theatre experience. His passion teaching shines through in this rendition of the Roald Dahl’s masterpiece.

A great team seems to have formed behind the scenes of this production and are a large part of what makes this show a success. Kimberly Martin, who student taught under Amy Mohl (our resident music expert), took the place as the assistant director. “If you come prepared you’re all set, for whatever in life. If you come over prepared, you’re even more set.” The glorious Barb Whitis has, once again, signed on to choreograph what promises to be a fantastic show. Nate Hall returns as technical manager and elected junior Kaitlyn Sears (me) as stage manager. Senior Claire Shutters was chosen to be this year’s student director and junior Kaylea Wright is once again prop master.

As far as the cast goes, we are joined by many old faces. Senior Kayelyn Woodlock rejoins the theatre department as Mrs. Gloop to complete her high school theatre career spanning eight consecutive productions. As her final show, this was a good fit, as she connects Wonka to her childhood.

“Growing up I think it was one of my favorite movies,” reflects Woodlock. “I could not go to sleep with my favorite movies,” reflects Woodlock. “I could not go to sleep with this one in mind.”

“What promises to be a year that would be really successful, a year that really needs support too.”

And two, people don’t realize it but we work our butts off. We really do! And I feel like sometimes that

THINK POSITIVE. Willy Wonka, Charlie, and many of the children and adult characters from Willy Wonka gather for a quick photo in advance of tonight’s opening performance. Photo by Kait Sears.

Inspiration and beyond: The untimely loss of musical genius

George Michael and his lasting legacy

“At the Brit Awards, Michael’s friends and former members of Wham! Andrew Ridgeley, and dancers/backup singers Pepsi and Shirlie all gathered on stage to pay tribute to their dear friend. “His is a legacy of unquestionable brilliance which will resonate years to come,” Ridgeley stated proudly. As one of the most unique and inspiring cultural forces of the decades since the eighties, fans everywhere have faith this statement will prove true time and time again.

“The boys from Wham! will help you reach that goal.”

From Michael’s musical beginnings in Wham! with his high school best friend (Ridgeley) to his revolutionary solo career, George Michael was always ahead of his time in many aspects. In March of 1985, Wham! traveled for a ten day visit to China. The visit included two concerts and these
Helping tuition come to fruition

Paying for college just got a little easier

Preparing to go to college can be a daunting task even before having to pay for it, but actually being able to afford tuition poses an immense challenge even after being accepted. One way to alleviate some of the stress of paying for university tuition is through the acquisition of scholarships, but many find this to be daunting as well, as many scholarships provided at the school are highly competitive and selective. This is where websites such as Fastweb.com are exceedingly useful. Fastweb is a website which provides personalized, realistic, and profitable scholarships to students of all ages, as it is never too early to start planning for college.

To create a Fastweb account, students provide their GPA, planned college major, interests, activities participated in, and other relevant information to receive a personalized dashboard of scholarships that fit their interests. Fastweb provides a database of thousands of scholarships from all fields and types of organizations. By simply scrolling through the main page students can easily view the amount, and the required submission to see if they are interested.

This exposure to such a wide array of scholarships is invaluable to someone looking to ease the pressure of paying to a university tuition. There is an extreme variety, ranging from projects, to essays, to simple submissions. For instance, last Halloween, Fastweb provided access to a $1,000 scholarship for carving a pumpkin, taking a picture and submitting it. Merely inviting a friend to the site provides the applicant with a chance to win a $500 scholarship. Going to the “Meet Our Winners” page of the website shows a list of such winners to inspire applicants and show how easy obtaining scholarships can be, and although such scholarships may seem menial initially, since Fastweb makes it so easy to apply for so many of these small scholarships they quickly add up and can significantly lessen the burden of paying a tuition. In fact Forbes recently published an article praising it as “One of the top resources for finding help paying for college,” and the Today Show stated that “Money 911’s experts agree, a great website to check for scholarships is Fastweb.”

Reflecting back on a music tragedy

Loss of musicians like George Michael hard to fathom

This era marked the first concerts to be performed by a Western pop group in the country. The boys from Wham! were received with great enthusiasm from the youthful crowds, and a great deal of the tour was filmed and packaged into a small documentary called “Foreign Skies: Wham! In China”.

“Cause I gotta have faith...” As far as Michael’s solo career, he was known for pushing boundaries with risque subject matter in his songs. He inspired many other professional musicians including Greg Hind of the Little River Band.

“As a professional musician I covered many of his songs including Faith [...] and I once stayed up all night long to learn to play and sing Kissing a Fool,” Hind recalled. Both of these songs were off of the blockbuster album “Faith” released in 1987. Upon the album’s release, it remained high in the charts with the title track peaking at number one on the US Billboard Hot 100 chart. The album earned its keep as it was packed with hits as well as quality album tracks. Today, artists such as Michael Buble cover songs such as “Kissing a Fool”, and in the episode “Here Comes Treble” of “The Office”, an employee named Andy Bernard dresses up as Michael and sings a bit of “Faith”.

“These are just a few examples of how Michael and his music are still relevant today. Sometimes the clothes do not make the man...” Throughout the majority of Michael’s young life into Wham! And into his earlier solo career, he struggled with his inner self, discovering, and finally coming out about his sexuality. Several celebrities, including Melissa Etheridge, have cited Michael as being an inspiration and, “opening up a lot of doors for LGBT people to feel confident about themselves.”

In addition to his inspirational influence on people, Michael was also an extremely generous supporter of many charity groups that worked to fight and inform about HIV/AIDS, to provide money for children in need around the world, and to assist with treatment for cancer patients. These acts of kindness were done without much, or any publicity, but have not gone unnoticed by those who were helped by his selfless desire to help others.

“So I’m never gonna dance again, the way I danced with you...” Artists such as George Michael arguably do not come around as often as it seems they should, but in the end that’s what makes people special. His achievements and inspiration will continue to live on to be known by countless people around the world and he is undoubtedly greatly missed.
Willy Wonka opens tonight
Popular spring musical will brighten your day

Many exemplary sports performances capped off a strong finish to the winter sports season at Speedway. The sports seasons for boys swimming, wrestling, and most recently boys basketball resulted in rewarding experiences.

For the wrestlers, three Speedway athletes participated in the Perry Meridian Regional. At the end of the day, senior Jaden Powell was rewarded for a season of hard work with a first place podium finish in the Heavyweight division. His efforts earned him a return trip to the New Castle Semistate. Two victories at New Castle would earn him a ticket to the State finals.

As a junior, Powell won a first round match but lost in the second round. As a senior, Powell defeated Carmel’s Jack Williams in just 43 seconds to advance to the second round. The top seed would next face another talented senior, Franklin County’s Tyler Selm. Powell’s dreams for a ticket to Banker’s Life Fieldhouse again fell short.

In Boys Swimming, the boys finished their season with a very solid sixth place finish in the Brownsburg Sectional. Junior Geoff Smith posted some of his best times of the year, reaching the finals of the 200 free where he finished seventh, and fifth in the 100 free.

Freshman Jared Hutcheson established a sixth place finisher in the 100 breast, the only freshman to place in the finals of the event. And the 400 free relay team of Hutcheson, Smith, and seniors Dan Davis and Jackson Harris posted a respectable fifth place finish to help the team finish strong.

The boys basketball team hosted the 2A version of Hoosier Hysteria last week. While the boys struggled this season, last week’s efforts were noteworthy. On Tuesday, the boys defeated Shortridge as expected, setting up a tilt with highly respected Broad Ripple. The Plugs upset the 16-5 Rockets, 65-62, setting up a sectional championship showdown with Heritage Christian.

The musical will premiere tonight. Both the Friday and Saturday show will start promptly at 7 p.m., here in Jordan Auditorium. The ticket price is $10, with a discount to $5 for students and senior citizens. See you there!
Live, local, lovely
Sister duo with ethereal, folksy sound

Big or small band, the excitement before a concert is always the same: a fluttering feeling that is present throughout the day leading up to your lively evening. On the last Saturday in February, my sister Amelia and I went downtown to the Old National Centre to see a local sister duo we’d seen nearly a year before in the same place.

Lily and Madeleine performed Saturday in the cozy, 500-person-max Deluxe Room. Both now in their early twenties, sisters Lily and Madeleine have been a performing couplet for years, with three full-length studio albums on their records. This summer, they will open for John Mellen camp’s tour.

As for what their songs entail, Lily and Madeleine usually go for haunting ballads of heartbreak, happiness, and metaphorical stories of personal experiences most high school girls might have, drawing inspiration from their personal lives for songwriting. While not as explicit in their life events as, say, Taylor Swift (nor as scandalous), the sisters’ songwriting is vague enough to be applicable to most listeners and in turn more relatable - listen to tunes like “Chicago”, an ode to the Windy City, “Westfield”, a song they dedicate to their old high school friend group, and “Hotel Pool”, a song they say was written on tour a few years back.

“Along with reflecting on the personal bonds that Madeleine and I both have, I also really wanted to focus more on the bigger picture and write about the experience of being a white woman in America and a college-age kid in the 21st century,” said Lily about their third album, Keep It Together, in an interview with Sacks and Co. These thoughtful songs, among many others, invoke a somewhat melancholy sense of nostalgia, with a magnetic ability to draw the listener into a daydream that makes them imagine the colorful pictures that the sisters’ lyrics paint.

Easily humbled and sensitive, the sisters were as gracious and gratified towards my sister and me as I imagined them to be when we stopped to say hi to them after their concert, thanking us for giving them congratulations for their work and for a second show as beautiful and satisfying as the first.

Having met leads of bigger bands, like Nick Petricca of Walk the Moon, a Cincinnati-based band, I’ve been able to observe and experience the beauty of local bands, and highly recommend you listen to Lily and Madeleine’s work to achieve an exceptional example of the gorgeous music Indy natives can create.