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'Godspell' gets high school twist

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By JOE GRACE

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ST. CHARLES – Tyler Vaughn of Geneva might look like a painter up on stage, but he's acting like Jesus. Just like he's supposed to be.



H. Rick Bamman-hbamman@kcchronicle.com Tyler Vaugh of Geneva, in the role of Jesus, rehearses for the Noble Fool Theatricals Youth Ensemble presentation God Spell. The show opened Saturday and runs December 6, 13 & 20, 2008. St. Charles 11/28/08

The 18-year-old senior at Geneva High School is playing Jesus in the Noble Fool Theatricals Youth Ensemble's production of "Godspell."

The musical will be performed at 10:30 a.m. Saturdays, Dec. 6, 13 and 20, and at 7 p.m. Sundays, Dec. 7 and 14, at the Main Stage at Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles. Tickets are \$13 and can be bought online at noblefool.org. For more information, call the box office at 630-584-6342.

Traditionally, "Godspell" is the story of Jesus told with hippies. However, director Tracy Whiteside and her performers updated the musical to be about high school cliques. Tyler Vaughn as Jesus helps the preps, gangsters, nerds and scenesters put aside their differences and come together before he is "crucified" near the end of the musical.

"The one thing they have in common together is their love of Jesus Christ," Vaughn says.

Vaughn, a religious teenager who travels 45 minutes every Sunday to go to his church in Plainfield, said the part of Jesus has helped him to understand what he went through.

"It's kind of hard," Vaughn says. "I have to play the character as confident and prideful, but also very humble. It's helped me understand him more."

Whiteside agrees.

"He's personally very religious," she said, "and I think that has helped him understand."

Barbara Homan of St. Charles is a scenester in the musical. The 17-year-old St. Charles North senior has been with the youth ensemble since it opened and is enjoying what might be her last show. She hasn't decided yet whether she'll do one more.

"This is a really amazing show with a lot of very talented people," she said. "Everyone is on the stage all the time."

On the other end of the spectrum is Jackie Scheer, 16, of Batavia, who is performing in her first production with Noble Fool, having recently moved to the area. She also has been enjoying getting ready for the performance.

"The people are really friendly," Scheer said. "Most theater kids are friendly with everybody anyway."

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Scheer said she has enjoyed the rehearsal, but is ready for the show to start. As is Whiteside.

"I'm really, really proud of the cast," Whiteside said, "because I think they've learned a lot from this."



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