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## 'Some Enchanted Evening' tribute to Rodgers & Hammerstein

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By Charity Bonner Staff Writer

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ST. CHARLES -- What do a widow who accepts a job as governess for the king of Siam, Austrian Alps and the very first American musical have in common?

All are part of the work of iconic musical duo Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II.

Audiences who see Noble Fool Theatricals' production of Some Enchanted Evening -- which opens today and runs through Saturday, Nov. 1 -- will see and hear a musical collage of pieces from each Rodgers and Hammerstein production. The show will be a collection of vignettes, scenes and songs from musicals including The Sound of Music, Oklahoma! and Carousel.

"It is a very elegant production. It is very sophisticated, much like Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals," said director Bill Jenkins.

Jenkins said musicals have a way of simplifying relationships.

"In this we are trying to basically say how complexities in relationships make sense when they put it in a musical. Musicals are able to capture the essence of relationships in a way that makes them clearer," he said.

The appeal for the show is broad.

"It is great for families. I think it is terrific for young and old alike. Anyone who has any knowledge of their work whatsoever will be brought in by Rodgers and Hammerstein. Folks who aren't familiar will maybe get a taste of these classic pieces. Rodgers and Hammerstein are usually looked at as the fathers of contemporary musical theater," he said.

Some actors in the show grew up on Rodgers' music and Hammerstein's lyrics. Others are being introduced to it.

Harold Mortimer, music director at Noble Fool Theatricals, says audiences will be able to listen to five professionally trained singers perform the entire show. The cast of five singers and a piano player have been rehearsing for weeks.

"The audience will see a show full of life and fun because that is what the rehearsal has been," he said.

Cassandra Liveris, the actress/singer portraying the character Julie Jordan from Carousel, says there are many comedic moments in the show, such as when a mother and daughter perform an adaptation of Sixteen Going on Seventeen, which typically is performed by a boy and girl.

Liveris said she grew up watching The Sound of Music and Oklahoma! But older generations may be more familiar with the material.

"I think it will hit the heart strings of the older generation, because it is the music they grew up with. Matinee crowds have been selling out because they are bringing in groups of older viewers. It will certainly appeal to families and people my parents' age, or to my friends. It will not be anything too crazy or avant-garde, but something that will appeal to the masses," she said.

Liveris says the experience has stretched her as a performer.

"There are some tough music moments that were at times a little harrowing to learn. It is certainly a nice group of singing actors on stage," she said. "All are well-versed in musical theater."

Liveris hopes the audience will come for the emotional connection.

"Live theater is an experience all of its own, and I hope we as a society don't ever lose that," she said. "As technology advances, we get into films that are accessible to masses. A movie or a sporting event seems to appeal to more people because it is easier. But when you go to the theatrical performance, the audience is part of the piece. It is a much more satisfying experience if you engage in it and realize, hey, these are live people performing this. You feel the emotion of it."

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