

No ordinary musical for STHS' state-of-the-art theater

By Kathryn Reed

Clicking of tap shoes fill the room. Girls in skirts from the 1930s. High school boys in suspenders and vests.

It must be "42nd Street" – on Viking Way.

Alec Niven plays the lead dancer Billy Lowler, while Jack Percival has the lead non-dancing role as Julian Marsh. Tall and thin, the two young men look like they could be from that era eight decades ago.



South Tahoe High students practice a number from "42nd Street". Photos/Kathryn Reed

"This is a lot different (than other shows). There are a lot more dance numbers," Niven says, taking a break from rehearsal on Thursday.

Percival says the number of set changes also makes it a more complicated show.

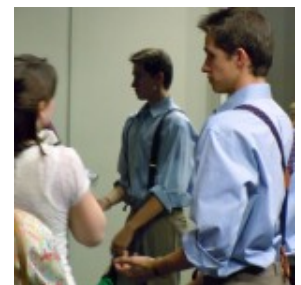
In less than a week, one of South Tahoe High School's largest

productions will be performed. Theater director Liz Niven didn't want to go small when it came to breaking in the new theater. The bigger the better – something memorable – she told *Lake Tahoe News* as the Theater Arts and Design Academy was being worked on last summer.

Feet rapidly move, arms wave, bodies are gyrating – all in unison – all under the watchful eye of Marcia Sarosik.

They are in the Sound Stage room where a wall of mirrors allows them to see themselves. A flat screen television has a direct feed to what is going on in the theater.

Using an iPod to deliver the music (it will be live music during the performances), Sarosik watches her charges clack their shoes – the girls all with a slight heel to contend with.



Alec Niven
plays Billy
Lowler.

Sarosik has been an integral part of each high school musical, and the dance instructor for some of these students since they were little kids.

She knows the play well, having seen it four times – at Harrah's, on Broadway, and twice in up state New York. The latter was with South Tahoe High School graduate Bubba Romagnolo on stage.

Romagnolo returned home in October to spend a few days helping

to choreograph the show and inspire the students.

On Thursday, the set was still being painted and looked far from finished.

Today is hat day. Each must be unique to complement the stylish dames who will parade across the stage.

More than 100 people are involved with the production – from actors to set designers to the orchestra. Key adults include Bob Grant as musical director, Casson Scowcroft as orchestra conductor, and Drake Niven as technical director.

“The theater being new is adding extra challenges,” Sarosik admits. “The sound and lighting are more challenging.”

Everything is new. But it’s also smaller, with less seating. This is one reason why instead of having the usual four productions in one weekend, there will be six shows covering two weekends.



"42nd Street" involves a sea of fast moving tap shoes.

Performances of "42nd Street" at South Tahoe High School:

- Dec. 9 7pm
- Dec. 10 7pm

- Dec. 11 2pm
- Dec. 16* 7pm
- Dec. 17 7pm
- Dec. 18 2pm

Advanced tickets are available by calling Lori Nelson at (530) 541.4111, ext. 235. Cost: \$15 general admission, \$10 adults 60-plus, \$5 students, Super ASB free after all ticket holders are seated.

* Performing Arts Booster Association is celebrating the opening of the theater with a fund raiser called "Stars Night Out" on Dec. 16 that will feature dinner at 5:30pm served by the high school's culinary arts students. Dessert will be served during intermission. Cast members will make appearances. Cost is \$40 and includes the show. Contact Kathy Percival at (775) 527.3556 or Madonna Doyle at (530) 545.9734 for "Stars Night Out" tickets. Dinner seating is limited.