

Keith-Albee presents the Tony Award-winning musical 'Cinderella'

By DEREK HALSEY
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"Cinderella: The Musical" will begin on Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. at the Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center. Tickets range from \$54 to \$60. More information can be found [here](#).
Photos courtesy of Carol Rosegg

Cinderella is an oft-told story that has its roots in the 1600s.

The tale of the neglected young woman that was surrounded by domineering family members yet on one special night was finally noticed by a handsome prince who falls in love with her was resurrected and changed slightly in the 1800s in the Grimm's Fairy Tales book.

Since then, Cinderella has survived in the public realm in various forms, from operas and ballets to the popular Disney movie version that was released in 1950.

Soon, however, a Broadway-inspired musical version of Cinderella appeared on television in 1957 starring a very young Julie Andrews. What was special about that adaptation was the music written for it by the great Broadway composers Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein II.



Many versions of the Cinderella musical have appeared since then with the book of the play, as in the dialogue and storyline, being adapted for more modern times by Douglas Carter Beane.

That is the version that won garnered nine Tony Award nominations on Broadway and will be staged this evening at the Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center. This production is known for its amazing costume transformations and the aforementioned score of Rogers and Hammerstein being brought to life with a live band.

"Cinderella: The Musical" will begin at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 5, at the Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center. Tickets range from \$54 to \$60. More information can be found at marshall.edu/muartistseries/.

One of the performers of tonight's production is Ohio native Natalie Girard who plays the part of Gabrielle, Cinderella's "stepsister with a heart." Girard is a triple threat who has the ability to act, sing and dance. She graduated with a B.F.A. in Acting and Musical Theatre at Wright State University located near Dayton, Ohio.

While many a young actor has made their way to New York City to try and make it in the show business world, it is hard work to get an acting gig for most who make the trek.

A few like Girard manage to get a steady job right away. While that is due to a bit of luck, it also means that the actor was prepared for the audition process and their talent was evident enough for the producers to hire them.

"I graduated from Wright State University in May and then I moved to New York City that August, but I traveled to NYC to do the original audition in July," Girard said. "Then, they called me back in and I did two more auditions after that. So, I was initially in New York City for only two weeks before I went out on this tour. I had traveled there earlier to do auditions for other shows. I have a cousin that lives in Brooklyn, so I was fairly familiar with the city and it felt like an easy transition for me. I love being there. But there is nothing like being on tour and seeing the whole country as it is an incredible experience."

One of the most exciting days for a young actor is getting that post-audition message, "You got the part!"

"It is kind of a 'luck meets opportunity meets hard work' experience," Girard said. "After the last audition, my manager texted me the next day and said, 'Hey, they are considering you for the

part.' That in itself made me go, 'Huh? What? Wait....' That was all I needed. To me, that was an achievement in itself. I had rented a room. I had a job walking dogs. I hadn't fallen on my face. Just being considered for the musical was icing on the cake. About two days later I was on 42nd Street on the subway and I looked at my phone and saw that it was my manager calling, so I hopped off of the subway car to take the call even though I wasn't at my stop yet. He was like, 'Hey, I just want to congratulate you on your first national tour debut. You got the part in Cinderella.'"

After receiving the good news, Girard spread the news:

"I shed a few tears of happiness as I sat on the floor of the subway station for a few seconds," said Girard.

"That is how I found out and it was surreal. I called my mom first, of course, and she was as excited as I was as we have worked hard for this for a very long time. She was very happy. I was thinking about that this morning as I was getting prepared for this interview. You can't beat preparation. Things are going to come at you in life and you are going to be nervous when doing things. But, what you can't replace is preparation. If you are prepared, then anything can be thrown at you and you will be ok, you will be able to handle it. If I have done my work, I will be OK."

Now, Girard finds herself touring the U.S. and singing the music of Rogers and Hammerstein while living out her dream in a beautiful production of Cinderella.

"It is an honor to sing the music that Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein created every night as they contain melodies that are known by almost everyone that hears them anywhere," Girard said. "The music is not just for musical theater fans, either, as the score contains a lot of uplifting music and you don't get sick of it when you stand backstage and hear your fellow artists sing those songs. It is pretty incredible. We have a band that travels with us and they are outstanding. Every person in this show came to rehearsal ready to work and ready to learn. They were prepared, yet they were open." Girard's favorite part about the Cinderella musical is the magic.

"There are amazing transformations onstage, such as the pumpkin that turns into the carriage and more," Girard said. "We have some hidden stage secrets that I am not allowed to reveal. But, the way that it all happens before your eyes leaves the audiences surprised every night. It is so great to perform in front of a live audience because they give you energy and that feeds what is happening onstage. There is a really beautiful connection that we make every night."

IF YOU GO

WHAT: The Marshall Artists Series presents the national tour of Rodger's and Hammerstein's Tony Award-winning Broadway musical, "Cinderella"

WHERE: Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center, 925 4th Ave., Huntington

WHEN: 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 5

GET TIX: Tickets are \$64, \$71, \$81 and \$98 at the Marshall Artists Series Box Office at 304-696-6656, or order tickets online at Ticketmaster.com.

ON DECK AT ARTISTS SERIES: At 7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 9, SNL alums Steve Martin and Martin Short reunite at the Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center. Having recently released a Netflix special, "An Evening You Will Forget for the Rest of Your Life," the two veteran comedians are now out on tour performing across the country as they recall their careers, influences, and most memorable encounters. Presented through a combination of stand-up, musical numbers, and conversations about their lives in show business. Tickets are \$197, \$120 and \$97.

Welcome to the discussion.

Keep it Clean. Please avoid obscene, vulgar, lewd, racist or sexually-oriented language.

PLEASE TURN OFF YOUR CAPS LOCK.

Don't Threaten. Threats of harming another person will not be tolerated.

Be Truthful. Don't knowingly lie about anyone or anything.

Be Nice. No racism, sexism or any sort of -ism that is degrading to another person.

Be Proactive. Use the 'Report' link on each comment to let us know of abusive posts.

Share with Us. We'd love to hear eyewitness accounts, the history behind an article.