

March 4, 2019

## ***Guys and Dolls***

Edmonton – *Guys and Dolls* is the tale of a couple of big city gamblers, escapes from the law, glamorous nightclubs and romantic hijinks. The play was written in the late 1940s and made its Broadway debut in 1950. In 1951, the production won five Tony Awards, including Best Musical. *Guys and Dolls* is the third production of MacEwan University's Theatre Season.

The main theme of *Guys and Dolls* is guarantees vs. gambles. When the story begins, the lead characters think they have it all figured out, but at a key point in the production, each character must make a decision: "Do I hold on to what I know, or do I roll the dice and take a chance on something better?"

"Many people call *Guys and Dolls* a timeless classic, but it would be equally true to say that it's a classic of its time," says Leigh Rivenbark, assistant professor, Department of Theatre. "While the musical comedy is entertaining, it is also quite subversive. At its heart, it's about the changing roles of men and women in the 1940s."

Before World War 2, gender roles were rigid. Men were expected to work and women were expected to stay at home. When the men went away to war, the women stepped into their jobs to support the war effort. After the war, many men expected to resume their old jobs and assumed their wives would return to their household duties. Many women refused to return to 'business as usual.' They wanted to redefine their relationships and determine their own destinies.

Rivenbark says there are many unique challenges in staging this production. "The show has many high-energy dance numbers. Luckily, we have one of Canada's most accomplished choreographers, Laura Krewski, on our creative team. She has choreographed for many leading theatre companies, including the National Arts Centre, Catalyst Theatre and the Citadel Theatre."

"One of the unique design requirements of *Guys and Dolls* is recreating Times Square in the Triffo Theatre. To achieve this, our set designer, Alison Yanota, designed giant 24-foot tall buildings and frames adorned with dazzling marquee lights," says Rivenbark.

The show has all the great ingredients of a quintessential musical comedy - universal themes, colourful characters, hilarious dialogue and memorable show tunes. The great choreographer Bob Fosse once called *Guys and Dolls* "the greatest American musical of all time."

When: March 20 - 30 (No show on Monday)

Where: Triffo Theatre, Allard Hall (11110-104 Avenue)

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