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Winthrop University

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"Once Upon a Mattress" Puts New Spin on Classic Fairy Tale

ROCK HILL, S.C. - A deceitful queen, a cursed king, a royal courtship derailed by countless schemes – "Once Upon a Mattress" isn't quite the fairy tale so many theatregoers recall from their childhoods.

Produced by Winthrop's Department of Theatre and Dance and the Department of Music, "Once Upon a Mattress" is a sillier version of Hans Christian Andersen's "The Princess and the Pea." In this reimagination, which debuted off- and then on Broadway in 1959, the devious Queen Aggravain (played by Cecily Bigham of Merrimac, Mass.) conspires to prevent Princess Winifred (Jesse Powers of Sumter, S.C.) from marrying Prince Dauntless (Ted Patterson of Lexington, S.C.). Rendered mute by a curse, the queen's husband, King Sextimus the Silent (Jonathan Rider of Sumter), is drawn into this mess of comedic misunderstandings and tries to thwart his wife's plots.

"Once Upon a Mattress," directed by Stephen Gundersheim, assistant professor of theatre, features a cast of nearly 30 students. Nine students serve on the artistic/production staff along with several College of Visual and Performing Arts faculty members, including Katherine Kinsey, music director; Stacy McConnell, dance choreographer; Zinorl Broñola, rehearsal accompanist; Biff Edge, technical director; Anna Sartin, scenic designer; Janet Gray, costume design; and Brenda Floyd, costume studio supervisor.

The production will run Feb. 23-26 at 8 p.m. and Feb. 27 at 2 p.m. in Johnson Theatre. "Once Upon a Mattress" is an approved cultural event for Winthrop students. Tickets are $15 for the public and $10 with Winthrop I.D. Seating is reserved.

Contact the box office at 803/323-4014 or boxoffice@winthrop.edu to purchase tickets.