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Newest Theatre and Dance Production Spoofs Musical Theatre, Comments on Social Issues

Winthrop University

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Quick Facts

- Urinetown is a Tony Award-winning musical.
- Show times are 8 p.m. Oct-2-5 and 2 p.m. Oct. 5 and 6. It is an approved cultural event.



Hustad, left, and Hoskins

ROCK HILL, S.C. – The posters for the [Winthrop University Department of Theatre and Dance's](#) newest production “**Urinetown**” are on display across campus, with a deliberate message added: “Is that really the title?”

“Urinetown” is in fact the title of the musical, which opens Oct. 2 in [Johnson Theatre](#), but the audience shouldn’t be scared away by the name and its implications.

“It really is a work of art in the way it’s able to use satire while paying tribute to classic musicals and being a dark political comedy,” said **Jonathan Hoskins**, a theatre major from Rock Hill who plays male lead Bobby Strong.

Director and [associate professor Stephen Gundersheim](#) agreed: “It is a completely irreverent type of show. The premise is ridiculous, but it’s about businesses and politics and corruption, underneath it all.”

Written by Greg Kotis and with music and lyrics by Mark Hollmann, “Urinetown” tells the story of a town plagued by a terrible water shortage—so terrible that a megacorporation, Urine Good Company, manages personal activities. Bobby Strong is a custodian at the most poverty-ridden facility in town, controlled by the mean Penelope Pennywise (**Emily Cupit**, Hilton Head, S.C.).

But trouble begins when Strong’s father Old Man (**Grant Zavitkovsky**, Fort Mill, S.C.) can’t afford the entrance fee to the facility and literally takes matters into his own hands, causing him to be escorted to a “punishment” known as Urinetown. In addition to music and choreography by Charlotte choreographer Linda Booth, a love story develops between Strong and Hope Cladwell (**Hannah Hustad**, Clover, S.C.), the daughter of the megacorporate boss Caldwell B. Cladwell (**Allyn Hunt**, Durham, N.C.)

“This show is more vocally demanding and offers a more challenging character,” Hoskins said.

Gundersheim noted that several scenes spoof musical theatre “in a joyous way,” including “West Side Story,” “Guys and Dolls” and “Fiddler on the Roof,” such as a scene where several characters pay tribute to “tomorrow” a la “Annie.”

The musical has meant collaboration between faculty and staff across departments as well as collaboration with students.

“If you ask people, they would say we had too much fun working on this, and that’s my goal,” Gundersheim said. “It’s a learning experience. If you have fun, it helps the production. It’s been pure joy to create this.”

Show times are 8 p.m. Oct. 2-5 with 2 p.m. matinees Oct. 5 and 6. Tickets are \$10 with a Winthrop and \$15 to the general public. Tickets can be purchased online or at the box office. Box office hours are 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Monday-Friday. Call 803/323-4014 or e-mail boxoffice@winthrop.edu for tickets. It is an approved cultural event.

For more information contact Gundersheim at 803/323-4852 or e-mail him at gundersheims@winthrop.edu.

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