

Siblings sing at Coffeehouse Series



Emily Ploch/Index
Musicians Adelee and Gentry Gates perform their original song, "Falling Hard," as part of the Coffeehouse Series at the Student Union Building April 12.

The Student Activities Board hosted the second installment of its Coffeehouse Series April 12 in the Student Union Building. The event featured Adelee and Gentry Gates, musicians from West Alexandria, Ohio, who play original songs and covers.

"Murder Ballad" to take the stage as rock opera

BY EMMA GADE
Contributing Writer

The Truman State theatre department is concluding its season theme — "What would you kill for? What would you die for?" — with the rock opera "Murder Ballad," which will run until Saturday.

Set mainly in a bar, "Murder Ballad" centers on Sara, a young New Yorker who is torn between the monotonous life she shares with her husband and family, and the enticing passion of an ex-lover. As an old flame is rekindled, an affair ensues, and the audience is drawn deep into a story of retribution and revenge.

Theatre professor David Charles Goyette, the show's director, said the department announced the show a year ago, and the team began working on it near the end of January. The cast rehearsed five days a week for four hours a day, Goyette said.

Goyette said one change made from the original production is Truman's version offers more glimpses into the specifics of moments in scenes.

The original production was a kind of stand and deliver, which means it was sung all the way through with little specificity, Goyette said. He said the crew sought to amend this through specificity of costume, prop and physical relationship to elaborate on particular moments within the story. This change is important because when the audience understands the specifics of a situation, people are drawn deeper into it because it feels more authentic, Goyette said.

Goyette said he thinks the music — which combines blues, rock, punk and alternative — will really draw the audience in. One of the central elements of punk and rock is anger and aggressiveness, and that style of music emphasizes those emotions and feelings in the play, Goyette said. There is

also a longing in blues that mirrors the sense of longing present in the play, he said.

"I think we all have these revenge fantasies about when somebody does us wrong ... what we would like to do to exact revenge," Goyette said.

Murder ballads are cautionary tales, Goyette said. This play examines what happens when people are pushed beyond the breaking point, he said.

Goyette said the show focuses on the issues in our personal lives that drive us to take action. To an extent, it also critiques our fascination with murder and violence in the media, Goyette said.

"I think we all have these revenge fantasies about when somebody does us wrong ... what we would like to do to exact revenge."

-Theatre professor
David Charles Goyette

"I think it's a very sexy show," Goyette said. "And ultimately, it's a guilty pleasure."

Assistant director senior Ryan Webb said the play questions "what could have been." Webb said everyone has those "what if" moments in their past, and the show will resonate with the audience in that way.

Webb said this is his first time assistant directing. Webb said he applied for the position in the fall, and his responsibilities include observing rehearsals, taking notes and offering suggestions to help realize Goyette's vision for the play.

"Being able to see everything that's going on from the reverse

side makes me really appreciate ... acting and all the experiences I've gotten," Webb said.

Webb said one of the bigger challenges directing this production of "Murder Ballad" was trying to balance acting and music. This production uses a live band, which makes it stand out from other shows, Webb said. Because this musical is a rock opera, the live band provides the ambiance needed for the performance, he said.

Webb said working with a live band has its challenges. It is important to establish the right balance between the singers and the band so it supports what is happening on stage, he said.

Senior Kristin Hafen, who plays the role of Sara, said actors did not practice with the band until the last two weeks of rehearsals. Hafen said it can be difficult trying to balance some of the quieter songs she sings with the full band behind her.

Although it is hard work, Hafen said her love for musicals is what drew her to this play in the first place.

Hafen said she began looking into the script when the play was announced last year and started to identify with Sara's character. Hafen said she and Sara share strong personalities and are both married mothers.

"I get it," Hafen said. "I get her frustrations, her joys, her worries."

Hafen said one of the ways "Murder Ballad" stands out from other productions she has participated in is that it feels very modern and natural. People make these choices and are in these types of situations, Hafen said.

"It's kind of dark, it's kind of sexy, it's kind of gritty," Hafen said. "But it's also really real."

"Murder Ballad" performances will be 8 p.m. April 13-16 in the James G. Severns Theatre in Ophelia Parrish. Admission is \$5, and tickets are on sale in the Ophelia Parrish Box Office.

Battle of the Bands honors L.I.F.E.

BY JESSICA HOWARD
Contributing Writer

The Society of the Prim Roses is hosting its annual Leaving an Impression For Erin Battle of the Bands event April 16 at Wrongdaddy's. The event celebrates the memory of member Erin Brennecke, who died in 2002 after having bone cancer, and raises funds for Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center, where Brennecke received treatment.

Junior Mollie O'Day, Prim Roses philanthropy chair, organized the event this year. O'Day said 2016 marks the 14th year since Brennecke died and Prim Roses started the L.I.F.E. Battle of the Bands, and the ninth year since the organization switched to the current battle of the bands format. O'Day said the Prim Roses chose this way of raising money because it stands out from other events they could have done.

"It's different than what anyone else does," O'Day said. "It's fun and it's a way to raise money. I don't think there's any other organization that does this."

O'Day said the event usually brings in \$1,000 to \$2,000, with a majority of the money raised the day of the event. At the event, O'Day said there will be food and drink people can purchase to support the cause, along with various raffles.

The process of voting for the bands also helps raise money because O'Day said the audience decides the winner by casting a paid vote. O'Day said the winning band then will receive a cash prize from the event budget, leaving all proceeds from the event to go to the hospital.

Before planning the event, O'Day said she called Brennecke's best friend to get to know her and help Prim Roses relate to her as a sister.

O'Day said one key difference between this year and previous years is the line up, which deviates from the precedent of only rock bands playing. Bands like Two-Headed Cow, Harmonic Convergence and Minor Detail will be adding country, acoustic folk and a cappella sounds to the mix, according to the event's Facebook page.

Alumnus Jon Gooch, lead singer of headlining band Conman Economy, said he also took notice of this change as soon as the lineup was announced. Gooch said this is his third time playing the L.I.F.E.

Battle of the Bands show and the first time his band has headlined it. When not on stage, Gooch said he will help set up the event and run the sound equipment. Gooch said he looks at his chance to help with this event on and off the stage as a privilege. He said the event is a great opportunity to listen to music people might not normally get a chance to try.

"I don't think there's any other organization that does this."

-Junior Mollie O'Day,
Society of the Prim
Roses philanthropy chair

"Of all the things that we do as a band, it's definitely foremost in our band motto that we want to help," Gooch said. "So if someone thinks that we should be playing something and offers us the headlining spot in an event where proceeds go to supporting cancer research ... it's for such a good cause, and we will always be down to do that."

For him and the band, Gooch said cancer is a personal matter, and while the band always is excited to play a show, the message comes first.

Gooch said the diversity of bands helps spread that message because it caters to several fan bases rather than just a single group. Gooch said he wants a large attendance regardless of if his band ends up winning or the amount of people that come only to support his band.

"It's like, if you want to listen to our music, cool, but I'd much rather it be about the cause, cancer research," Gooch said. "You know, we [Conman Economy] have all had someone who's had cancer in our lives, so why not push yourself to do something so great as help eliminate cancer?"

Although Brennecke died 14 years ago, Gooch said she left an impact. Gooch said while he never knew her personally, what she has become means a lot.

"The fact that she has this legacy that lives on now, you know I feel terrible for her, her family, friends, but at least it wasn't in vain," Gooch said.

Tickets for the event are \$5 and are for sale on The Mall until April 15.

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