

Walberg Family TIP Performers

Theatre In the Park has been a summer tradition for many years for myself and my family. Who else can say that they have been on the stage in shows with their father, mother and four children?

It all started in 1981, I received a phone call asking if I wanted to be in Annie Get Your Gun. I said yes and was hooked. During one of the shows, I can remember the cast gathering backstage listening to a transistor radio of the news and reports of the Hyatt Sky Walk collapsing. It was a very somber evening.

82' brought on Fiddler on the Roof followed by West Side Story in 83'. This was my first of two productions of WSS at the park for me (Picture #1 & #2 The Sharks in "Tonight." I'm on the far right, #3 The dance at the gym scene. I'm on the far left). **Also in the center of the picture is Maria played by Constance Ramos. Constance later went on to have a successful acting career and is known for her time as one of the hosts of ABC's Extreme Home Makeover.

I returned to the park stage in 86' for Seven Brides for Seven Brothers and then again 89' for West Side Story. (Picture #4 Here we have the Jets singing "Officer Krupke." I'm on the left in the red t-shirt. Also pictured is veteran TTIP director David Hastings, very bottom) This show has a strange turn of events for me. I wasn't cast in the show due to a prior two week coaching commitment in Wisconsin in middle of the rehearsal process. I was very sad not to be in the show, however, I contacted the director Barb Nichols and asked if I could be involved in the show back stage somehow. She said yes, of course. About a week later Barb called and said there have been a few changes in the cast and she asked if I would be willing to be IN THE SHOW as a Shark. YES! A no brainer. When we got to the first rehearsal, Barb told me that now I was going to be a Jet. Now here we are two weeks into the rehearsal process and the actor who plays Riff is in a life threatening motorcycle accident and can't continue as Riff. Barb walks to me and asks if I would be willing to play Riff. I had to turn down the offer due to my coaching commitment, but what a series of events that was. It was by far the most enjoyable show that I have ever been in at the park.

In 90' I was cast in my first lead role as Frank Butler in Annie Get Your Gun. (2nd time in this show at the park) Pictures # 5, 6 & 7 are all related to the show.

91' I was offered the role of Sky Masterson in Guys & Dolls. Stepping out of his comfort zone and onto the stage was my father, Carl Walberg aka. Big Jule. If you are familiar with the show, you will remember that Sky gets to knock Big Jule out in the Crap shooting scene. I will remember that for a long time. Pictures # 8, 9 & 10 are from Guys and Dolls with picture 10 showing Sky & Big Jule together on stage just before the big knock out.

Into the Woods was next for me as Rapunzel's Prince. This was now my mother's turn to step onto the stage as Jack's Mom in 93'.

My next stage appearance came in 2010 in Cinderella when I was cast as the Town Crier and had the pleasure of being in my first show with 3 of my children. Alaina, Alec & Willa. (picture 11 shows me with my left arm around my son Alec)

2013 had the Walberg players in the production of Peter Pan, where I was cast as one of Hook's pirates. I was joined by children Alec, Wyatt & Willa. (picture 12 is me as a pirate and picture 13 is the Lost Boys of Neverland with the three Walbergs in the tank tops. Also included is picture 14 it is the 4 of us singing the National Anthem)

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The Walbergs were cast in Honk in 2014 where I played the geese commander Greylag (15) and was joined by children Wyatt & Willa.

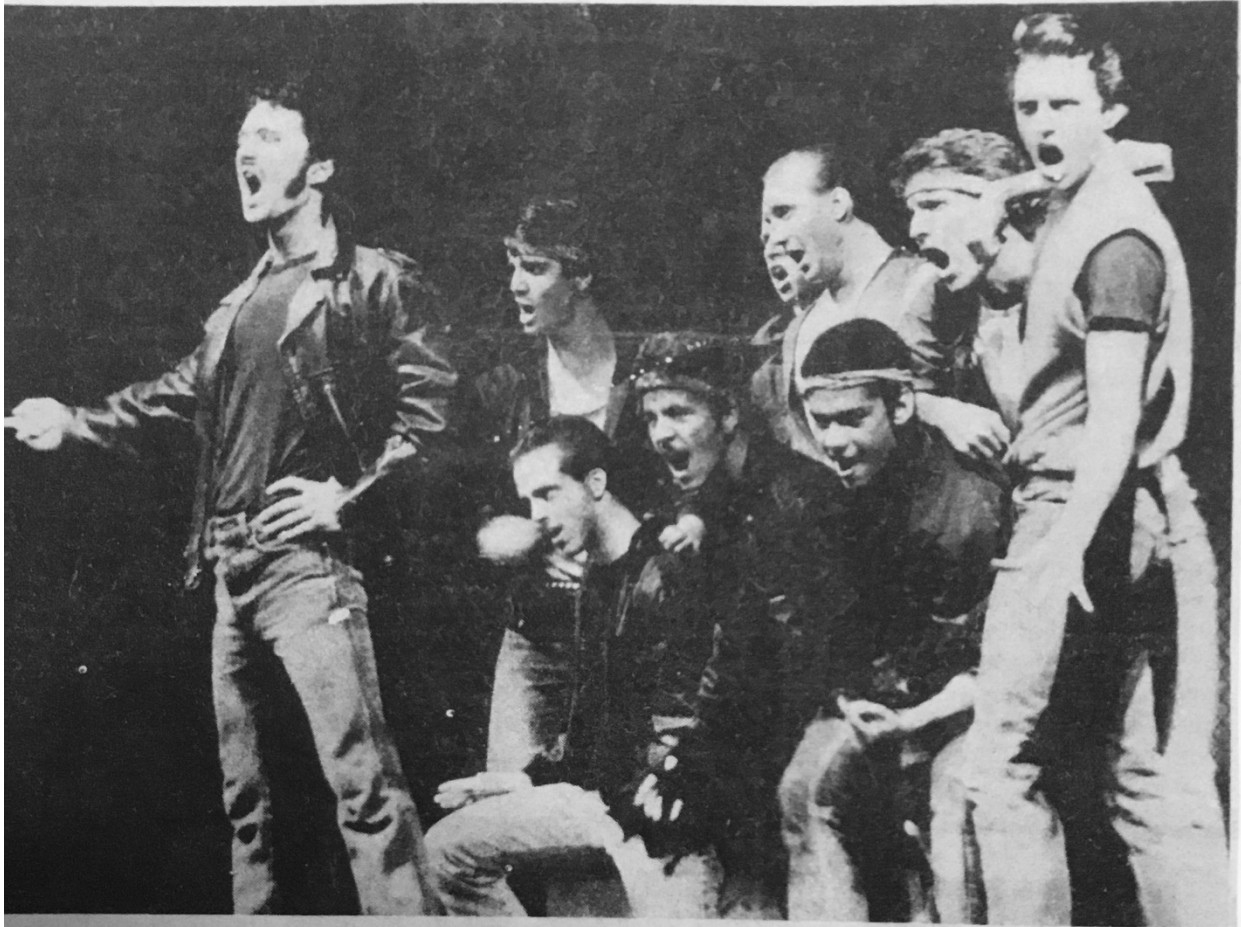
In 2015 I was cast as Reverend Alvin Paterson in the production of Annie Warbucks. My daughter Willa was also in the show.(Picture 16 is from AW)

2017 was the year for the Walberg boys to steal take center stage. While I was cast in the Men's ensemble in Spamalot my son Wyatt was cast as King Arthur's tap dancing faithful steed Patsy. My other son Alec was cast Michael Feldman in Back to the 80's

Last year I had the privilege of being cast in two shows. The first show was The Little Mermaid with my daughter Willa where I played King Triton. The second show was The Addams Family where I played Mal Beineke. My son Alec was also in this show while Wyatt was in South Pacific. (picture 17 is of me and Willa in The Little Mermaid and 18 is of me and Alec from Back to the 80's)

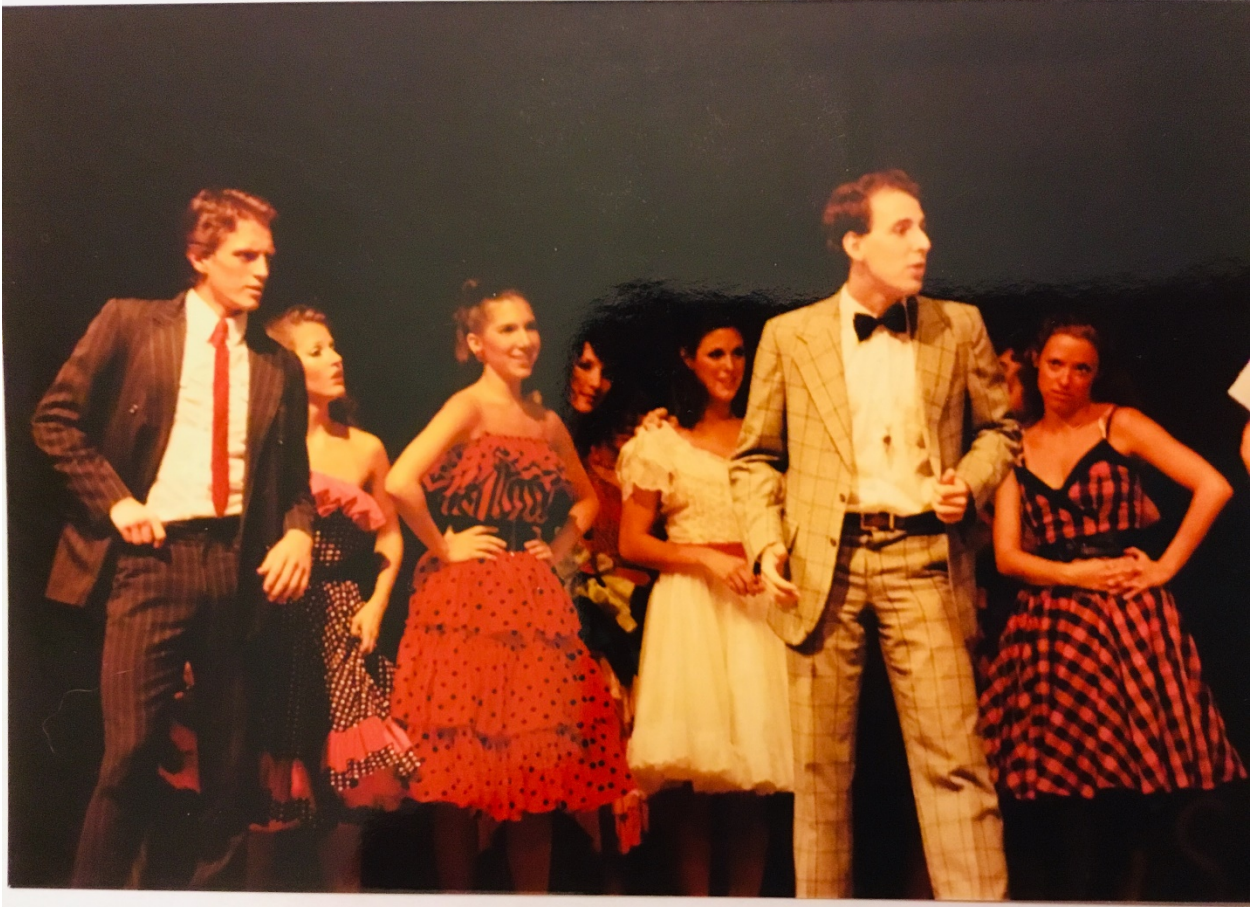
This year I'm in a show with no other Walberg, how strange! I have been cast in the Men's ensemble of The Music Man while my son Alec is playing Drake in the first show of the summer Annie.

*"The Sharks" in a scene from the 1983 Theatre in the Park production of "West Side Story."
Photo by Mary Eads, Johnson County Park and Recreation District.*



**summer theatre
lives in the park**





Walberg Family
TIP Performers



Theatre-in-the-Park Announces 1990 Performances

Theatre-in-the-Park has announced its 1990 season, including four musical productions, two concerts by the Kansas City Symphony, and other productions for young and senior citizens alike.

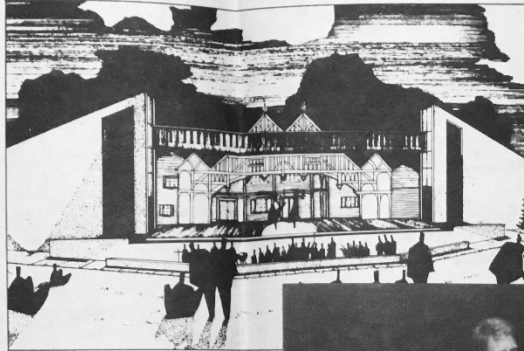
*Considered one of the nation's outstanding community theatres, it is located in a beautiful, natural, bowl-like setting, complete with professional lighting and sound systems. More than 500 persons will take part this season.

Theatre-in-the-Park began in 1970, with its first production being "Mame." The productions became so popular that the theatre opened in 1972 in larger quarters, in the 1,250-acre Shawnee Mission Park... here the crowds continued to grow. In 1980, thanks to efforts by the Shawnee Mission Sertoma Club, new facilities were dedicated. Today, the project is an ongoing project of the Johnson County Park and Recreation District and continues to grow in facilities, landscaping and parking areas.

The present theatre includes a 60-by-180-foot stage, dressing rooms, technical facilities, set construction and storage areas, concession facilities, restrooms, and parking.

Attendance is expected to increase this season. The 1989 season brought 96,550 theatre goers, compared with just over 68,000 in 1988. Those attending bring lawn chairs and/or blankets to enjoy the shows. Many start the evening with picnic meals in the park. Parking is plentiful and free. There will be an entertainment charge of \$1 per person this season to help defray the production costs.

Demmaree Carns has been Cultural Arts Supervisor for the Park Department and producer of the theatre since 1973. She relies on both highly qualified amateurs and professional talent to ensure the qual-



ity and success of the outdoor productions. In fact, this year more than 700 children and adults tried out for parts in theatre productions. Carns said that this season, the 21st, is projected to be the most successful yet.

The first production this summer, "Annie Get Your Gun," will begin June 15th and will run Friday, Saturday and Sunday evening for two consecutive weeks, closing June 24th. All performances begin at 8:30 p.m.

"Annie Get Your Gun" is the story of Annie Oakley as she comes from the Ohio hills to become the crack rifle shot in the country. Thrills, romance, tension and great music, including "There's No Business Like Show Business," bring an immortal and entertaining show to the big theater stage, complimented by a cast of nearly 100, and a musical score by Irving Berlin that also includes: "The Girl That I Marry," "They Say It's Wonderful," "You Can't Get a Man with a Gun," "I Got the Sun in

the Morning," and "Anything You Can Do."

Carns said that the Theatre-in-the-Park was named the 13th best drawing attraction in the Kansas City area by the *Kansas City Business Journal* and is rated as one of the top cultural attractions in the entire state of Kansas. Carns added that theatre-goers actually come from areas more than 100 miles away for the evening performances, and this points to the dedication of those participating in the performances, talented performers and the quality of the shows.



There's no business like show business



NO, YOU CAN'T GET A MAN WITH A GUN — Stephanie Henigan (right) plays Annie Oakley and Kassj Dougherty plays Dolly Tate in the production of Irving Berlin's "Annie Get Your Gun" at Theatre in the Park. The lively musical runs through this weekend at Shawnee Mission Park.



FRANK BUTLER — Matt Walberg plays sharp-shooter Frank Butler, the matinee idol of the Wild West Show, in the Theatre in the Park production of Annie Get Your Gun.

Theatre in the Park stages Irving Berlin's best musical

By David Small
Contributing columnist

"Annie Get Your Gun" may not be full of complex themes or heart-stopping ideals, but as the kick-off production of Shawnee Mission Park's 21st annual Theatre in the Park season, it proves "there's no business like show business."

Probably the strongest element of the 1946 musical is the Irving Berlin score, which includes an impressive number of showstopping songs: "Anything You Can Do, I Can Do Better," "You Can't Get A Man with A Gun," "They Say That Falling in Love is Wonderful," and, of course, "There's No Business Like Show Business."

Theatre in the Park's artistic producer, Philip Kinen, said he selected "Annie Get Your Gun," based on the strength of the Berlin music and then let loose with his own stylistic insights. Integral to Kinen's vision is the use of "Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show."

"The very first thing you see is the Wild West Show," Kinen said. "We're presenting a mo-

ment of history in a circus-type atmosphere. . . It's all taking place under a tent with a good and fast 1940s movie pace."

Kinen and the co-directors of the play, Christopher Glaze and Brenda May, agreed that one of the biggest obstacles to overcome was the memory of actress Ethel Merman (Berlin created the musical for her), who starred in the role of Annie Oakley and, in the film, Betty Hutton might her own frenetic style.

"We came into this show trying to get past the fact that most everything was written for Ethel Merman," said Kinen. "What I try to do is bring an overall quality and ideal to the show in the sense that I must adapt an older show to 1990's taste."

And how to accomplish that feat? "We went very Brechtian with this show," Kinen said. "We used slides for visualization and watched the metaphoric knots of the machine move in."

How was the cast able to understand this vision? "I break everything down to the director."

choreographer, scene designer, conductor and vocal director," Kinen said. "They in turn eventually it reaches the cast."

During a recent rehearsal at the park stage, Christopher Glaze and Brenda May sat back in the director's chairs and nervously watched stories unfold close in.

Although the cast would be put through their paces for the show's final dress rehearsal (the play, which opened June 15, runs through June 24), it was a good start through. Rain would force the two co-directors to send their crew home 20 minutes early.

Before the deluge, Glaze and May reflected on why they chose to tackle "Annie Get Your Gun."

"We've done lots of things together in the past," May said, "so we decided to try this 'Annie.' We also like the time slot, since it can get pretty hot out here in July and August."

The challenge of this production, May added, is the range of experience of the cast members; some have done plays before, many are making their first foray on a stage.

"The real challenge," May said, "is pulling it all together."

"Doing a park show is a chance for people to get out and participate in a production and get an education at the same time," Glaze said.

"If you'd seen this show six weeks ago, when we first started, in contrast to what you've seen tonight, and I have really seen some people grow up in the last six weeks."

"Annie Get Your Gun" will run at the Theater in the Park, today, Saturday and Sunday. All shows begin at 8:30 p.m.

Star photos by David Brandt

Guns and theatre

'Annie Get Your Gun' opens Friday at Theatre in Park



The major players in the cast of "Annie Get Your Gun," which begins Friday at the Theatre in Shawnee Mission Park, are: (front row, from left) Kathleen Dougherty as Dolly Tate, Matt VanBuskirk as Charley Davenport, Pat VanBuskirk as Charley Davenport, and (back row, from left) Jim Hendricks as Buffalo Bill, Travis Russell as Sitting Bull, and Forrest White as Pawnee Bill.

The Wild West and the Far East
Friday when "Annie Get Your
Gun" starts its two weekend run at
the Theatre in Shawnee Mission
Park.

The musical production tells the
story of Annie Oakley and the
rivalry between Buffalo Bill's Wild
West Show, of which Oakley was a
featured attraction, and Pawnee
Bill's Far East Show, according to
co-directors Brenda May and Chris
Glaze.

The story is told with music by
the late Irving Berlin in front of
elaborate old west-style sets. The
show features Stephanie Hennigan
as Annie Oakley, Matt Walberg as
Frank Butler, Pat VanBuskirk as
Charley Davenport, Jim Hendricks
as Buffalo Bill and Forrest White
as Pawnee Bill.

Part of the charm of the show,
May said, is that the characters
and the story are based on real peo-
ple and events. But the story is
basically a fairy tale, she said.

"It's the basic Cinderella story,"
she said. "A hillbilly girl becomes a
celebrity, falls in love. They fight,
break up and get together again."
It also shows the history of
vaudeville," Glaze added, "how
they toured on a shoe-string
budget and how they went from
town to town barely making it in
the early 1900s."

The show is full of Irving Berlin
favorites, May said, such as
"There's No Business Like Show
Business" and "Doin' What Comes
Naturally". Musical accompani-
ment will be provided by a 30-piece
orchestra under the direction of

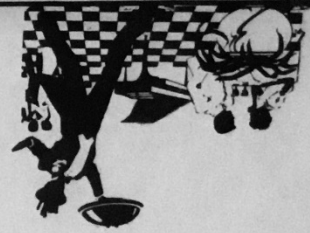
Annie Oakley, Stephanie
Brenda May
Directors: Christopher Glaze and
Mrs. Little Horse, Lillie Salinas
Foster Wilson
Mac, John Stock
Yellow Foot, Walter Brandes
Iron Trail, Cam Lynch
Minnie, Melanie Huntington
Jessie, Dextra Brooks
Nellie, Samantha Biggs
Little Jake, Marc Scervo
Dolly Tate, Kassl Dougherty
Frank Butler, Jim Hendricks
Buffalo Bill, Matt Walberg
Charlie Davenport, Pat
Hennigan

ANNIE GET YOUR GUN
8:30 p.m. Admission is \$1.
through June 24. All shows are at
Shawnee Mission Park, and con-
tinues the next weekend, June 22
Friday, Saturday and Sunday at
"Annie Get Your Gun" begins at
age of 101.
presented partially as a tribute to
Berlin, who died this year at the
May said the show was being
Dan Larson.

Ripperger
Gunnanger
Mrs. Yellow Foot, Pat
Nenita
Hennigan
Pat
VanBuskirk
Jim Hendricks
Conductor, Matt Walberg
Walter Brandes
Pat Budlong
Dave Rogers
Forrest White
Sitting Bull, Travis Russell
Mr. Adams, Carol Saagorski
Dr. Ferguson, Rex Rodenbush
Mr. Ernest Henderson, Don
Mr. Clay, Jack Hallquist
Loverly
Christian Porter, Mike Cairns,
Male Chorus/Dancers: Rob Reeder,
Walter Brandes
Ensemble: Shirley Wagner, David
Byerley, Christine Byerley
Adult Chorus/Dancers & Singers:
Sharon Pilcher, Marya Anne Rip-
perger, Kara Pablick, Penny Simp-
son, Suzi Makalous, Kathi Disbrow,
Tina Throckmorton
Children's Chorus: Reena Rupan,
Rita Agrawal, Greeta Agrawal,
Ashley Biggs
Aquilina Locke, Joshua Staley,



'Guys and Dolls' takes SM Park stage



On the Town

Journal Herald

a guide to local dining, entertainment and community events



GUY AND DOLL — Slinky Sarah Brown, played by Mary Jane Postgate-Smith, sings "I'll Know" as Sky Masterson (Matt Wahberg) looks on during a rehearsal for Theatre in the Parks' upcoming presentation of "Guys and Dolls."

duction starting an all-child cast featured some euphemistic variations — for instance, the alluring things, and there are no prima donnas in the group.

The cast members range in age from nine to "fifty-something," Spyker said, and they cover a broad range of experience levels. Spyker said her most challenging task as director of the show was to work effectively with all the different levels of experience. The cast features some members who are pursuing careers in music and acting, she said, and others who never graced a stage previous to this show.

Spyker herself has acquired experience in acting, singing, directing and producing shows at the Kansas, where she worked for

limer Sarah Hiss.

"I've really enjoyed my leads the years, Miss Adelaide, will be played by Theatre in the Park first-

Sarah Brown, Nathan's fiancée of 14 years, Miss Adelaide, will be played by Theatre in the Park first-

Jane Postgate-Smith (Rosabud in "Edwin Drood") as the saintly Mystery of Edwin Drood") as his Perry White (Jasper in "The Extraordinary Sky Masterson; "Anne Get Your Gun") as gambler Matt Wahberg (Frank Butler in Theatre in the Park veterans as this year's version will star such at the Park in 1976.

The last adult version was put on dancers.

hot box dancers became hat box week stint at the Park.

more city-life realism to the idyllic story line than other directors typically do by using a set that portrays the city as a forbidding element looming over the characters.

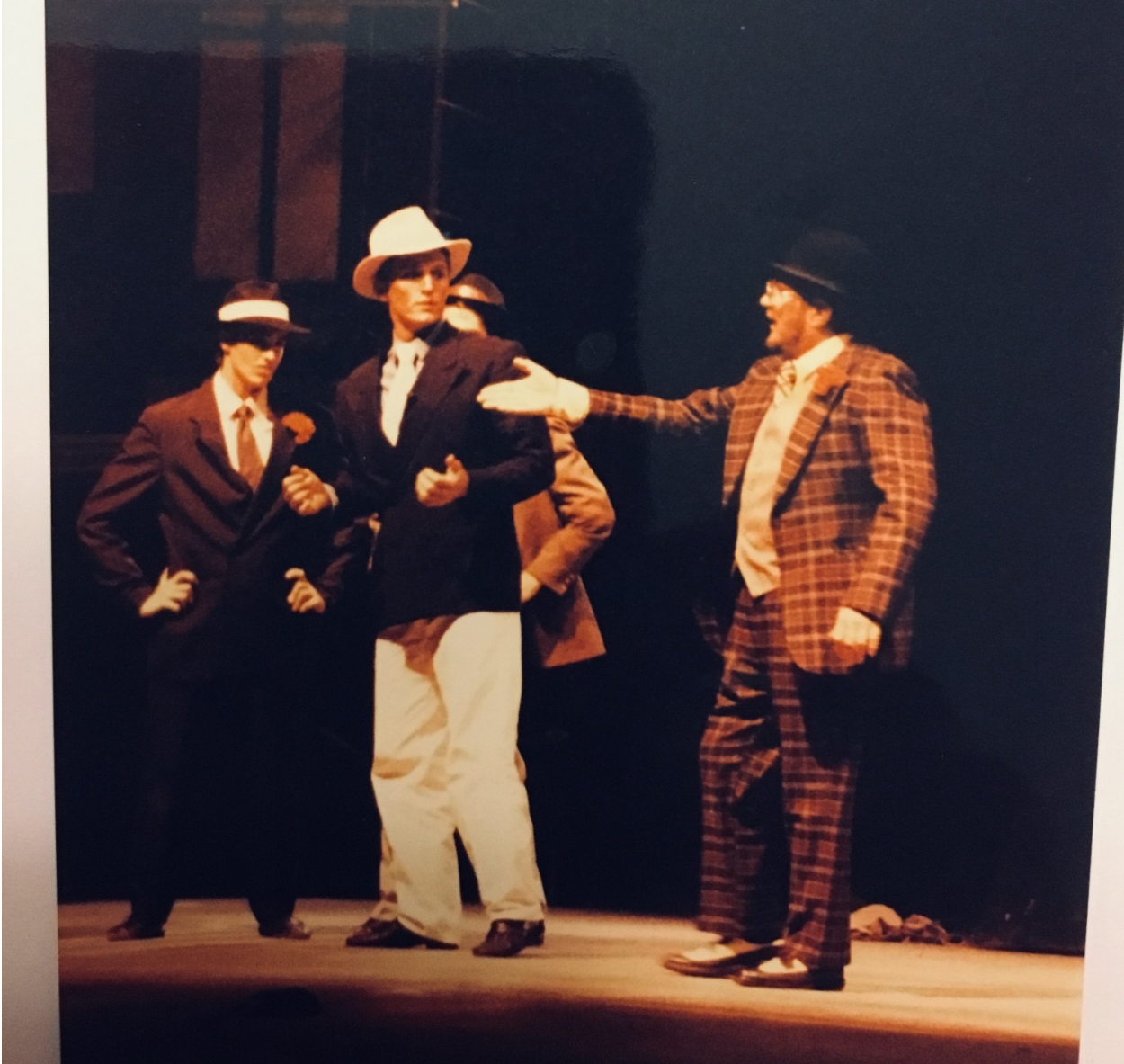
"The show has mission people who are out to save souls and help people from the darker side of the light," Spyker said. "Some people from a darker way of life in who are out to save souls and help people from the darker side of the light," Spyker said. "Some people from the darker side of the light."

This rendition is definitely more mature than the last "Guys and Dolls" production staged at Theatre in the Park. That 1955 pro-

by Robyn Stauffer
Journal Herald Staff



GUYS AND DOLLS — The cast of the rousing musical, to open this weekend at Theatre in the Park, includes (top) Mary Jane Postgate Smith, (from left) Matt Wallberg, Sarah Hiss, Perry White and Jay Coombes.













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