

Orangeville Music Theatre starting the New Year with the Wedding Singer

By Constance Scrafield

The Wedding Singer is, not surprisingly, a romantic comedy musical and a pretty lively way for Orangeville Music Theatre (OMT) to start the New Year.

‘It’s 80’s pop music,’ observed Music Director Heather Holmes. ‘This show is going to look great on stage – just the ‘80s coming back to Orangeville.’

Based on the original 1998 movie, which starred Adam Sandler and Drew Barrymore, there are differences between the two productions, with variations in both the plot and the music.

However, the basic plot: Robbie is a wedding singer, ready to marry his sweetie, Linda. She subsequently dumps him at the altar to find a more ambitious husband. The day before at another wedding, Robbie meets the beautiful Julia, a waitress, who is about to become engaged to a Wall Street hot shot. Broken hearted from Linda’s leaving him, Robbie is encouraged by his friends and grandmother to carry on, and, eventually, Julia and her friend, Holly, enter into the fun of mending Robbie’s heart. Naturally, things have to go wrong before they can go right and the ensuing confusion and heart break of miscommunications and self doubt, which are basically maintained from the movie, with minor shuffles about the sequence of events, keeping the laughter and the music flowing toward the happy ending.

If you see what we mean.

Director and Choreographer Raeburn Ferguson has a long history with OMT, headlining a few of their productions from the age of 14. That was her first show. She also sang in Shrek and has played Columbia in OMT’s Rocky Horror Show for the last four years. She is now returning to OMT to direct The Wedding Singer, after graduating with a BA in Theatre from York University in June. Upon graduation, Ferguson went to participate in the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland, for six weeks. Since then, she has been working with OMT for this show.

It is clear that Ferguson loves this musical comedy. ‘Robbie Hart gets his heart broken and then falls in love again – the musical numbers are great and the comedy is too.’

She says there will be a live band for the show, the Highway Lights. Sean Casey from Toronto is starring in the piece as Robbie Hart and Tawni Holmes (no relation to Heather Holmes) plays the lead as Julia. Tawni Holmes played in OMT’s production of Grease.

Other members of the cast have performed in other OMT productions as well.

Heather Holmes has also come back to OMT after her studies. She went to New York where she majored in vocal and jazz at school there.

Previously for OMT, she was the vocal coach for Shrek.

She is now teaching music in Orangeville, at Tritone Music Studio, which is now been open for going on three years.

‘I love teaching music and working with the kids,’ was Holmes’ comment.

‘I am communicating with the band, making sure everything musical works,’ she described her job with this show. ‘We’re really lucky to have such a great cast. They work really hard and learn their lines well. It’s much easier to work with people who know what they’re doing.’

What in particular attracted the group to do The Wedding Singer?

‘It’s just such a sunny show,’ Holmes replied. ‘It is mostly original music written for the stage show with two songs from the movie.

The band is really great and the show is going to be terrific!’

The Wedding Singer is on at the Opera House, opening Jan. 9, and playing for three weekends – Jan. 9, 10 (8 p.m.) and 11 (2 p.m.); 16, 17, (8 p.m.) 18 (2 p.m.) and 23, 24 (8 p.m.) Tickets and information is available at the Opera House Box Office 519-942-3423 and on line at www.OrangevilleMusicTheatre.com