



Bringing eastern Texas to Western Oregon

Western theatre prepares to open "Best Little Whorehouse in Texas"

By Stephanie Blair | Staff Writer

Matthew Ramage, Nick Hulscher and Hunter Atkin

On March 1, the "nicest little whorehouse you ever did see" will be open to the public at Rice Auditorium. Under the direction of dance professor Sharon Oberst, actors and techs have been preparing Western's production of "Best Little Whorehouse in Texas," a Tony Award-winning musical best known for the 1982 film adaptation.

The show, both wild and western, tells the story of conservative ideals battling it out against a century of tradition in Texas. After popular

television personality Melvin P. Thrope, portrayed by junior BFA acting major Nicholas Hulscher, condemns a whorehouse, the town goes into a frenzy. Some trying to close it, others fighting to keep it open.

At the center of the conflict is brothel-owner Miss Mona — the iconic role portrayed by Dolly Parton in 1982, here played by Lindsay Spear — and the abiding Sheriff Dodd, who regular attendees of Western theater will recognize as senior BFA acting major

Gabriel Elmore. It seems like a simple plot, but the two-hour long production tackles a number of themes.

"This show is much more than it presents itself to be. There are societal overtones to it which I believe are still prevalent today," said Elmore. "The deep-seated tragedy of watching something unfold before your very eyes, knowing damn well that there's nothing you can do to stop it, is something which isn't addressed in everyday life."

The musical is still primarily a comedy, however, and a mature one, at that. Parents who are unfamiliar with the show may wish to see it before bringing their children. On the doors of Rice Auditorium, signs can be found warning of adult themes, including alcohol use, strong language and mild sexual content, in stereotypical Texan language: "Howdy y'all! This here show has some cussin' and some rootin' tootin' shootin' in it. There's a piddlin' of hop juice an a tad bit of spoonin' and carryin on."

From the 26-person cast to the box office workers, the set builders to the costume crew, the amount of work put into the production gives the show a feeling of authenticity and passion in every detail.

"I love musicals, and it's been wonderful to have a chance to get to know some people and create some really gorgeous music with them," said

Photos and cover photo by PAUL F. DAVIS



Chryna Shurts singing her heart out



Caiti Rangel as Angel

Continued on the back