

STEPPING UP by Gary Kyle/Graphic Artist



'ALADDIN AND THE WONDERFUL LAMP'

Pre-Disney story set to shine

By DUSTIN WYATT
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When you think "Aladdin," Disney might automatically come to mind. But the Spartanburg Youth Theater's production of "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp" is based on the Arabian Knights tale, written long before Walt Disney even started making movies.

In the play, Aladdin, a young, mischievous boy, gets his hands on a magical lamp that grants him not three wishes, but infinite wishes. And there's no limitations to the kind of wishes the genie, called Jinn in this version, can grant.

Like the movie, "There is an evil sorcerer who realizes the only way he can get the lamp is to go through this young boy Aladdin," director Leah Wren said.

Wren says the lamp in the show is so large and spectacular, it's pretty much a character in itself.

"It comes to life on stage through the magic of theater," she said.

The title character of Aladdin is played by Grayson Schmitt, a 14-year-old student at McCracken Junior High School. Grayson has been in four youth theater plays before this one, but he says this has been his favorite.

"It's a very interesting experience. When people come to this play, they expect the Disney version,



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Hunter House plays the young Aladdin in the Spartanburg Youth Theater's production of "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp," which runs at 4:30 and 7 p.m. Friday and 2 p.m. Saturday.

Want to go?

Where: Chapman Cultural Center in the David Reid Theatre

When: 4:30 and 7 p.m. Friday, 2 p.m. Saturday

Tickets: \$12 for adults, \$9 for students

Info: Call 583-4891 or visit www.spartanburgyouththeatre.com.



More photos

Go to GoUpstate.com to check out a photo gallery from "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp."

they expect something they have seen before," he said before a rehearsal on a recent Monday. "But this play is nothing they have seen before, and that's what makes it so great. The plot is similar, but there's a lot of twists you don't see in the Disney ver-

sion." One character the play features that is absent from the movie version is Aladdin's mother.

"She's a really funny character," said Ashley Tisdale, a 14-year-old student at Spartanburg Day School. Ashley plays

Princess Babr al-Budur in the play.

"It's definitely a show kids can enjoy. They will have fun watching it," she said.

But Wren says this is a show that has broad appeal to everyone, young and old. "I feel like at this time, with everything going on in the world today, the story is something that really relates to everyone. It's a great family show. It's just spectacular."

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