



photo by Autumn Carter

Lanny Mitchell has appeared previously in Cottage Theatre's 'Les Miserables' and 'Assassins', but 'A Chorus Line' marks his directorial debut in Cottage Grove. A simple stage offers a chance for more character and story development.

'A Chorus Line' brings another Broadway gem to CT

BY SAM WRIGHT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Cottage Theatre opened "A Chorus Line" over the weekend, and it is a production that differs from recent plays held at the Theatre. The original play (by Michael Bennett) was a big hit throughout the late 1970s and 1980s, and once again the Cottage Theatre has successfully produced another famed Broadway gem.

Cottage Grove invited back Lanny Mitchell, a professional of the theatre business that has worked on and off Broadway and has appeared in previous Cottage Theatre plays such as "Les Miserables," and "Assassins." However, this was Mitchell's first

time as a director at the Theatre. He also choreographed and plays Zach in the show.

The play takes place entirely at the audition for a chorus line of a Broadway show and dives into the professional and personal lives of all the different auditioning dancers. The setting gives the show its first unique aspect. The stage is supposed to be a studio and is therefore empty except for mirrors lined in the back, and the costumes are simple rehearsal clothes. The simplicity of the stage allows for more focus to be on character development as each character gets a chance to explain who they are and where they're from. This leads to another unique aspect of the show.

While some character's stories are

more prominent and drawn out longer, there really are no main characters that steal the show. And while the characters are developed to the audience, their objective at the audition is to blend in with the chorus line and not stand out.

Characters' stories range from growing up in a wealthy yet neglectful suburban home to growing up in different boroughs of New York City struggling with poverty, abuse and in some cases, being accepted for their sexuality.

Some top performances came from characters like Bobby played by George Butterick. Butterick puts on a quirky persona to display the story of an outcast to his suburban family. Contrast that with the aging and

aggressively promiscuous Sheila, played by Marcee Shriver Long, and the cast brings the audience on an emotional roller coaster.

The play connects with the audience differently in that there is no protagonist and antagonist. The audience connects with different characters based on individual relatability which makes the viewer root for different characters to get the job on the chorus line.

The size of the cast makes Mitchell's directing and choreography all the more impressive and has proven he is a welcome sight at the Cottage Theatre, whether he's acting or directing.