

Theatre continues season with western romance

By Anna Barrett
associate editor

As the theatre season continues, Director John Davenport chose a challenging piece to kick off the semester. OHS theatre worked hard to perfect "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence," which opened on Feb. 14. According to Davenport, it is a relatively new play based on a short story, of the same title, that was written in the 50s, and became a very famous Hollywood film in the 60s.

"Our main character is from New York, and he is traveling outwest. He comes in contact with kind of a rouge group of outlaws," Davenport said. "He is stuck in this town until he can heal, and while he is stuck there, he befriends some people who don't know how to read, and he teaches them to read. He eventually starts a school. Since education has come into the area, one of the outlaws, who everyone is scared of because he is supposedly an extremely talented gun slinger, Liberty Valence, makes threats, and our main character even-

tually ends up having to face him. The whole play is the young man questioning whether or not he actually shot Liberty Valence."

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Joel Adamson
senior

of all of the characters," Adamson said. "One of the hardest aspects is trying to find all of our motivations and goals, which is vital to making the characters and the overall story believable. I have taken apart of other shows that are of this same difficulty.

For this show, Davenport carefully chose the cast, with the lead roles falling into the hands of the more experienced actors, such as Joel Adamson.

"This show is another hard piece to produce because of the depths and emotional backgrounds

Shows such as, 12 Angry Men and Romeo and Juliet. Even though the process is hard, the end product is always rewarding and I'm always glad I took part in them."

To help the actors and actresses get more into character, Davenport recruited the help of U.S. History teacher, Dr. Stella Lindsey.

"I believe historical knowledge enhances and informs all of our experiences—which is particularly true of this play. You take so much more away from the performance when you have some knowledge of the history of the West," Lindsey said. "I've just been lucky to have been invited into Mr. Davenport's world. Simply put, he's a creative genius and a gracious and kind man. We have collaborated on theater and history trips to Chicago over the past three years, and we're always talking about the historical context of different plays or musicals and why they were important at a particular time in history."

Lindsey helps the characters better understand what was happening historically to help the acting.

"The plot is driven by the changes taking place in the West and in the nation as a whole. Early in the play, each character had been deeply impacted by the challenges of living in a region where power belonged to those who took it through the use of brute force," Lindsey said. "As the play moves forward, power shifts to the politicians, the courts, the educated, and—ultimately—the "civilized" in society. The gunslinger gives way to the politician, but the question of legitimacy remains an issue."

The OHS theatre program has rewarded Adamson in different ways, and he encourages everyone to become a part of it.

"There may be some days where the work is hard, but it is always so rewarding and satisfying to see everything come to fruition," Adamson said. "Whether you want to act or work on crew, there is always a place where you can truly feel at home in theatre. It may not be easy starting out and it may not really get any easier, but if you really want to do it, then just do it."



Top left: Seniors **Caroline Newsom** and **Jacob Heuer** act out a scene. Bottom left: Senior **Caroline Newsom** walks down the stairs that were a part of the set as she enters into the scene. Middle: Seniors **Caroline Newsom** and **Joel Adamson** gaze into each others' eyes. They were the lead roles in the play that is considered a western love story. Right: Seniors **Joel Adamson**, **Caroline Newsom**, and **Damarius Wilson** stand around a "bar" having a conversation. This love story opened on Valentine's Day and closed on Feb. 16.

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