

Some like it hot with sugar

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Chris Riley



The tap dancing gang from Chicago finishes a jazzy dance number before going off to look for two musicians who witnessed a murder.

GILROY – Most people may be familiar with the 1959 movie "Some Like it Hot," starring Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon, but South Valley Civic Theatre actors are performing a similar version called "Sugar," which opens Friday night, at the Morgan Hill Community Playhouse.

This week the actors have been busy putting the finishing touches on scene changes and musical cues, and everything is coming together great, said producer Richard Kaiser. Kaiser is not only a longtime producer for SVCT but has taken on the role of playing an ensemble member in the musical.

The show set in Chicago comes to life with 1930s period costumes, but it has its own twists and comedic routines with toe-tapping gangsters, men in tights and a Marilyn Monroe look-alike – so sweet her name must be "Sugar."

"We have had so much fun with this show, just last night we were rehearsing until 1 a.m., and it didn't even faze us," Kaiser said.

20 cast members have rehearsed for 10 weeks and invested more than 150 hours into making the last show of the season a success, Kaiser said.

Most of the actors say the best part of the show is seeing John Brewer and Freddie Fuentes of Morgan Hill plays characters who dress in womens clothing to avoid the gangsters who want to kill them.

Lauren Cowan, of Morgan Hill plays the role of seductress, Sugar Kane. Her father, Don Cowan proudly sat in Wednesday's dress rehearsal videotaping her performance. He says she has spent the last six months renting tapes of Marilyn Monroe's movies in order to master her expressions and vocal style, for the part.

"I love acting and doing theater, because you get to become a different person," Lauren Cowan said.

Kaiser said even though the show has some adult comedy, there is no foul language and it is appropriate for families.

"The show is hysterical, we are laughing every night," said Jon Reed, of Morgan Hill who plays Sir Osgood Fielding. This is Reed's 12th show with SVCT.

South Valley Civic Theatre has always been a family affair said Maureen Imagawa, the director of "Sugar," and this show is no exception.

Maureen's sister Mitzie Imagawa is the choreographer. Scott and Jeremy Borgia of Morgan Hill play henchmen and gang members while Richard Kaiser's wife Becky helps with costumes and takes producer notes.

This is SVCT's third show and first musical in the newly renovated \$2.5 million Morgan Hill Community Playhouse on the Corner of Dunne Avenue and Monterey Street. The playhouse seats 187 people and is equipped with movie-theatre style chairs.

Imagawa, who has directed nearly 10 shows for SVCT, said that this show has had its difficult moments with no orchestra until Monday night and the loss of their musical director to a family emergency earlier in rehearsals. But she joked that as in all show business the show must always go on, and this Friday at 8 p.m. the curtain rises.