

Nonprofit profile: Musical ‘Footloose’ coming to South Valley Civic Theatre stage

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Brianna Pember plays Ariel Moore and Edie Garcia-Flores plays Ren McCormack in the SVCT teen musical show “Footloose.”

Photo by Jason Leong

By Camille Bounds

When South Valley Civic Theatre’s Elizabeth Mandel called and asked me to visit a rehearsal of “Footloose” (that opens Feb 24) at the nonprofit group’s Morgan Hill warehouse and see what goes into making their latest teen production, I turned up and was truly amazed at what I found.

A small door opened to an unexpected 6,000 square feet of organized costume storage, sets from the current and former productions, a staging area full of the 38 spiraling teen actors polishing their songs and dances in SVCT’s latest production. Nearly all the actors in the production are from Morgan Hill, Gilroy and Hollister.

Director Alan Chipman was getting the gyrating group together to rehearse a scene. Javier Garcia’s hammer was flaying building scenery, in this case a railroad track. Other volunteers worked all over the place — painting, sawing or doing something for the enhancement of the production. Producer Marianne Snook hovered over all aspects, making plans to deliver what is needed then and later. And they were busy answering everyone’s questions. It was like finding Oz at the end of the Yellow Brick Road — luckily, without encountering the Wicked Witch of the West.

Vocal director Joy Reynolds and choreographer Jyovonne Montosa worked on their areas with the performers who are being coached for special moments for their roles.

Who knew that our Morgan Hill-based community theater group has such an amazing professional organized secret. Nothing is wasted from costume materials, leftover paint to wood used for the sets that will fold up to be moved to the Morgan Hill Community Playhouse for final rehearsals. No one can imagine what goes into producing the five shows SVCT is offering this season.

A live orchestra will accompany this production of “Footloose,” a musical about a teenage boy’s change of life after moving from the hip big city of Chicago to a small religious town in Oklahoma. He faces an ordeal with the rigorous local edicts, including a ban on dancing instituted by the local preacher (played by Jacob Goller) determined to exercise a control over the town’s youth that he cannot command in his own home with his rebellious daughter.



Paetra Rottman playing Vi Moore singing “Can You Find It In Your Heart” during a rehearsal for South Valley Civic Theatre’s upcoming show “Footloose” playing at the Morgan Hill Community Playhouse.
Photo by Jason Leong

The book and lyrics by Dean Pitchford were featured in the hit 1984 movie starring Kevin Bacon and then to the two-year run on Broadway starting in 1998. “Footloose” is one of the 20 most produced high school musicals.

Eddie Garcia-Flores from Watsonville handles the lead role as Ren McCormack, the teen making the change from big city life to small town America. He showed up at the last night and last minute of the auditions and was the last to audition — and the producers were so impressed by his musical, dancing and acting talents that he got the lead. “Footloose” opens Feb. 24 and will entertain with high energy coming from a cast of teen performers with a lot of fun talent. Go and enjoy it. Maybe I’ll see you there opening night.

Camille Bounds is the arts, entertainment and travel columnist for Morgan Hill Life and Gilroy Life. She can be reached at bounds17@gmail.com.

What: “Footloose”

When: 8 p.m. Feb. 24 and 25, March 3, 4, 10, 11, 17 and 18; 2:30 p.m. Feb. 26, March 5 and 12. At noon March 11 there will be a sensory-friendly show

**Where: Morgan Hill Community Playhouse
17090 Monterey Road, Morgan Hill**

Tickets: \$16 to \$25, available at (408) 842-7469, email boxoffice@svct.com, or visit www.SVCT.org