

Enjoying the ride behind the curtains of Lagniappe

The process of making NT's favorite show

by Alyssa Pak

Lagniappe is one of the most unique New Trier traditions; not many schools have a production that cracks jokes about their own community. We get to laugh about skits where math teacher Bradley Kuklis, orchestra conductor Peter Rosheger, and Kinetic Wellness teacher Andy Horne all read their Rate My Teacher reviews, but we don't get to witness the extensive process behind the candidly funny of the final show.

There are many components that go into producing Lagniappe, from writing skits to handpicking music.

The process started at the beginning of April 2018, when board member positions were selected based on a résumé, online application and interview process. Members then attended board meetings where they learned more about their upcoming responsibilities.

One of the main points of contention for the production is what the theme will be, which the co-producers ultimately decided on after the script was put together. We've all been privy to the intense stress floating around New Trier, whether it be about schoolwork, our own personal drama, or the ACT. However, the "Enjoy the Ride" sends a different sort of message. "We wanted to take an approach to high school that tells students to sit



Cast members perform "Celebration" choreographed by Nicki Montenegro and Lily Lederer | Pearlman

back, and enjoy the moments that are happening in front of them. It is all too often we are distracted by external forces that we cannot see the amazing things that are happening right in front of us," explained senior co-producer Josh Hoffman.

After the theme was decided, each crew managed their responsibilities separately before coming together to organize the final product.

"Everyone was individually working on their own parts of the show, and then when all the pieces came together everything worked so well," remarked senior Eli Friedman, one of two conductors.

Hoffman agreed, "Watching it all come together at the dress is an incredible sight, and the excitement in the Gaffney is exuberant."

The creators of Lagniappe worked throughout the summer on their individual components in order to prepare for practices during the year.

"From 9:30-4:30 6 days a week before school started, the Gaffney and rehearsal rooms would be busy with scenes, choral work, set construction, dance rehearsals, band number practice and so much more," explained Hoffman.

Board members also carry heavy the responsibilities as student leaders. Junior Cameron Baba assumed the role of head composer, and her job included overseeing the music writing staff and band over the last several months.

"My favorite song in this show came about as a result of me and my friend lying on the floor for about four

hours complaining about our lack of ideas, but then one came out. The songwriting process is a complicated and funny thing," said Baba.

For others, such as junior scenic designer Isa Figlioli, Lagniappe involved creating a design for the backdrop that hangs in front of the set for several scenes, and then bringing that designs to life.

"We began by chalking out the design, and then painted it in a "paint by numbers" fashion," said Figlioli. However, this process isn't always smooth. Between arranging the band number, transcribing it themselves and putting together 30 individual pieces of music, Friedman acknowledged that there were certainly challenges along the way.

"This was a time-consuming and exhausting process, but we

learned a lot," he said. And according to Figlioli, the scenic team faced a shorter build time for this show, causing students to hone their focus.

Despite any challenges, the actors and creators of Lagniappe came together to create a show that their peers loved, and their dedication was evident on stage.

"Lagniappe fosters such a significant bond in its community because of the nature of the production. It's a place where artists of all different expertise and passions are able to formulate a production through support and collaboration," said senior director Andrew Kline.

Many other crew members have also noted this same sense of community, as Kline's fellow director, senior Chris Sciortino, stated that one of his favorite parts of Lagniappe was being able to collaborate with his peers in a way he never had before.

"Being in a collaborative environment, building characters and scenes provided me with a totally new perspective on theatre as an art form in general," said Sciortino.

Although many students who are involved in the performing arts participate in Lagniappe since the production is run by the theatre department, senior director Laura Stone noted that the production isn't just for theatre kids.

"If you're interested in costuming or writing I highly suggest you get involved," encouraged Stone. "There are opportunities beyond just theatre related aspects in Lagniappe and it would be awesome if more of the school got involved."

"Crazy Rich Asians" brings diversity to the big screen

Film breaks barriers and box office records

by Darcie Kim

Ever since I was old enough to watch Hollywood entertainment, I've struggled to find an actor who looked like me and represented my ethnicity.

The few times I did encounter Asian Americans in films and TV shows, they often embodied racist stereotypes or had irrelevant roles.

So, it's easy to imagine my excitement when I found out that "Crazy Rich Asians," a movie with an entirely Asian/Asian American cast, would premiere in theaters.

Naturally, I went to see it on opening day with my sister and when we both came out, we were bawling like babies, not only because it was a dramatic story that pulled at our heartstrings, but because for the first time in our lives, an American film had made us feel proud to be Asian.

"Crazy Rich Asians" follows the story of NYU economics professor, Rachel Chu (Constance Wu) and her boyfriend, wealthy heir and bachelor Nick Young (Henry Golding), as she accompanies him to his best friend's wedding in Singapore.

Rachel is wholly unprepared for the scrutiny she faces as she meets Nick's family and the jealous socialites clamoring for her position as Nick's girlfriend.

Despite the serious storyline, the film succeeds in maintaining a lighthearted tone that leaves the audience laughing frequently throughout. The movie is set in Singapore and showcases a flamboyant celebration of luxury and money while also paying homage



Constance Wu and Henry Golding star as a couple navigating social and family tensions | "Crazy Rich Asians"

to morals and traditions essential to Asian culture.

"Although the movie features the top 1% of wealthy Asians, I feel like it still did a good job depicting aspects of Asian culture. The dumpling making scene was so accurate, and I could really relate to the movie's message of how important it is to respect the elders in our families," said junior Emily Rhee.

The empowerment that came with knowing that my culture was appropriately and respectfully represented in a mainstream Hollywood movie is difficult to articulate.

Growing up, when your encounters with Asian Americans in the entertainment industry are limited to squinting and unattractive men speaking with exaggerated accents and broken English, or the rebellious and often sexualized female character with a blue streak of hair and wearing all black clothing, or the classic studious nerd with minimal social skills and an obsession with being a perfect student, having pride for your culture is difficult.

"I hadn't thought about the significance of having an all Asian cast before [watching "Crazy Rich Asians"] because it never occurred to me that some people felt underrepresented. But I was amazed by the impact of this movie," said senior Cece McNeely.

This is the first movie to feature a predominantly Asian cast since "The Joy Luck Club" in 1993, and it's hard to overstate the significance of the success of this film.

Asians have faced a pattern of underrepresentation in the entertainment industry, and even in movies specifically written for leads with Asian or Pacific Island backgrounds, Caucasians have played these roles. Scarlett Johansson was accused of whitewashing when she took on the main role in "Ghost in the Shell," a movie based on a Japanese manga series and originally adapted in 1995 as a Japanese animated film.

Emma Stone also played a character who was a quarter Hawaiian and a quarter Chinese in the movie "Aloha," despite not representing either of these ethnicities.

"Asian Americans are rarely represented in the entertainment industry, and because of recent concerns about whitewashing Asian cultures, it's especially important now to have a movie with a predominantly Asian cast that was so successful," said senior Hannah Kadin.

"Crazy Rich Asians" exceeded expectation and took the top spot at box offices its opening weekend. As of September 12, it earned \$139.8 million in domestic grosses, making it the biggest romantic comedy since "The Proposal" in 2009.

Perhaps more notable than the movie's financial success is its influence drawing immigrants to theaters.

First-generation Asian Americans tend to shy away from the crowds and language barriers, but it seems that this movie has succeeded in bridging a generation gap in our society.

"I enjoyed the movie's ability to bring people closer together. I went to see it with my mom and sister, and now my mom is going to teach us both Mahjong," said senior Alexis Woodrick.

What in the world is going on?

by Eleanor Kaplan

On Friday, Sept. 14, President Trump's former campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, agreed to cooperate fully with the investigation of Russian involvement in the 2016 elections. The investigation is led by special counsel Robert Mueller III. Manafort made this decision as part of a plea deal after being convicted of eight felonies related to financial fraud last month.

Source: New York Times

Tropical Storm Florence has created mass flooding in areas all along the East Coast. The storm has taken the lives of 17 people and 700,000 are without power. In a rare coincidence, China and the Philippines are also being battered by a major storm, Typhoon Mangkhut, which has been named one of the most dangerous storms of the season. As of Tuesday, Sept. 18, 25 people have died and more than 87,000 have been evacuated. The 105 mile-per-hour winds and major flooding have caused landslides, destroying thousands of homes.

Source: Washington Post

Lake Michigan water temperatures have been on average five degrees higher this season. As a result, as swimmers can attest, late-season algae blooms have been washing up on the shoreline. Cold-water fish are struggling to find optimal temperatures, forcing them to go to the middle of the lake where there is little food. A mass die-off of fish both in the lake and in surrounding rivers is expected.

Source: Chicago Tribune