

# “Once Upon a Mattress” gives refreshing twist on classic fairy tale

Musical retelling of “The Princess and the Pea” sends new feminist message

by Katie Kim

A twist on Hans Christian Andersen’s classic fairy tale, “Princess and the Pea,” brought smiles and laughs to the faces of the audience watching the musical play “Once Upon a Mattress,” performed by Choir Opera from Mar. 8 to Mar. 11.

Marshall Barer’s play starts off with the minstrels singing “Many Moons Ago,” explaining the story of the Princess and the Pea. Being a comedic musical play, it then gets argued by characters Jester and Sorceress, clearing it up and informing the audience of the true story of the princess.

The first plot conflict that we as an audience find out is that Prince Dauntless is lonely on the look-out for his bride to be.

The audience is then introduced the environment of the kingdom. Prince Dauntless’s father, King Sextimus, suffers from a curse making him unable to speak. The curse can only be broken when “the mouse devours the hawk.” The prince’s mother, Queen Agravia, plays the antagonist of the musical. Due to King Sextimus’s cursed situation and everyone’s uncertainty of when it’s going to break, Queen Agravia took over.

Queen Agravia cannot get herself to allow any princess to marry her dear, beloved son. In order to make it difficult for the prince to



Phoebe Rudnick, Laura Stone, Sofia McGrath, and Jordan Pritzker shine in their respective roles | Neustadt

find the one, the queen develops a “sensitivity” test and gives it to all the princesses that Prince Dauntless had interests in. Previously, she has already tested 11 princesses, all of whom failed.

Senior Lauren Ellis, who played the role for Queen Agravia, said “Being the antagonist was honestly so much fun. She’s kind of a nut job, so it was really fun to just get on stage and be someone completely ridiculous and different from myself. Also, the crown I had to wear was really heavy so it made it a bit easier to be grouchy.”

The people of the Kingdom are in a hurry for a new king, due to the fact that Queen Agravia is a dominating, over-ruling “witch.” Two specific characters that truly worries about the situation of a single prince, a controlling queen and a mute king are the couple of Lady

Larken and Sir Harry.

To gain more reasons as to why Prince Dauntless needs to find himself a princess, Lady Larken hits Sir Harry with the news that he is a soon-to-be father. Sir Harry then goes on a journey to once and for all, find Prince Dauntless the love of his life.

Sir Harry comes back to the kingdom with, lo and behold, Princess Winnifred.

Princess Winnifred is introduced into the play as a mess. She had just swam the moat and doesn’t hold “princess-like” mannerisms, making it difficult for the people of the kingdom to believe she truly is from a royal bloodline.

Prince Dauntless immediately falls “in love with a girl named Fred” (Fred being the preferred name of Princess Winnifred), musically expressed in the number “Song of Love.”

loses hers. The show was not only entertaining but nostalgic, being a spin off on one of my favorite fairy tales. However, I preferred this take on the classic tale because it was empowering as well as comedic. I loved how a prince fell madly in love with a princess named Fred and I loved how it didn’t close with the typical “happily ever after” ending but instead, with the rat devouring the hawk.

Senior Maliha Sayed who played Lady Larken said, “The play is primarily a goofy comedy meant to entertain people so there aren’t a lot of deeper emotional messages but I also feel as though we could all be inspired by the spirit of Winnifred, because she is nothing but herself. All she had to do was exist as she was and she ended up with the happy ending she wanted. It’s kind of sweet for me to think about it that way.”

“The main story surrounds a mother’s attempted sabotage of the girl that really loves her son. This girl, Princess Winnifred, is not a conventional princess. She’s strong, blunt and very charismatic,” said senior Frankie Nayman who played the role of Sir Harry.

“The director also wanted to shift the power dynamic in the relationship between my Sir Harry and Lady Larken. Rather than seeing Larken becoming pregnant and dependent on Harry to rescue her,” Nayman said. “We tried to portray the story so that it was clear that Larken was using the pregnancy to her advantage and manipulating Harry into what she wanted. Overall, the message was intended to be a very feminist one, which I think is wonderful.”

# Model UN thrives at White House, NAIMUN conference

Members volunteered at the White House and attended conference

by Stephanie Kim

Model United Nations’ recent trip to the North American International Model United Nations Conference combined with volunteer work at the White House made for transformative experience for the members of New Trier’s Model UN program.

The NAIMUN conference, hosted by Georgetown University, occurred from Feb. 15 — 18 in Washington, D.C. According to the official website, the conference is “one of the largest and oldest UN simulations for high school students in North America and the world” where a staggering number of MUN teams from across the nation gather their delegates to “seek, through discussion, negotiation and debate, solutions to the various problems of the world.”

“[It’s an] invitational Model UN conference with mostly North American teams, and some teams from Europe and Asia with over 2000 people,” said freshman Alex Gordon.

What differentiates NAIMUN from other Model UN, or MUN, conferences is primarily the number of students in attendance. “We try to do both local and regional conferences, which are a little bit smaller. [NAIMUN] is unique because of the size. There were 3500 students there — the size is what makes it a big, national conference,”

said MUN sponsor Brent Strom. As with most MUN conferences, the NAIMUN conference involves the delegates from different schools diving into a variety of events. “We had 15 students in attendance, and for the most part, they represented countries,” explained Strom. Some of our students were able to represent different historical debates. It’s all about simulation; you simulate these events and these conversations as you play a role.” For the students involved in the historical debates, these delegates had the task of debating a resolution on a specific issue. “The conference has committees covering topics ranging from human rights issues to war topics to historical cabinets for people like Alexander the Great,” said sophomore Lindsey Falk. “For each committee, there are four days of debate and writing that hopefully amount to passing a resolution paper about the issues at hand.”

These committees typically consist of one- or two-person delegations, and the individual sessions themselves can last between 1.5 to 4 hours, according to freshman Maya Crystal.

Though the teams may be two people, New Trier’s delegates worked cooperatively to tackle complex issues, as was the case with Gordon. “My role was to debate how the UN could defeat terrorism. One person would debate while the other teammate would form an alliance and type a resolution paper outside the room,” explained Gordon. The delegates’ intense work paid off for some of New Trier’s MUN members in the form of an award as well.



New Trier Model UN delegates in line before security screening in order to visit White House | Guthrie

“My double and I got Honorable Mention in our committee, Legal, which we were very excited about because we had been working really hard on speeches and writing for the whole weekend,” said Falk.

It’s particularly significant that New Trier chose to attend the NAIMUN conference because of its location in Washington, D.C., the center scene for the United States government and American politics.

“The conference was hosted in Georgetown, which meant it was really close to D.C. Students who participate in MUN are usually highly interested in politics, and being near D.C. gave us the opportunity to see the government in action,” explained Crystal.

“Furthermore, the conference is a major conference and draws students internationally, which is just overall a cool experience.”

As Crystal mentioned, while in

D.C., not only did New Trier attend the NAIMUN conference, but they also got the unique opportunity to visit the White House and other government buildings and witness their day-to-day functions, even getting involved in doing some tasks for the White House, such as sorting presidential mail.

“We had the chance to work with the correspondence department of the White House, a job that not many students have been able to do,” said senior club head Jaine Archambeau. “We got to work with the letters people write the president. We were [also] offered a tour of both the White House as well as the Capitol that really allowed us to get an inside look at government.”

For many of the MUN members, both experiences at the conference and the White House were particularly inspiring and left them in awe.

“[Touring] the White House

and Congress buildings were both incredible experiences, as we got to see the history of such significant government buildings,” noted Falk.

Crystal had an experience that was just as fantastic as Falk’s. “MUN conferences are always super fun and a great place to make new friends. The opportunities we had in D.C. were particularly cool,” said Crystal.

Not only was the team’s time in D.C. rewarding, but it helped to gain insight into the reality of working with the government. “We all actually got hand-signed letters from the president for our work at the White House, which was an honor, to say the least,” explained Archambeau.

“[The experience] gave me a lot of perspective on our government. I met some really amazing people from all over and learned a lot about the opportunities that are available to me in terms of future employment.”