

# 'Mary Poppins' pops into OCT

By KATE DAY SAGER  
Olean Times Herald

ALLEGANY — Several actors will literally be flying high in Olean Community Theatre's musical production "Mary Poppins," which will be staged Feb. 12, 13 and 14 at the Allegany-Limestone High School auditorium on Five Mile Road.

Actors and dancers from New York and Pennsylvania will perform in the classic Disney and Cameron Mackintosh Broadway musical, said producers of the show. Special treats for audiences will include on-stage flights by key performers as well as preshow and intermission activities for younger audience members.

The musical depicts Bert, performed by Clay Nolan of Bradford, Pa., who introduces the audience to England in 1910 as well as the troubled Banks family. The story centers on young Jane and Michael, played by Olivia Emily and Andrew Sherburne, respectively, whose antics have sent many nannies packing. That is until Mary Poppins, performed by Tanaka VanDruff of Olean, arrives on their doorstep. The unusual nanny uses a combination of magic and common sense in teaching the family how to value each other again.

"It's fabulous. They're doing a good job, and we're excited," said co-producer Carla Campbell. "The whole cast is doing great."

Director William Steffen said the installation of cables and lines for the flying scenes took hours of work to set up. He said the stage crew also

received special training for the flying stunts from Stu Cox of ZFX Flying Effects in Louisville, Ky.

Steffen said he spent an entire day helping with the installation of lines above and near the stage.

"Each one of those lines can hold up to 1,000 pounds," Steffen noted.

VanDruff and Nolan, who will be suspended on cables in several scenes with Emily and Sherburne, said they are comfortable performing the flying stunts.

"Many of these guys have worked backstage before, and on stage as well, so I have faith in them," VanDruff said of the stage crew.

Producer Jennifer Simpson said the sets were built and painted by theater volunteers and parents. Performers are from communities including Allegany, Olean, Portville, Hinsdale, Franklinville and Randolph in New York; and Bradford and Shinglehouse in Pennsylvania.

"Everybody is ready to get on the stage and make this happen," Simpson said.

The producer said the song "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious" is guaranteed to delight audiences.

"Supercal' is one number that can be colorful and crazy," Simpson remarked. "We've layered dresses on top of dresses, and there are going to be wigs.

"We definitely had to research outfits for 1910, and we rented (and made) costumes. That's what's wonderful about community theater — the whole cast contributes." Children in the audience

will be welcomed in the lobby up to an hour early, as well as during intermission and afterward, to participate in arts and crafts activities and visit with the costumed "Bird Lady." Items will also be available for purchase, including "Supercal" T-shirts and kite kits.

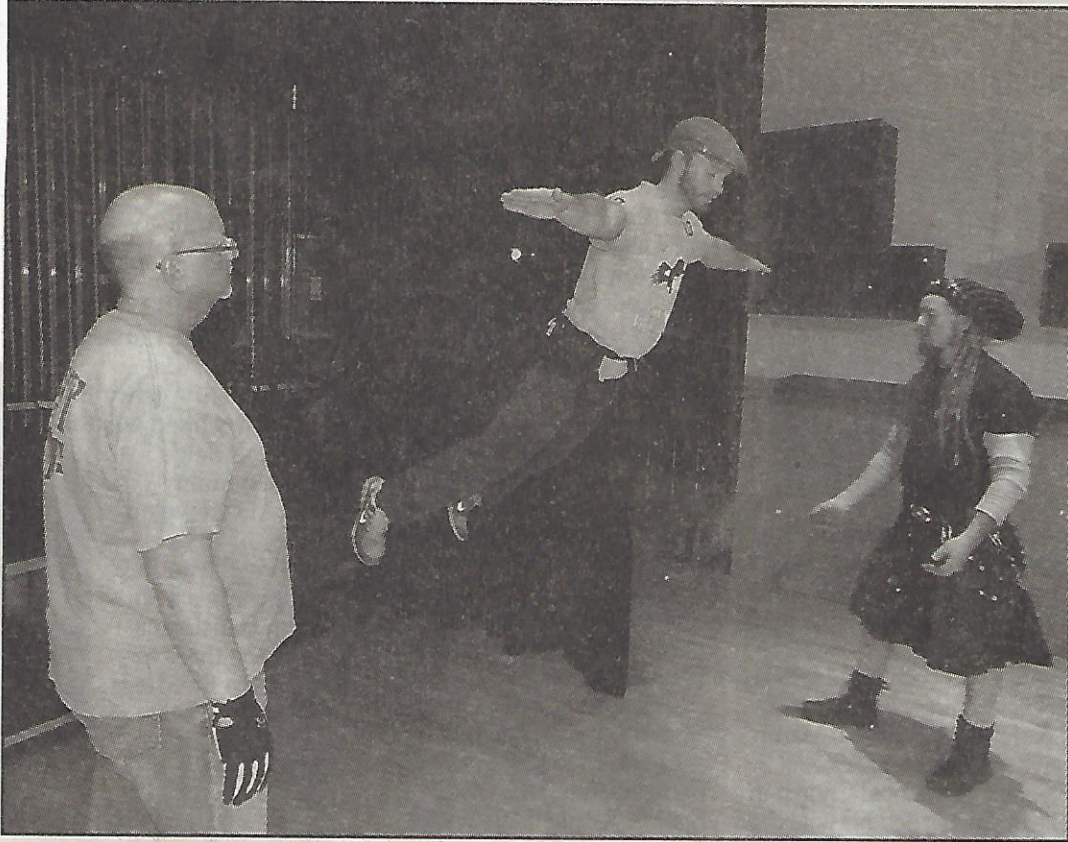
"A couple of our biggest things is we'll have a Mary Poppins umbrella and Bert's broomstick that will be raffled at each show," Campbell said.

The musical will be performed at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 12, 2 and 7:30 p.m. Feb. 13 and 2 p.m. Feb. 14. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$10 for senior citizens and people under 18.

(Contact reporter Kate Day Sager at [kates\\_th@yahoo.com](mailto:kates_th@yahoo.com))



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Clay Nolan (center), an actor in the upcoming Olean Community Theatre musical "Mary Poppins," tests his "flying" abilities during a rehearsal this week with trainer Stu Cox (right) and Paul Nelson.