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The road to '42nd Street'

Actor Galen Schloming began his journey at about age 7

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Galen Schloming stars as Billy Lawlor in Camelot Theatre's "42nd Street." Schloming is a graduate of Ashland High School and Chicago's Northwestern University. Photo courtesy of Steve Sutfin

Photo courtesy of Steve Sutfin

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By Laurie Heuston

Revels
Posted: 9:30 AM December 20, 2012

"What do you go for, go see a show for? Tell the truth, you go to see those beautiful dames," sings character Billy Lawlor in the Tony Award-winning musical "42nd Street."

"My argument would be that people go to theater to be transported to another world," says Galen Schloming, who plays Lawlor in Camelot Theatre's production. "Billy's take on theater would be that it is a great place to see dames in skimpy clothing."

Lawlor is the young, male lead in "42nd Street." He fancies Peggy Sawyer, a chorus girl fresh off the bus from Allentown, Pa. — along with a range of other love interests.

"Ultimately, director Julian Marsh (played by Tyler Ward) gets the girl," Schloming says. "But Billy is content with the myriad of attractive, young girls that come along."

What Billy and Peggy offer each other is friendship and a mutual respect for each other's talent. When prima donna Dorothy Brock (who is cast in the lead female role because of her financial backing) breaks an ankle onstage, Marsh sets about preparing Sawyer to step into the role.

"No one is sure she's up to the task," Schloming says. "But everyone's success is riding on it."

Sarah Gore plays Sawyer in Camelot's production; Linda Otto plays Dorothy Brock. The key roles are joined by a cast of middle-, high-school and Southern Oregon University students. Directed by Artistic Director Livia Genise, the cast sings and dances its way through such hit songs as "Lullaby of Broadway," "You're Getting to Be a Habit With Me," "I Only Have Eyes for You," "We're in the Money" and the 20-minute dance finale "42nd Street."

Schloming's first stage experience was at age 7, when Camelot Theatre was still called Actors' Theatre. As a graduate of Ashland High School, he worked with a high caliber of theater professionals.

"Members of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival were involved with Ashland High in a variety of capacities," he says. "They offered classes, lectures, workshops, directed the school's stage productions and provided scene design."

In 2004, Schloming left the Rogue Valley to study communication and musical theater at Northwestern University in Chicago.

"In '42nd Street,' Julian says something like 'You're all just specks of dust in my show,' and Peggy says 'Yes, but if you put the specks of dust together, you get something alive and beautiful that can reach out and touch thousands of people.' "

"I think those words sum up what it is about musical theater that attracts so many. It's the spectacle, the story and ultimately that collaborative effort that provides entertainment for audiences. When theater is good, it is emotionally immersive in a way that few other things are."

The pace at Camelot Theatre is different from venues in Chicago and Los Angeles where Schloming has worked. That pace is reflected in Camelot's style, he says.

"The pace is intimate, and performers are accessible here. We make ourselves available after most shows and take questions and feedback from audience members. Some appreciate the time to connect with performers; others prefer to keep the illusion intact and not cross the line between character and

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When: Through Sunday, Jan. 6

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for 8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, Dec. 20-22, Wednesday through Saturday, Dec. 26-29, and Thursday through Saturday, Jan. 3-5. Matinees are set for 2 p.m. Sundays, Dec. 23, 30 and Jan. 6, at the theater, 101 Talent Ave., Talent.

Tickets cost \$25, \$23 for seniors and students, and are available at www.camelottheatre.org or by calling 541-535-5250. Reserved seating is available for an additional \$2 per seat. Student rush tickets cost \$10 and are available five minutes before showtime.

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