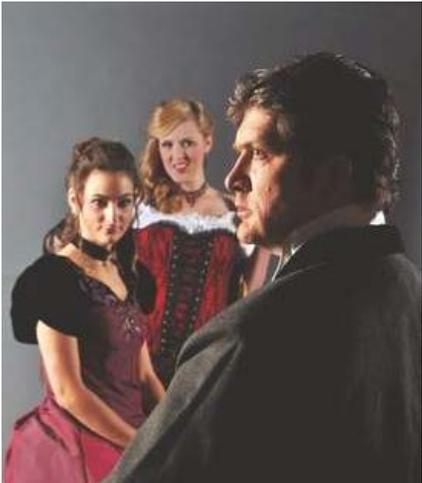


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'Jekyll & Hyde' at Camelot Theatre

Good versus evil — can we choose one over the other? Or are they both forever intertwined in our very being? What happens when the carefully crafted facade we present to the world cracks open and our dark side goes unchecked?



Zoom

Photo courtesy of Steve Sutfin

Kendra Taylor, Kelly Hammond and Robin Downward appear in Camelot Theatre's production of "Jekyll & Hyde." Photo courtesy of Steve Sutfin

By Roberta Kent
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Good versus evil — can we choose one over the other? Or are they both forever intertwined in our very being? What happens when the carefully crafted facade we present to the world cracks open and our dark side goes unchecked?

Heady stuff, indeed, and the subject of "Jekyll & Hyde," a Tony-nominated musical based on Robert Louis Stevenson's horror tale.

When the earnest Dr. Jekyll becomes determined to cure his mentally ill father, he develops a tincture to separate man's evil nature from his good — and tests it on himself. The consequences wreak brutal havoc on the good doctor and unleash a reign of terror in Victorian London.

"Hyde was the Victorian equivalent of a super-villain," says Live Genise, artistic director at Camelot Theatre. "In Stevenson's novel, no one describes him the same. He has something of the dark side of everyone. Everyone has a secret side, hidden from even friends and family."

If you go

What: "Jekyll & Hyde"
 When: Previews Wednesday and Thursday, June 19-20, opens Friday, June 21, and runs through July 21
 Where: Camelot Theatre, 101 Talent Ave., Talent
 Tickets: \$25 for th...

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Camelot's production of "Jekyll & Hyde" is set to open Friday, June 21. There will be two previews: Wednesday and Thursday, June 19-20. The first is a benefit for Hope Equestrian Center, and all tickets cost \$25. Tickets for the June 20 preview cost \$12. The show will run through July 21, with curtain at 8 p.m. Mondays (July 1, 8 and 22) and Wednesdays through Saturdays; and 2 p.m. for Sunday matinees. Tickets cost \$27, \$25 for students and seniors (except Sunday matinees). Camelot Theatre is at 101 Talent Ave., Talent. Tickets may be purchased online at www.camelottheatre.org, by calling 541-535-5250, or at the box office.

Called a "Victorian-Gothic pop opera" by The New York Times, "Jekyll & Hyde" was conceived for the stage by Frank Wildhorn and Steve Cuden. Book and music are by Leslie Bricusse; lyrics are

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co-written by Wildhorn and Bricusse.

It opened to rave reviews in 1990 in Houston, and subsequently toured nationally before it opened in 1997 on Broadway and ran for nearly four years. It was revived on Broadway earlier this year.

Genise directs the Camelot production, and Robin Downward of Randall Theatre Company in Medford plays the contrasting roles of Jekyll and Hyde. Choreography is by Renee Hewitt and music direction is by Michael Wing, assisted by Kendra Taylor. Kelly Hammond plays Lucy Harris, and Taylor plays Emma Danvers.

"There are two things that fascinate me about the story of 'Jekyll & Hyde' — the concept of evil as a choice and the idea that we all have a 'façade,' " Genise says. "Jekyll starts out with good intentions, but does he become addicted to the power and pleasure he experiences when he is evil?"

Genise says that the first read-through of the show was in March, two months before rehearsals began for the June opening.

"The cast became immersed researching the Victorian backgrounds of their characters," Genise says. "They each came up with a backstory for their character's secret side."

When Downward began studying his roles as Jekyll and Hyde, he looked for ways to make the character multi-dimensional.

"I began looking for a subtext," Downward says. "I wanted to give Jekyll a deeper motivation, a hidden reason that he dedicates his life to this search for a cure for his father.

"I created a past for Jekyll and his father in which the father was exemplary to the outside world but demanding and abusive within the family. Jekyll is trying to break the cycle. I hope the character will speak to people familiar with such an addiction pattern.

"When Jekyll takes that potion and becomes Hyde, he releases all the anger, frustration and resentment that he has tried to repress," Downward says.

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